

Child Safe Policy

Statement of Commitment

At Carlton North Primary School (CNPS) we are committed to child safety.

We strive to ensure that all children are safe, happy and empowered. We are committed to the participation and inclusion of all children.

We support and respect all children, our staff and all other visitors to the school.

We are committed to the cultural safety and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety and inclusion of children with disabilities.

We are committed to preventing child abuse in all school environments. We identify risks early, and remove and reduce these risks.

We conduct robust recruitment processes and follow the DET guidelines for human resource management, including training of all our staff and volunteers on child safety, abuse and risks.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently through the implementation of our policies and procedures.

Every person involved at CNPS has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play, individually and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Aim

To outline the school's commitment to child safety including procedures, expectations and responsibilities of everyone at Carlton North Primary School (CNPS) in all school environments.

Guidelines/Implementation

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Child abuse includes–

- any act committed against a child involving–
 - a sexual offence or
 - an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of–
 - physical violence or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

Our Children's Rights

This policy is intended to empower children at our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

- The school will develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
 - standards of behaviour for children attending the school;
 - healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
 - resilience; and
 - child abuse awareness and prevention.
- The school will promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

See the Child Safe Code of Conduct, Appendix A, for detail regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviours with respect to child safety and child abuse.

Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at CNPS under any circumstances.

School Council

As the school's governing authority, School Council, will ensure that they are actively involved in the development, enforcement and review of the Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy. School Council will complete the CNPS Child Safe Risk Management document annually and ensure that monitoring of Child Safety is a permanent agenda item within all School Council meetings.

Our Staff, Parents/Carers, Volunteers and External Providers

All of our staff, parents/carers, volunteers and external providers must agree to abide by our Child Safe Code of Conduct (Appendix A) which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. The code of conduct requires all staff, children, parents/carers, volunteers and external providers to abide by the DET Child Safe Standards.

School staff adhere to the following standards about the ways in which they are expected to behave with children including:

- providing opportunities for all children to learn;
- treating children with courtesy and dignity;
- working within the limits of their professional expertise;
- maintaining objectivity in their relationships with children ensuring they are always in a professional relationship with the children in their school whether at school or not.

Duty of Care

School staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care it is important to take immediate action.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- Reporting their concerns to Child Protection, Victoria Police or another appropriate agency.
- Notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Duty of care obligations are separate and additional to mandatory reporting and 'failure to disclose' reporting obligations.

Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at CNPS understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities when advertising positions.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information

When recruiting the school carries out thorough and documented reference checks. In order to obtain current VIT registration teachers must provide a current National Police History check.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints:

Child Abuse

CNPS takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to look for to identify child safety matters. We support them to know what to do, who to tell and how to report if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Mandatory Reporting

Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse.

- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties. Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.
- See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](#)
- Staff do not require the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.
- Staff are expected to follow the Department policy for making a report set out at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>
- Reports to Child Protection and Victoria Police are confidential unless you consent or a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for your identity to be disclosed.
- Please refer to the 'Step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST' flow chart accessible through the following link: http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/582591/flowchart-mandatory-reporting-27-5-10.pdf

Legislative responsibilities

CNPS takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies:

- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Student Inclusion Policy
- Gender Inclusions Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Bullying and Harassment (including Cyber-Bullying) Prevention Policy

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with:
Mandatory Reporting Policy
Student Inclusion Policy
Gender Inclusions Policy
Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
Bullying and Harassment (including Cyber-Bullying) Prevention Policy

Links

- DET The Child Safe Standards - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childsafes.aspx>
- A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST - http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/582591/flowchart-mandatory-reporting-27-5-10.pdf

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

This policy was ratified by School Council on 6 September 2017.

PROTECT



Education
and Training

Appendix A:

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This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, DET policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel. It is expected that all staff, children, parents/carers, volunteers and external providers abide by the DET Child Safe Standards at all times. The DET Child Safe Standards are:

- Standard 1 – strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- Standard 2 – Develop, implement and review a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- Standard 3 – Review current code of conduct so that it establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- Standard 4 – Implement appropriate screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- Standard 5 – Continue to develop and implement processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse in line with DET
- Standard 6 – Implement recommended strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Standard 7 – Further develop strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

The Principal and school leaders of Carlton North Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Carlton North Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies to all school environments.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Carlton North Primary School will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development. Ensuring that all such people have current Working with Children Checks (WWCC).
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the School Principal and Assistant Principal;

- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse; and
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse;
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts);
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context;
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate;
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting;
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter;
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes; and
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances

Corporal Punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools. Corporal punishment must NOT be used at CNPS under any circumstances.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

This policy was ratified by School Council on 6 September 2017.