

# ***WPS – CHILD SAFETY POLICY***

**For Period:  
October 2016 – October 2018**

## **RATIONALE**

Wandong Primary School Child Safety Policy has been developed in line with the Child Safe Standards. In 2013, the Victorian parliament held an enquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse, resulting in the Betrayal of Trust Report. As a result, the Victorian Government has mandated that all organisations who work with children, including schools, meet the Child Safe standards.

Children have the right to be safe and protected, including at school. It is important that parents and guardians feel confident that their child is safe and well whilst in the care of the school.

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

- Wandong Primary School is committed to child safety
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- **We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures**
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously
- Wandong Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks
- Wandong Primary School has robust recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
- We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers and are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments
- This policy applies to all school environments, including physical and online environments
- **If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000**

### **Child abuse includes:**

(a) any act committed against a child involving-

(i) a sexual offence; or

(ii) an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and

(b) the infliction, on a child, of-

(i) physical violence; or

(ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and

(c) serious neglect of a child. 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.

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### **EMPOWERING CHILDREN**

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in 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 our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. 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.

The school has considered student welfare, safety and care carefully. For more information, refer to the following school policies:

- Student Welfare
- Behaviour Management
- Positive Behaviours incorporating Bullying and Harassment
- Complaints and Grievances
- Student Engagement

### **OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

This policy ensures that our staff and all volunteers understand the expectations of how to behave with children while in our school.

(For guidelines and further information about volunteers and visitors entering our school, see our 'Visitor's to School Policy')

## **TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in Wandong Primary 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 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.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to our school's Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

For more details about the roles and responsibilities and how to raise and report concerns about Child Safety of all persons involved in the protection of children at school, please refer to the flow charts within the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

## **RECRUITMENT**

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applicants from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disability.

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 refer to our 'Visitors to School' Policy.

All teaching staff are required to have a current reference and police record checks, along with registration to teach in Victorian Schools. This ensures that we are recruiting the right people.

## **FAIR PROCEDURES**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our student referral form. All records are securely stored.

## **PRIVACY**

All personal information considered 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.

## **LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child 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 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. For additional information regarding mandatory reporting please refer to our Mandatory Reporting policy.

## **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 risk of abuse to our students.

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, doors that can lock) and online environments (please refer to Wandong Primary School Social Media Policy).

## **ALLEGATIONS AND CONCERNS**

At Wandong Primary School, we work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell 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.

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

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and/or following any significant incidents. Staff, families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible, we do our best to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

## **KEY LINKS TO THIS POLICY**

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Social Media Policy
- OnSite Supervision of Student Policy
- Visitors to School Policy
- Student Welfare, Care and Safety Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy

**APPENDIX**

This document should be read in consultation with the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

**CERTIFICATION**

- This policy was adopted at the School Council meeting held at Wandong Primary School on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2016.

Signed:

Signed:

School Council President

School Principal: