Research Primary School Child Safe Policy

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Overview

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the Child Safe Standards apply must have:

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

2. A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Research Primary School has addressed each of these standards, and created the following document to ensure all Child Safe Standards are met.

Standard 1
Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities.

Research Primary School understands that it must act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We understand that this requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout our school, to ensure that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Research Primary School acknowledges that such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership, in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.

A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. Research Primary School fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults within the Research Primary School community know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All Research Primary School staff and volunteers will consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Governance in a child safe environment
Research Primary School's leadership understand they must take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in your organisation should be a paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership responsibilities
Research Primary School's leadership is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety. The school's leadership will take the lead in protecting children from abuse, must be made aware of child abuse allegations and risks, and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Research Primary School's leadership will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

If Research Primary School believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse, the School will phone 000.

Identify and analyse risk of abuse
Research Primary School will adopt an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our school identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

Develop a child safe policy
Research Primary School has developed a child safe policy, which outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

Develop codes of conduct
Research Primary School has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Additionally, Research Primary School actively encourages appropriate behaviour between children.

Choose suitable employees and volunteers

Research Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, face-to-face interviews, and detailed reference checks from previous employers - including from the applicant's most recent line manager.

Support, train, supervise, and enhance performance

Research Primary School ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. School leadership, managers, and a child safety officer/champion understand their responsibilities. A child safety officer/champion is a person in our school who has extensive knowledge of child safety issues, and is a point of contact for others who have questions/concerns, or want to report an allegation of abuse.

Promote inclusion

Research Primary School is inclusive to all children and families. In particular, our school has established a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters
- the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring your organisation is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making

Research Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. For example, Research Primary School will provide opportunities for children to express their views on the school's child safe policy or code of conduct, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children may be sought through suggestion boxes, feedback sessions, and class discussion.

Research Primary School actively listens to children and takes them seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.

Standard 2
A child safe policy and commitment to child safety

Research Primary School's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Research Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Research Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people **are safe and feel safe**, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved with Research Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays – both individually and collectively - to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In its planning, decision-making and operation, Research 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;
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.

Research Primary School's Child Safe Policy

Research Primary School's child safe policy is publicly available to help raise awareness about the importance of child safety in organisations and demonstrates our commitment to protecting children from abuse.

- Research 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.
- Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our organisation is 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. We 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.

If we believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, Research Primary School will phone 000.

Our 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 organisation, 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.

Our staff and volunteers
This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school.
All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Training and supervision
Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school's 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.

Research Primary School also supports 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. 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.

Recruitment

Research Primary School takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements 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 welcome applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with a disability.

People who are engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, who are required to hold a Working with Children Check will be required to provide evidence of this Check.

When appropriate, we will carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks if used, will only be for the purposes of recruitment, and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history, then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for personnel

At Research Primary School, 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 incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as a school take.

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. Research Primary School has 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.

Legislative responsibilities

Research Primary School 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 school 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.

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, Research Primary School proactively manages 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 member or volunteer is to have contact with a Research Primary School child on social media).

Allegations, concerns, and complaints

Research Primary School 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 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 (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.

Standard 3

A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Research Primary School's Child Safety Code of Conduct

Research Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

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, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Research 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 Research 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 in **all** school situations, including school camps, and in the use of digital technology and social media.

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 Research Primary 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's leadership
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- 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 (1)
- In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy (2) or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

This Code of Conduct was endorsed/approved by the Research Primary School Council on 17 October 2016 for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2018.

1 SPAG: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx
The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

2 SPAG: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx
The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions.

I agree to this Code of Conduct:

Name: …………………………………………..

Signature: …………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………

Standard 4
Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Research Primary School has in place policies and practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel that include:

- Screening
- Supervision
- Training
- Other human resources practices

At Research Primary School:

1. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:

- The job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
- The job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.

2. All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school will be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).

3. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school will make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:

a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
b) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
c) the person's history of work involving children; and
d) references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

4. The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in steps (3)(a) to (3)(d), above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.

5. The school will ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
- The induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
- Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.

6. The school will implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

Research Primary School recognises the importance of organisations having strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse.

We will foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as be aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations, particularly primary schools. Robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

Research Primary School will provide opportunities for new and existing employees, and volunteers, to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. We will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures. Research Primary School commits to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

Child Safety Officer
Research Primary School employees and volunteers will be supported through the appointment of an individual child safety officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist Research Primary School in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with the school's legal requirements and policies and procedures. Research Primary School's Child Safety Officer is the Principal, or the Principal's nominee.

Training and induction
Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Research Primary School employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) will be supported to discuss child protection issues, and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will receive support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff will be encouraged to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

Training and support also promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that Research Primary School meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

Research Primary School staff will commit to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, by signing our school's code of conduct. Training will be structured to enhance the skills and knowledge of Research Primary School employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

Research Primary School employees and volunteers working with children will receive training in the following areas:

- Identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Research Primary School's policies and procedures (including the code of conduct and child safe policy) legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- How to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
- Cultural awareness training.

Training may be formal such as:

- Higher education training and accreditation   Training offered by external organisations
- Training developed and delivered internally   On-the-job training meeting key objectives.

Training may also be informal such as:

- Inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- Inviting local Aboriginal Elders and community members to speak at meetings and events
- Inviting local culturally/linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- Internal mentoring and coaching.

Supervision

Supervision of Research Primary School employees and volunteers will be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members will be present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision.

As a matter of good practice, new Research Primary School employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs will be reported through appropriate channels, including Research Primary School's internal reporting procedures (child safety officer and leadership), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

Performance and development review

A proactive performance development strategy will be used to improve Research Primary School's employees and volunteers' skills and knowledge on child safety. Research Primary School recognises this as an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance will be measured against the Research Primary School's standards of conduct and care, to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards will align with those of the code of conduct and child safe policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of your organisation and appropriate behaviour.

Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures

Research Primary School's disciplinary procedures will be accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Research Primary School's employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within the organisation. Employees and volunteers will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Research Primary School's code of conduct will be made publicly available.

Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Research Primary School's disciplinary procedures will clearly outline what employees or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

Recruitment practices for child safe organisations

Recruitment checklist for child safe organisations

Robust recruitment processes help ensure the best applicants are employed. From advertising through to conducting interviews and checking the background of applicants, it is important that each step is done consistently and thoroughly.

The following checklist will guide Research Primary School through critical steps in the recruitment process. It includes objectives and examples for:

• Selection criteria in job descriptions
• Advertising
• Face-to-face interviews including behavioural-based questions and questions about motives for wanting to work with children
• Working with Children Checks <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>
• Police record checks and identity checks <www.police.vic.gov.au> (including international police record checks where necessary)
• Reference checks over the telephone with recent line managers
• Probation periods

Selection criteria

Developing appropriate selection criteria for the position is a valuable first step to reducing the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. It will also ensure that applicants have the specific knowledge and skills required for the position.

Examples of appropriate selection criteria may include:
> *'Must have experience working with children.'*
> *'Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children.'*

Does our selection criteria clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant?	
Does our selection criteria outline the supervision and accountability processes in place which support child safety?	

Research Primary School's selection criteria provides for the safety of all children. Applicants will be provided the opportunity to indicate their understanding of, or any experience they have, in working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds.

Does our selection criteria include a demonstration of the needs of children with a disability?	
Does our selection criteria include a demonstration of Aboriginal cultural safety and awareness?	
Does our selection criteria include a demonstration of cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds?	

Advertising

Planning any Research Primary School advertisement and its placement provides the school with a good opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding children and deter would–be offenders.

Does our advertisement include a message about Research Primary School's commitment to child safety?	

Does our advertisement include reference to Research Primary School's code of conduct and child safe policy?	
Does our advertisement inform applicants that appropriate rigorous reference and background checking will be undertaken, including a Working with Children Check and police record and identity check?	

It is imperative that Research Primary School promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability.

> *'Research Primary School promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children with a disability.'*

Has our job advertisement included a statement about Research Primary School's commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability?	

It is important that Research Primary School be culturally safe for Aboriginal children, and encourage participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children.

> *'Research Primary School promotes the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, and encourages applications from Aboriginal peoples.*
> *Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with Aboriginal children and/or communities.'*

Has our job advertisement included a statement about Research Primary School's commitment to cultural safety, inclusion and empowerment of Aboriginal children, their families and communities?	

It is important that Research Primary School promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

> *'Research Primary School promotes the safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and encourages applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.*
> *Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.'*

Has our job advertisement included a statement about Research Primary School's commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds?	

Interviews

Research Primary School understands that the interview process is a very important step in selecting the right people for our organisation, and in identifying any people who may pose a risk to children.
We give ourselves sufficient time to plan and prepare for the interview process, and form an interview panel with the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview, ensuring that all panel members are clear on what the position requires.
We will give due consideration to including Aboriginal peoples, people from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and people with a disability on the interview panel.
We understand that an open-ended style of behavioural-based questioning will give us insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability.

> *'Tell us about why you want to work with children?'*
> *'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?'*
> *'Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?'*

Have we prepared a list of open–ended questions which will determine how the interviewee will behave in certain situations?	

Interviewers will take notice of their own thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant, and for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.
Did we notice any warning signs such as:

• Unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history	
• The applicant says they do not value or 'need' supervision	
• The applicant is evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers	

Pre-employment screening

Screening applicants (including for paid and volunteer positions) is a good tool for helping to prevent people who may abuse children from entering your organisation.

Police checks

It is important to be upfront and ask the applicant if they have any criminal convictions, formal disciplinary action taken against them, or any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct. This could involve the applicant signing a declaration as part of an application form.

We could also cover this in a face-to-face interview. We understand that this may be challenging for the interview panel, particularly if the person is already known to Research Primary School, but the applicant's response should demonstrate a sufficient level of professionalism, as well as an understanding of our obligations. To help introduce this difficult topic, we could say to the applicant that we have some specific questions about child safety because your organisation takes child safety seriously.

Have we included a question about whether the applicant has any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal or pending cases, including formal disciplinary action, which may affect their suitability to work with children?	
If addressed during a face-to-face interview, did we take notice of how the applicant responds to questions with regard to his or her words and body language?	
Have we undertaken a police record check (which includes identity check)?	

Working with children check

Under the *Working with Children Act 2005*, people who are doing child-related work, and who are not exempt[1], need a Working with Children Check. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers. Full details of the Working with Children Check process can be found on the Working with Children website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>.

Does the applicant hold a valid Working with Children Check, if required? Have we checked the validity of their Working with Children Check <online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/checkstatus.doj>?. OR If the applicant does not hold a valid Working with Children Check, and it is required, has the applicant provided evidence that they have applied for a Working with Children Check, and does Research Primary School have processes to follow up pending applications?	
Has the applicant provided us with evidence of their Working with Children Check, or evidence of their application for a Working with Children Check?	

Referee checks

[1] For example, teachers and police officers are exempt because they undergo other thorough backing checking.

Research Primary School will always talk to at least two referees, understanding that this can provide insight into the applicant's character and skills. Line managers, particularly the most recent, are likely to provide us with the most accurate reference. Where possible, referees that can provide insights into the applicant's experience working with children should be contacted.

Do the referees provided by the applicant include line managers who can be objective, rather than colleagues or friends?	
Has the applicant provided their most recent line manager as a referee? If not, have they provided us with a satisfactory reason?	
Have we spoken to at least two of the referees by telephone? Did we confirm with them their name and position provided to us by the applicant?	

When speaking with the referees, we will seek to establish the referee's relationship with the applicant, including:
• how long the applicant and referee worked together
• the specifics of the position
• the applicant's perceived strengths and weaknesses
• whether the referee would hire the person again, particularly in a role working with children, and whether they have any concerns about the applicant working with children.

We will ask referees directly about any concerns they may have about the applicant working with children. To help introduce this difficult topic, we will say that we have some specific questions about child safety because, Research Primary School takes child safety seriously.

Take note of any pauses or gaps in the referee's responses.

Ask behaviour-based questions like:

• 'What did the applicant do when…[for example, they had to comfort a distressed child]?'	
• 'Do you have any concerns about the applicant's attitude towards Aboriginal peoples / people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds / people with a disability?'	
• 'Do you have any concerns about the applicant working with children?'	
• 'Would you employ this person again?'	

Additional checks

Additional checks will confirm the identity of the applicant and that their responses have been truthful.

Have we checked the identity of the applicant (for example, that their driver's licence/passport has the same name they have provided us)?	
Did we see a certified copy of the applicant's qualifications (if required)?	

Probation periods

Probation periods can help to assess a new staff member's performance and suitability for the job before confirming their permanent employment. If Research Primary School has any concerns about the person working with children, we will seriously consider whether we want them to remain in the job and our school.

Standard 5
Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

What Research Primary School staff and volunteers will do when an allegation of child abuse is made

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:
- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your manager or your organisation's child safety officer/champion, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent / carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern
- Explain that your organisation has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the organisation's management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

Research Primary School is aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. We understand the need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, we will ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.

Advice on [communicating with people with a disability](#) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities>.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, Research Primary School understands that every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about [failure to disclose](#) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website
<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities. More information about [mandatory reporting](#) is available in the *Child protection manual*
<www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting>.

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](#) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so. Further information about [failure to protect](#) can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation website
<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence, and the Department of Health and Human Services website>.

Research Primary School Incident Report

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. Research Primary School will provide this resource to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern in your organisation. Our staff will also use this resource to record disclosures.

All incident reports completed by Research Primary School will be stored securely.

Incident details

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

No ☐   **Yes, Aboriginal** ☐   **Yes, Torres Strait Islander** ☐

Please categorise the incident

Physical violence	☐
Sexual offence	☐
Serious emotional or psychological abuse	☐
Serious neglect	☐

Please describe the incident

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	
What did you see?	

Other information	

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

Office use:

Date incident report received:	
Staff member managing incident:	
Follow-up date:	
Incident ref. number:	

Has the incident been reported?

Child protection	
Police	
Another third party (please specify):	

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

Incident reporter name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

Standard 6
Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Child Safe Standard 6 requires schools to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

In preparing for compliance, Research Primary School will:

- Assess, identify and document the school's risks in relation to child safety, and plan and document risk management strategies where necessary.
- Incorporate risk management actions and responsibilities in the Action Plan as described in Standard 1.
- Identify the actions the school proposes to take, per Standard 1, to ensure a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

Process for identifying and reducing or removing risks of child abuse

While risk management assessments and strategies will vary for each school, Research Primary School recognises that managing risk typically involves the following steps and considerations.

1. Identify the school's child safety risks across the range of school environments (including excursions, camps, online).
2. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures or existing controls.
3. Assess and rate the school's child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.
4. If the risk rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further risk management strategies through additional treatments or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then re-assess the risk (once in place these treatments will then become controls).

Research Primary School's risk management process will be documented, recorded and reviewed periodically. As a school, we understand that effective risk management strategies are dynamic and change over time, as new risks arise and others may no longer be relevant.

Research Primary School understands that effective risk management strategies need to be transparent, well understood and diverse, to take account of the increased level of risk associated with the specific nature of some activities and the vulnerability of particular groups.

Research Primary School understands that, at primary schools, potential child safety risks are many and varied. Below is a list comprising of potential child safety risks relevant to Research Primary School, and risk management strategies we will use to mitigate these risks.

Risks

- Lack of an organisational culture of child safety
- Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues
- Natural trust of long term employees (who may have developed issues over time)
- Children alone with one other person unsupervised
- Recruitment of an inappropriate person
- Inappropriate behaviour not reported
- Harassment via email, SMS, or social media
- Unsupervised recreational or other activities
- Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)
- Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues

- Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps
- False allegations

Risk Management Strategies

- Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy
- Child safety code of conduct
- Child safety reporting procedures
- Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour
- Counselling and other resources
- CCTV for unsupervised areas, and 'hot spot' areas
- Clear windows in walls to enable visibility of occupants
- Non-lockable doors in hot spots
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks
- Supervision or monitoring of activities
- Online searches (Google, Facebook etc.)
- Performance management procedures
- Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety
- Criminal history checks and confirming currency of WWCC/VIT registration
- Psychometric testing

Risk Management Matrix

CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT				
Child Safety Risk	**Children at risk**	**Is this a predatory, opportunistic, situational and environment risks?**	**Likelihood**	**Control measures in place**
School Camps	All children attending camp	All	Possible	- Camps Excursion and Incursion Policy - WWCC Policy - Parent Helpers Policy
Excursions	All children attending excursion	All	Unlikely	- Camps Excursion and Incursion Policy - Parent Helpers Policy
Interschool Sport	Children attending sport	All	Unlikely	- All sports taken by VIT registered teachers. - Parent Helpers Policy
Educational Support Staff	Children working closely with ES staff	All	Unlikely	- WWCC Policy - ES working within eyeshot of teacher.
Specialists (Psych, Speech, etc.)	Children attending specialists	All	Unlikely	- Use of DET SSSO's - Background checks into private specialists.

Pre-Service Teachers	Children in company of teacher	All	Unlikely	- Pre-Service Teachers overseen and inducted by Pre-Service Teacher coordinator. - Pre-Service Teachers work under direct visual supervision by classroom teacher.
Work Experience Students	Children in company of teacher	All	Unlikely	- Work experience students overseen and inducted by Work Experience coordinator. - Work experience students work under direct visual supervision by classroom teacher.
In-School Lessons, such as music	Children attending lessons	All	Unlikely	- WWCC Policy - Lessons visible to other staff members where possible - School Volunteers and Visitors Policy
Visiting specialists	Children attending	All	Unlikely	- WWCC Policy - Lessons visible to other staff members where possible - School Volunteers and Visitors Policy
Parent Helpers	All	Opportunistic	Unlikely	- Parent Helper policy
School visitors	All	Opportunistic	Unlikely	- School Volunteers and Visitors Policy
Contractors	All	Opportunistic	Unlikely	- School Volunteers and Visitors Policy -'Closed for Cleaning' signs for use when working in toilets.
OSHC	Children attending OSHC	Opportunistic	Unlikely	- WWCC Policy - OSHC Policy
Before and After School	- All - Children whose parents are late	All	Possible	- Duty of Care Policy - On-Site Supervision Policy - CCTV Policy

Standard 7
Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

Research Primary School understands that children have the right to give their views and opinions about decisions that affect them, and to be listened to.

Empowerment is about helping children to have their say. Acting to empower children will always guide the work of our school. Research Primary School recognises that participation is important for children, as it provides them an opportunity to have a say about issues and decisions that affect them. Our school is acutely aware that children are more likely to speak up about their concerns about feeling unsafe, or make a complaint, if they feel their views are valued and welcomed.

Research Primary School understands that empowerment and participation is not a one-off event – it is an approach that is an integral part of our school's culture.

Empowering children and facilitating their participation enhances their safety. In Victoria, mandatory child safe standards have been introduced to help protect children from abuse in organisations. Standard seven requires organisations such as Research Primary School to take steps to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Benefits of empowering and supporting the participation of children
Research Primary School understands that participation and empowerment are vital components of a child safe organisation that benefits children, families, organisations and staff. Key benefits include:

- Involving and consulting with children enables our school to improve its policies, practices and services, as children provide a unique voice regarding what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- Facilitating the empowerment and participation of children enhances a culture of child safety and listening to children within our school.
- Children and young people learn new skills, build self-esteem, and develop an understanding of collaboration and rights.
- Children are more likely to report abuse or concerns if they feel safe and empowered in the organisation.
- Children feel their views are valued and listened to. Children are more likely to support the outcome if they have been involved. Research Primary School understands the need to be genuine in our approach to children, and follow through on what we say we will do – we acknowledge that credibility needs to be earned, and can be easily lost.

How Research Primary School encourages the empowerment and participation of children
As with all activities, Research Primary School understands that it is vital to plan the involvement of children, and will:
- Ensure participation is designed to be:
  a) ethical
  b) age appropriate and child-friendly
  c) culturally respectful
  d) inclusive of a diverse range of children, demonstrating respect for children of all ages, abilities, social and cultural backgrounds
  e) positive and fun
  f) voluntary and with informed consent.
- Be clear, honest and realistic about the boundaries of a discussion and what can change.
- Give adequate time to consult and make sure the venue is appropriate.
- Listen to what we are being told by children – acknowledge, value and take seriously the views put forward by children.

- Ensure adults involved are skilful in facilitating the participation of children.
- Be clear if the discussion will be confidential or if the outcomes will be made public.
- Monitor the impact our consultation may have had on the children involved.
- Ensure we have procedures in place to provide support to any child who may be distressed as a result of their involvement or disclosure of concerns.
- Provide feedback to children about how their views had informed decision-making.
- Deliver appropriate education about: standards of behaviours for students attending school; healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality); resilience; and child abuse awareness and prevention.
- Promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly for children.

Appendix

PROTECT

Child safe policy outline

Purpose	The child safe policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.
Scope	All staff, volunteers, contractors and whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. Across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.
Statement of Commitment	School Statement of Commitment
Policy and procedures	Policies and procedures outlining school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined.
A child-safe culture	The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. The school's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found on the website and in the school policies folder.
Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities / Code of conduct	School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
Human resources practices and training	The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and appropriate volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check. The school's approach to human resources practices that ensure child safety can be found on the website at and in the school policies folder.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint	The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.
	The school will take action to respond to a complaint.
	The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found in the school policy folder.
Risk reduction and management	The School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.
Listening to children	The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/ care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.
	When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parent/carer) informed about progress.
Confidentiality and Privacy	This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy."
Policy evaluation and review	To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents and the school community.
Definitions	Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:
	Child abuse includes—
	• any act committed against a child involving:
	o a sexual offence or
	o an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
	• the infliction, on a child, of:
	o physical violence or
	o serious emotional or psychological harm
	o serious neglect of a child.

	Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
	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.
	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).
	School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:
	• directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
	a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
Related policies and documents	School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care
	School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations
	DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework
	School Privacy Policy