



CHILD SAFE STANDARDS POLICY

PURPOSE

To support schools to create a child safe organisation and protect students from all forms of abuse.

POLICY

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) are compulsory minimum standards for all organisations that provide services to children including Victorian schools. The aim of the Standards is to ensure organisations are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect. It is recognised that many schools will have existing policies and procedures that aim to keep children safe.

The Standards provide a framework to identify gaps and improve policy and practices around child safety. On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015, which amended the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 to introduce the Child Safe Standards that would apply to all organisations involved in child related work in Victoria.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as regulator for all Victorian schools has responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards in schools. The Standards are:

- Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

The Standards apply to all organisations that provide services to children.

Ministerial Order 870 - Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools provides guidance on how the Standards apply to a school setting. It came into effect on 1 August 2016. To implement the minimum Standards in accordance with the Order school governing authorities must:

- take account of the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable; and
- make reasonable efforts to accommodate such diversity.

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Protection - Reporting Obligations
- Responding to Student Sexual Offending
- Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy

RESOURCES

The Department and the VRQA have developed practical resources to assist schools to fully implement each Standard. See:

- the Department's website, which includes the new Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools guidance - [PROTECT](#)
- [VRQA - Schools](#)

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last reviewed and approved by school council on September 2018 and is scheduled for evaluation and review in September 2020.

CHILD SAFE STANDARD

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

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

Watsonia Heights Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Watsonia Heights Primary School is 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 in Watsonia Heights Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays 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 operations Watsonia Heights 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
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers