



CHILD SAFE POLICY

Rationale

This policy has been developed in recognition of Sandringham Primary School's commitment to fully comply with Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools.

Sandringham Primary School is committed to creating a child safe environment and embedding a child safe culture within our school. We support and respect all students, 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.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments and to comply with Child Safe Standards. In this way we ensure actions are taken to prevent child abuse and identify risks early, and remove and reduce these risks.

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents/carers and volunteers who are engaged in activities with students at our School.

Aim

- To ensure that everybody understands their legal and ethical obligations towards child safety.
- To promote the safety, participation and empowerment of all students.
- To empower students who are vital and active participants in our school, involving them when making decisions, listening to their views and respecting what they have to say.
- To increase awareness of the needs of students from diverse backgrounds to ensure the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.
- To guide our staff and volunteers to behave in a manner that is safe and appropriate with students and outline the role they play in protecting children from abuse.
- For all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and students) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- To ensure robust human resources, recruitment and induction practices are in place for all staff and volunteers.
- To provide regular training and education for our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- To ensure the recording of all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, including investigation updates are securely stored.

Legislative responsibilities

Sandringham 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 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.

Implementation:

In order to achieve the aims of this policy, the following guidelines are implemented:

- Staff are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by following the Mandatory Reporting requirements.
- Under the Mandatory Reporting requirements, we all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place including: a child stating they or someone they know, has been abused, present with behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim, someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it or observing suspicious behaviour.
- 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.
- The school works 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.
- New employees, student teachers, work experience students 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.
- Reasonable steps to employ skilled and qualified people to work with students are taken. Selection criteria and advertisements demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities.
- All teaching staff are required to hold current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and police checks.
- 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.
- The school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly.
- If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we take.

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed regularly and following any significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute.

Related Policies and Documentation

- SPS Child Safety Code of Conduct

- SPS Mandatory Reporting Policy
- SPS Working With Children Check Policy
- SPS Staff Induction Policy
- SPS Volunteers Policy
- SPS Visitors Policy
- SPS Bullying Prevention Policy
- SPS Digital Technology Policy
- SPS Acceptable & Responsible Use of Mobile Phone Policy
- SPS Student Engagement Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy
- SPS Equal Opportunity Policy
- SPS Camp Policy
- SPS Excursion Policy

Renewal and Approval

Evaluation of this policy will be completed annually.

References

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/childsafe.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>