



# STRATEGIES TO EMBED A CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY AT THE SCHOOL (Child Safe Standard 1)

The School Council and staff are responsible for ensuring a culture of child safety is embedded at the school.

The following will be embedded to inform the culture of a Child Safe school where the school council, staff, students and parents all work cohesively to create such a culture.

- The diverse needs of children in the school are to be recognised. It is important that our school is inclusive and culturally safe places for children and parents. Young children and children with a disability may need greater levels of support and consideration. See Student Engagement Policy Appendix 2 that reinforces the inclusive culture of the school.
- Include child safety as a standing item on Leadership Team and Staff Meeting agendas.
- Key people in the school are allocated to undertake child safety roles and responsibilities. See School Child Safety Leader Role and Responsibilities below.
- Communicate the school's stand on Child Safety that informs all people in the school community of the school's Child Safe Policy based on Ministerial Order 870. Communicate broadly and with a mix of tools : online (website, Facebook), paper-based, verbally at information nights for parents, transition forums for new parents in the school and through school council's communication through distributed school council minutes and Policy Sub-Committee work.

## **Leadership in a child safe environment**

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

Wattleview Primary School will act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We do this by providing a culture of child safety embedded throughout our school so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. This culture has been achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of Wattleview Primary School.

Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. At Wattleview Primary School, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. All staff and volunteers must 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**

Leadership at Wattleview Primary School takes preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

## **Leadership responsibilities**

The leadership team takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, and are aware of child abuse allegations and risks, and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Wattleview Primary School 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.

## **School child safety leader role and responsibilities**

The School Child Safety Leader will undertake the role and accompanying responsibilities to ensure the school embeds a culture of child safety and is compliant with Ministerial Order 870. The role includes:

### **Providing Authoritative Advice:**

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
- Liaise with the principal and school leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety.
- Lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

### **Raising Awareness Across The School Including Staff, Students And Teachers And Others Who Come Into Contact With Children In The School**

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
- Ensure the school actions are reviewed as to the effectiveness of the strategies put into place and to revise accordingly.
- Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. This being incorporated into the Annual Implementation Plan, Strategic Plan and the 4 yearly Review process.
- Conduct regular briefing sessions for school staff members to ensure a high degree of awareness of The Standards and the school's Child Safe policy.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this. The policy will be uploaded onto the school's website and will be evaluated as part of the policy cycle for all school policies unless changes in the Order dictates changes in the school's policy. The Child Safe Policy will be provided to all new families who come into the school at the time of enrolment.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers. The Child Safe Leader will be actively in communication with the broader leadership team regarding potentially vulnerable and at risk children. 'Child Safe' will be a standing item on both the Leadership Team's meeting agenda and the Consultative Committee's agenda to ensure regular forums do support embedding a child safe culture in the school.
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.
- Work with teachers to include, where appropriate, supporting teaching points into curriculum programs ie cyber safety programs, School Wide Positive Behaviour program, health and wellbeing related programs to build a culture of pro-activity and healthy relationships.

### **The Child Safe Leader Will Be Trained and Have Capabilities To Support The School To Embed A Child Safe Culture Being authoritative in providing advice by:**

- Keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years
- Having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals. Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new, part time staff and CRTs. Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

## **Communications**

Leadership will ensure Child Safe Policy information and procedures are available for everyone in the school community. Ways of disseminating information will include: Website, Compass, newsletters, parent information session, staff meetings and staff bulletins.

### **Identify and analyse risk of abuse**

Wattleview Primary School adopts 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.

### **In its commitment to Child Safety Standards, Wattleview Primary School has:**

#### **Developed a Child Safe policy**

This child safe policy outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. The school will regularly review its commitment to child safety and procedures as a part of the Annual Implementation Plan process in which Child Safety will be a component.

#### **Developed Codes of Conduct**

Wattleview Primary School has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) developed the Code of Conduct as required by Part 2.6 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. The Code of Conduct is a set of principles or standards for the behaviour and conduct of all Victorian teachers in the Victorian Government Teaching Service and the non-Government sector.

The following principles are of particular relevance when using social media tools:

**Principle 1.5:** Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

**Principle 1.7:** Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.

**Principle 2.1:** The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

Wattleview Primary School ( also has developed a specific Code of Conduct that encourages appropriate behaviour between children called the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Chosen suitable employees and volunteers**

Wattleview Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, it will ensure it includes:

- Selection criteria in job descriptions
- Police record and identity checks
- Working with Children Checks where required
- Face-to-face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager

## Supported, trained, supervised and enhanced performance

Wattleview 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. In particular, the principal, leadership team and the child safety officer understand their responsibilities. Our child safety officer at Wattleview Primary School is the person who has knowledge of child safety issues, and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

## Further information

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-andinitiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-andinitiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations)

Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-andresources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-andresources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)

In particular, An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards, has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit Wattleview Primary School Policy

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's yearly cycle or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.

## Certification

- This policy was endorsed by School Council at the meeting held on **July 2020**
- This policy was endorsed by **Education** committee at the meeting held on **July 2020**

Signed.....

Signed.....

*Principal*

*School Council President*

Review July 2021