



# Child Safe Policy

## LANGWARRIN PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

### 1. OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Langwarrin Park Primary School is committed to child safety.

- 1.1. We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- 1.2. We support and respect all children. 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.
- 1.3. We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

### 2. OUR CHILDREN

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. 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.

- 2.1. We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:
  - 2.1.1. promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
  - 2.1.2. promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - 2.1.3. ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

### 3. OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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.

### 4. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

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

- 4.1. Our organisational 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.
- 4.2. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- 4.3. We support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to:
  - 4.3.1. develop their skills to protect children from abuse
  - 4.3.2. promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children

**4.3.3.** promote the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds

**4.3.4.** promote the safety of children with a disability.

**4.4.** New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).

**4.5.** 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.

## **5. RECRUITMENT**

Langwarrin Park primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

**5.1.** We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children.

**5.1.1.** We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities.

**5.1.2.** We encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

**5.2.** All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)> for further information.

**5.3.** We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

**5.3.1.** Police record checks are used only 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.

**5.3.2.** 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.

## **6. FAIR PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel.

**6.1** The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

**6.2** We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting documentation, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

**6.3** 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 an organisation take.

## **7. PRIVACY**

**7.1.** 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.

**7.2.** We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

**7.3.** Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

## 8. LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- 8.1. **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.
- 8.2. **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.<sup>1</sup>
- 8.3. Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties

## 9. RISK MANAGEMENT

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

- 9.1. 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 or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

## 10. REGULAR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.



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<sup>1</sup> Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)>.