



MACEDON PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The child safe environment 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.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and those who work in direct contact with children or young people at Macedon Primary School. The guidelines apply across a range of school forums including all activities at school, excursions and camps, as well as online and outside of school hour's activities endorsed by the Principal and School Council.

2. DEFINITIONS

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

Child abuse: includes—

Any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence or
- an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)

The infliction, on a child, of:

- physical violence or
- serious emotional or psychological harm or
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the Principal or School Council 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 Principal or School Council 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 Principal or the School Council; for example Teachers, Education Support staff, Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs)

Volunteer being an individual engaged in supporting child-connected work under the supervision of a teacher who falls within the following sub-groups:

- **Parent/family helper** who has a direct relationship with student/s at the school
- **Community volunteer** who supports the school in a variety of ways in child-connected work, this includes work experience students.

Contracted service provider being an individual or group who is engaged by the Principal or School Council to provide additional educational programs or other services to the school; for example: instrumental music tutors, a minister of religion.

Outside agencies being personnel who fall under institutional bodies such as Universities, DET and DHS including pre service teachers, speech pathologists, OTs and visiting teachers, case workers.

3. **COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

Macedon Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. The school has zero tolerance for child abuse.

The 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. The school will ensure that attention is 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 Macedon 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.

4. **GUIDELINES**

4.1 The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

4.2 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, volunteers, contracted service providers 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 (see Appendix A - Macedon Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct page 4)

The Principal and School Leadership Team are the Child Safety Officers with sufficient status and authority to be the champions for child safety at Macedon Primary School (see Appendix B – Child Safety Officers’ Roles and Responsibilities, page 6)

4.3 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 volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check. (see Appendix C Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Procedures for a Child Safe Environment page 7)

4.4 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, Child Safety Office 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. (see Appendix D - Procedures for Identifying and Responding to Child Abuse, page 8)

4.5 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 (see Appendix E - Risk Reduction and Management of Child Safety page 10).

4.6 The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers 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 and their parents/carers informed about progress.

4.7 This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian Privacy Law and DET School Privacy Policy.

5. LINKS

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)

[DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework](#)

[School Privacy Policy](#)

[DET Protect Website](#)

6. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or earlier if there are changes in government regulations or DET policies

Appendix A

Macedon Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct

Macedon Primary School community recognises the importance of, and has a responsibility for, ensuring the 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 Macedon Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school. The Principal and school leaders will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, volunteers, contracted service providers and outside agency personnel 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, community volunteers and contracted service providers involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- 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 or 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 Principal or the Leadership Team (Child Safety Officers).
- 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.

All staff, community volunteers, contracted service providers and outside agency personnel are expected to:

- Use educational online platforms or work related contact channels, where appropriate controls are in place, to communicate to students on matters related to school work or extra-curricular activities.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, community volunteers and contracted service providers 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
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

All staff, community volunteers, contracted service providers and outside agency personnel will not:

- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels using any form of social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc,

Appendix B

Macedon Primary School Child Safety Officer Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal along with other members of the School Leadership Team have the role of Child Safety Officers to oversee the child safety policy and procedures and will fulfil the following responsibilities:

Provide 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

Raise awareness

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately
- Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed bi-annually or sooner if there are changes in government regulations or DET policies
- 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.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and those with young carers.
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.

Training and Development

- Have a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference so as to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate and 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 and part time staff.
- Make sure staff members are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

Appendix C

Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Procedures for a Child Safe Environment

Macedon Primary School implements rigorous human resource practices to promote a child safe school environment and reduce the risk of child abuse. The Ministerial Order 870 specifies the following requirements for schools regarding recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that support a child safe school:

1. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
 - a) the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
 - b) 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 must be informed about the school's child safety policy and procedure including the code of conduct
3. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement and school policy, the school must 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 VIT registration;
 - b) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
 - c) the person's history of work involving children
 - 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 must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
 - a) the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
 - b) monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work will be conducted by the Principal and relevant team leader on a regular basis
6. For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct to adhere to child safety standards and supervision requirements expected by the school, DET and the VRQA.
7. Implementing these procedures and practices enables the School Council to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Appendix D

Procedures for Responding to All Forms of Child Abuse

Principals have core responsibility for managing their school's response to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

Ministerial Order No. 870- Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of child abuse in schools, requires that school leadership teams support and empower staff to make a report by having clear policies and procedures to follow, Key points include:

- A staff member can seek advice from the Principal, the Child Safety Officer or any member of the Leadership Team regarding concerns around child safety
- Arrangements will be made to relieve staff from duties while they are making or deciding to make a report as soon as practicable
- Strategies are in place to support staff through the process of making a report
- Written details will be recorded using the relevant templates for Victorian schools.

PRINCIPAL'S or DELEGATE'S CHECKLIST

If there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse concerning a student or staff member at the school, the Principal or next senior leader, is responsible for overseeing the following steps:

Reporting and Recording

- Ensuring that **the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse** have been followed
- Ensuring that your staff complete the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template for all Victorian Schools**
- Undertaking the review process included within the template between 4-6 weeks after a report is made.
(See supporting documents from the DET PROTECT website on page 9)
- All reports to be secured in a confidential file in the school safe

On-going Communication

Ongoing liaison/communication with:

- DHHS Child Protection and Victoria Police
- Regional Office and Student Incident and Recovery Unit (SIRU)
- Parents/carers of all impacted students (where appropriate, following advice from authorities)

If an international student is impacted:

- Liaison with International Education Division (Government schools)

If an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Student is impacted:

- Liaison with Koorie Education Officer

If a staff member is implicated:

- Liaison with Victoria Police
- Ongoing communication and action as set out by the Employee Conduct Branch (Government schools)

Providing On-going Support

Overseeing the development of a short-term action plan for all children impacted by suspected abuse in consultation with:

- The Region and the Student Incident and Recovery Unit (SIRU)

Ensuring ongoing education and support services are provided for all children involved via:

- Formation of a Student Support Group
- Developing, implementing and reviewing a **Student Support Plan** in partnership with children and their parents/carers, Allied Health workers and external support agencies where appropriate (this plan should list appropriate school-level and non-school based supports and should assist students in returning to school)
- Addressing concerns as they arise

Provision of school based wellbeing services

- Continued monitoring of the situation and the health and wellbeing of impacted children and staff members
- Ensuring the provision of ongoing support for the children, families and staff members involved.

Supporting documents from the [DET PROTECT website](#) include:

- Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools
- Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template for all Victorian Schools

Supporting documents from the [DET Child Safety Standards website](#) include:

- Spotting the Warning Signs of Child Abuse: For Staff
- Protecting Children from Child Abuse: For Parents and Carers

These documents are also located inside the Child Safety Standards folder in the main office.

Appendix D

Risk Reduction and Management of Child Safety Table

A key part of a risk management strategy is a risk assessment. The following Risk Assessment Table has been developed for school use. [School Policy & Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy](#). Provides additional resources for risk assessment in schools.

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Severe	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safety Officer role established, maintained and supported by the Principal Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available as part of the Child Safety policy 	Principal, Child Safety Officers	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures Performance management procedures	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy, procedures and strategies are embed into organisational culture of child safety and are reviewed bi-annually Yearly refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module Yearly staff refresher on school’s policy and procedures for Childs safety Standards 	Principal	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module • Yearly refresher of School Code of Conduct on Child Safety Standards 	Principal Leadership Team	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Processes updated to require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal history search • Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety 	Principal, Selection Panel HR Office Manager	Low
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour • Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies 	Principal, Leadership team Grade Teachers	Low
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks • Ensure Code and strategies apply in all school contexts 	Principal, School Council Team Leaders	Low
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher training for frequent contractors 	Principal, Office staff	Low

