
	Policy Name:	Child Safe Environments	First approved:	07-2016
			Last approved:	07-2021
	Responsible:	Leadership Team	Review date:	07-2024

1. Rationale:

- 1.1 Victoria has introduced compulsory minimum standards that will apply to organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from all forms of abuse. The child safe standards form part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry.
- 1.2 Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out specific actions that registered schools need to take to meet the Child Safe Standards.
- 1.3 The child safe environments 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.
- 1.4 This policy will apply to all staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.
- 1.5 This policy will apply across a range of school environments (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

2. Aims: Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

- 2.1 Lyndhurst 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, with particular attention 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.
- 2.2 Lyndhurst Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- 2.3 Lyndhurst 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.
- 2.4 Every person involved in Lyndhurst 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.
- 2.5 In its planning, decision-making and operations, Lyndhurst Primary School will:
 - Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
 - Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
 - Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
 - Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
 - Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
 - Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
 - 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
 - Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
 - Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
 - Value the input of, and communicate regularly with, families and carers.

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3. Implementation:

- 3.1 Lyndhurst Primary School's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.
- 3.2 School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Staff Code of Conduct and with other relevant Standards and Codes. The school's Staff Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. *(Also refer to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics)*
- 3.3 School leaders will communicate with community members to ensure that they understand their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Community members and School Council will comply with the school's Community Code of Conduct and the School Council Code of Conduct.
- 3.4 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. 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. National Criminal History Records checks and Working with Children Checks will be required according to the school's NCHRC and WWC Policy.
- 3.5 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 DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. *(Refer to the school's Mandatory Reporting Policy)*
- 3.6 The school believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes are implemented. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will adopt a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.
- 3.7 The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.
- 3.8 Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. Processes for the collection, use and storage of information is included in school policies. *(Refer to the schools Privacy Policy)*


4. Evaluation:

- 4.1 To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year policy evaluation process.

References:

Definitions: A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870

www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe

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Ministerial Order No 870

<http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf>

Understanding Child Safe Standards

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/understanding-css.aspx>

Child Safe Standards – DHHS

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards>

School Policy Advisory Guide – Duty of Care

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

School Policy Advisory Guide – Child Protection

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>