



# Child Safe Standards Policy

BANYULE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## **Purpose:**

The Child Safe Standards 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.

## **Scope:**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

## **Definitions:**

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

### **Child abuse**

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

### **Child-connected work**

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

### **Child safety**

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**

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority 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**

School staff being an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- a minister of religion.

### **Statement of Commitment:**

- Banyule 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.
- Banyule Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Banyule 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. Particular attention will be 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 Banyule 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.

### **Aims:**

In its planning, decision-making and operations Banyule Primary School will;

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. 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;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

### **Related Policies:**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies outlining school's approach to the Child Safe Standards;

- Duty of Care
- Volunteers
- Visitors
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations
- Yard Duty and Supervision of Students
- Student Engagement
- Camps and Excursions
- Privacy

The school's policies can be found on the school website or a hard copy may be requested from the office.

## **Implementation:**

### **Standard 1: Culture**

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

1. Banyule Primary School will develop and implement a range of policies to ensure child safety.
2. The principal will appoint a staff member with the responsibility for managing child safety issues across the school. This person will be known as the Child Safety Officer.
3. Duties of the Child Safety Officer may include;
  - a) conduct a risk assessment each year and employ a prevent, detect and respond approach
  - b) act as a source of support, advice and expertise on matters of child safety
  - c) liaise with the leadership team to maintain the visibility of child safety
  - d) lead the development of the school's child safety culture
  - e) raise awareness of child safety within the school and community
  - f) ensure policies and programs are communicated
  - g) be alert to the needs of specific children
  - h) encourage a culture amongst the staff of listening to children
  - i) keep detailed, accurate and secure records of concerns and referrals.
4. Student welfare will be a standing item on the agenda for all Professional Learning Team meetings.
5. The principal will promote a confidential reporting culture across the school.
6. The principal will ensure that adequate records of child safety issues are kept.
7. Our school will develop and implement a Code of Conduct for both staff and volunteers.
8. The Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct for staff will be included in the Induction program for new staff.
9. The Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct for volunteers will be published on the school's website.

### **Standard 2: Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment**

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 will comply with the school's Code of Conduct

1. The school will develop a policy and statement of commitment to child safety.
2. The school will ensure adults and children are made aware of their rights and responsibilities.

### **Standard 3: Code of Conduct**

The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

1. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by a Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
2. In addition to the Banyule Primary School Code of Conduct all teaching staff are bound by the VIT Code of Conduct for Professionals. <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/media/documents/imported-files/spl/Code-of-Conduct-2015.pdf>
3. Volunteers, including parent helpers, will be provided with a copy of the Volunteer policy and Code of Conduct prior to commencing any work in our school.
4. The Student Engagement policy outlines an agreed Code of Behaviour and school values for our students.

## **Standard 4: Human Resources**

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.

### **1. Training and supervision**

- a) Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- b) Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- c) The Child Safety policy will be discussed annually by staff to build skills and awareness of staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- d) We also support our staff through ongoing discussions to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.
- e) Through our Induction program all staff are made aware of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, sign code of conduct and conduct mandatory reporting training. Mentors are assigned to new staff to assist with ongoing support, supervision and training.
- f) All volunteers in the school work directly under the supervision of a teacher and are made aware of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct.
- g) New employees will be observed 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.
- h) 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.

### **2. Recruitment**

- a) We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- b) All position description for new positions advertised will include the 'Child Safe Environments' clause as provided in the Recruitment in Schools Guide.
- c) Face to face interviews and thorough reference checks will be conducted for all prospective employees. During the interview process questions will be asked to gain an understanding of the applicants past experiences and motivations for working with children.
- d) The school principal will ensure that reasonable efforts are made to gather, verify and record the following information prior to employment;
  - i. proof of personal identity
  - ii. VIT Registration (for teaching staff)
  - iii. Working with Children Check and any professional qualifications (non-teaching staff)
  - iv. the persons history of work involving children
  - v. referee checks that address the persons suitability for the job and working with children.
- e) All new staff are made aware of the Child Safe policy, procedures and Code of Conduct through the Induction process.
- f) All volunteers required to hold a Working with Children Check must provide evidence of this check. This information is recorded in the Working with Children Check Register.

### **3. Fair procedures for personnel**

- a) The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.
- b) The principal will record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns. All records are securely stored.
- c) If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, the principal will provide updates to children and families on the progress of the allegation and any actions the school takes when appropriate.

### **Standard 5: Reporting and Responding**

1. Teachers are mandated reporters and as such they must follow the procedures outlined in our Child Safety Reporting Policy.
2. The school will take immediate action to respond to a complaint. Following the process outlined in the *Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse*. When responding to an incident the principal will use the *Responding to Suspected Child Abuse* template.
3. A copy of the document *Four Critical Actions for Schools* will be provided to all teachers through the Induction process.
4. All staff are required to complete the Child Protection online training modules mandated by the Education Department.
5. Our staff are provided with resources and support to deal with allegations. We work 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.
6. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved. Refer to the school's Privacy policy.

### **Standard 6: Detect and Prevent**

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.

1. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.
2. 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 and online environments.
3. All staff are provided with information to support them to identify children at risk of abuse and organisational child abuse risks.  
[http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5\\_SchoolsGuide.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf)
4. The Child Safety Officer is responsible for the risk management approach. The Child Safety Officer will raise awareness of potential risks to the leadership team to develop risk mitigation and internal controls.
5. The risk assessment template will be reviewed annually, concurrently with the OHS risk assessment schedule.

## **Standard 7: Empowering Children**

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 (or their parents/carers) informed about progress when appropriate.

1. Our school has developed strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
  - standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
  - healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
  - resilience; and
  - child abuse awareness and prevention.
2. All students in the school will be involved in units of work to develop their understanding about the areas listed above. The content will be documented and delivered through our Student Wellbeing program. These units of work will be tailored for the appropriate age group and presented with child friendly content.
3. We empower children to be active participants in the school decision making processes. We foster student voice and ensure that children feel that their views will be listened to by adults in a respectful way.
4. All classroom will display the Protect poster.
5. Students will be provided with opportunities to give feedback on how safe they feel at school to raise concerns through the student survey conducted each year.
6. The Student Engagement Policy provides the basis for the development of a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment. The Student Engagement Policy outlines the aspirations of our school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour.

### **Confidentiality and privacy:**

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy.

### **Review period:**

This policy and Code of Conduct was endorsed/approved by the school council in March 2019 and is scheduled for review, if legislative or other changes require in the interim, by March 2021.



## Child Safety – Staff Code of Conduct

BANYULE PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Banyule Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children, 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 Banyule Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school environment. They will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.
- All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the appropriate Banyule Primary School Code of Conduct.
- This Code of Conduct applies to all staff, in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

### Acceptable behaviours

As staff involved in child-related work we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

1. upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
2. 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
3. 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/the safety of another child
4. promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
5. promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
6. promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
7. reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer
8. understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
9. if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

## Unacceptable behaviours

As staff involved in child-related work we must not:

1. ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
2. develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
3. exhibit behaviours or engage in physical activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
4. ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
5. discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
6. treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
7. communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
8. photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
9. consume alcohol in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, contrary to DET guidelines and school council approval, or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

This Code of Conduct was endorsed by the Banyule Primary School Council in March 2019.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the school's leadership or Child Safety Officer.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....