

## Child Safe Standards Policy

### Background

The Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse report was released on 15 December 2017. The Child Safe Standards have come into effect as part of the recommendations of this report and detail the compulsory minimum standards for schools, to ensure we protect children from abuse and neglect.

### Guiding Principles

Huntingdale Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, regardless of their age, culture, beliefs, socio-economic circumstances, disability, family living situation, child rearing practices or educational level. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. **There is a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse.**

Huntingdale 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.

**Huntingdale Primary School firmly believes that it is everyone's responsibility- School Council, the Principal, staff, parents, volunteers, students, visitors, and service providers to ensure children are safe.** Every person has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play 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.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Huntingdale 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
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.



## Purpose

To ensure that Huntingdale Primary School:

- Has a Child Safe Standards Policy demonstrating commitment to child safety in the seven standards.
- Are compliant with Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) policies and procedures, the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and Ministerial Order No. 870.
- Develops the values and principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment.
- Details the actions it will take to promote child safety.
- Supports, encourages and enables School Council, the Principal, school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.
- Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- Inform the school community about the Child Safe Standards.

## Implementation

- The Principal has the overall responsibility of implementing this policy, but may delegate certain roles to suitably qualified staff.
- The school understands it has a shared responsibility for implementing the Child Safe Standards. Many external services providers engage with the school. The school understands that these organisations have their own regulatory body to ensure they meet the Child Safe Standards. The school will ensure that they check that these organisations comply with the standards before engaging with them.
- The Child Safe Standards and this policy will be communicated to the school community at least twice a year in the following ways:
  - **School Council-** Child Safe Standards is a standing item on the Council agenda and policies will be reviewed as per school schedule.
  - **Staff-** Briefing at the start of each school year and refresher at a staff meeting mid-year. New staff will have the Child Safe Standards included as part of their induction.
  - **Parents-** information will be included in the newsletter at the beginning of the year and reminders throughout the year. All information regarding the Child Safe Standards will be on the school website.
  - **Students-** As part of the Creating Our Learning Community (COLC) unit of work at the beginning of the year, the Principal Team will brief students on child safety and complete the 'Helping Hand' activity with the classroom teacher.
- The school must implement the following minimum child safety standards as per Ministerial Order No. 870 and will do so in the following ways:



## **Standard 1- Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including thorough effective leadership arrangements**

Huntingdale Primary School will:

- Have goals/strategies in its Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) related to 'Positive Climate for Learning'.
- Create, maintain and monitor a school action plan related to student wellbeing in the school. This is regularly reviewed as part of Leadership Team.
- Assign the overall Student Wellbeing and Management role to the Assistant Principal.
- Ensure there is provision in the school budgets to fund child safety and student welfare.
- Assign student wellbeing and e-Smart as a core role of staff in the school and this will be reflected in the school role statement document. Student wellbeing and safety may form part of teacher and education support staff PDP's (Performance and Development Plan).
- Have a Student Wellbeing Team that meets regularly.
- Have an e-Smart Team that meets at least once a term and a commitment to safe online learning for students.
- Liaise with DET SSS Key Contact to discuss student wellbeing, safety and educational needs.
- Have provision for Student Wellbeing support within the school.
- Supporting all students' safety and wellbeing through the PSD (Program for Students with a Disability) and JLA (Japanese Language Assistants) Programs.
- Assign Student Support yard duty time to teachers to monitor the welfare and safety of students.
- Assign meeting dates in the school calendar to allow for professional development related to child safety and staff training (e.g. Mandatory Reporting Training)
- As part of the induction and mentoring of new staff share and discuss this policy.
- Provision in the school calendar and timetable for COLC (Creating Our Learning Community) and ICU (Intercultural Understandings) which help to promote a culturally sensitive, safe and inclusive environment for children and where children can discuss child safety issues.
- Use of GradeXpert throughout the school to keep a record of student safety issues. Highly confidential issues will be kept in a file in the Principal's Office. Reports from SSS professionals will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Assistant Principal's Office.
- Keep a Communications document so families can know how they can participate in school activities.
- Provide opportunities for parents to have education of child wellbeing and safety issues e.g. e-Smart, Play is the Way.
- 'Welcome to Country' and 'Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians' at each assembly.
- Endeavour to make partnerships with community organisations related to child safety and student wellbeing.
- Review child safety practices each year.
- Review child safety as part of the annual report as per DET guidelines.

## **Standard 2- A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety**

- Huntingdale Primary School has created a Child Safe Policy (this one) and is reviewed as part of the school's three year cycle.
- The following school policies, available on the school website support the Child Safe Standards Policy:
  - Code of Conduct
  - Mandatory Reporting
  - Risk Assessment
  - Student Engagement
  - Working With Children Checks



### **Standard 3- A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children**

- Huntingdale Primary School has devised a Code of Conduct Policy for all community members.
- This will be placed in prominent places throughout the school and on the school website.

### **Standard 4- Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel**

At Huntingdale Primary School we:

- Follow recruiting processes outlined by DET which will adhere to the Child Safe Standards.
- During the application process assess the applicant's:
  - Motivation to work with children
  - Relevant and verifiable child-related work experience
  - Understanding of professional boundaries
  - Communication Skills
- Panels should check the following:
  - Two forms of identification e.g. driver's licence, passport etc.
  - Academic transcripts/qualifications
  - Work history and previous employment details are accurate
  - Background searches using Facebook, LinkedIn and Google
  - Gaps in the applicant's employment history and are there valid reasons for this e.g. travel, study, family leave
- In regards to referees panels should check the following:
  - The applicant has provided the most current employer and/or manager
  - There is not a personal relationship between the applicant's supervisor or manager that may affect the objectivity of the reference
  - Has the referee directly supervised the applicant working with children?
  - Would the person employ them again?
  - Has the referee any concerns with the applicant working with children?
  - Did the referee have any concerns about the applicant adhering to the organisations Code of Conduct?
  - Have the referees observed the applicant managing the behaviour of a child and what did they notice?
  - That any written referee statements are authentic.
- Check that the applicant has any relevant experience working with children outside employment e.g. volunteering, tutoring or coaching?
- Ensure all teachers have a current VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) card. Through the VIT process teachers will undertake a police check (timing deemed by VIT).
- Keep a record of volunteers and have a copy of their Working with Children Check (WWCC).
- Sight WWCC of contractors and other visitors who enter the school.
- Have visitors sign into the school system at the office.
- Ensure all new staff are aware of child safe standards and their obligations for mandatory reporting as part of the induction and mentoring process.
- Provision in the school meeting calendar so that staff can update their Mandatory Reporting Training each year (DET requirement). Provisions will be made in the school calendar of any other professional development sessions we need to undertake related to child safety.
- Include child safety aspects as part of the Parent Induction Program.



### Standard 5- Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

- Huntingdale Primary School has a Mandatory Reporting Policy outlining the school's response to suspected child abuse.
- All staff are trained yearly in this area.
- Staff should consult the Step by Step Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST: [http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/Flowchart\\_Mandatory\\_Reporting\\_Sep\\_2010.pdf](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/stuman/wellbeing/Flowchart_Mandatory_Reporting_Sep_2010.pdf) to assist them with making a report.
- Staff can use resources from the PROTECT website to assist with making a report. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx>  
A hard copy of these resources will be given to staff.
- **All adults** are required to report to police if they know or reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. Failing to meet these obligations can constitute a criminal offence, including a:
  - Failure to disclose a sexual offence
  - Failure to protect a child (where it is known that a person associated with their organisation poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing children).
  - *The failure to protect offence* applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a school will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that school. A person in a position of authority in the school will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so. Organisations other than schools are also covered by the offence. Further information can be obtained at: <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-disclose-offence>
  - A fact sheet can be found at: [https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge\\_cache/emshare/original/public/2018/07/f0/bbce5bd2b/failure\\_to\\_disclose\\_betrayal\\_of\\_trust\\_factsheet\\_2017.pdf](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2018/07/f0/bbce5bd2b/failure_to_disclose_betrayal_of_trust_factsheet_2017.pdf)

### Standard 6- Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse

At Huntingdale Primary School we:

- Monitor sick bay attendances and student absences each month as part of Leadership Team Meetings. Specific incidences, trends and child of concern are discussed and an action plan put in place.
- Have a Duty of Care Policy outlining supervision requirements for students at school activities in and out of the school and online.
- Ask for parent permission to use photographs or video of students for public forums e.g. newspapers, online, newsletters
- Keep photos and videos of students on a secure network.
- Provision for sufficient yard duty staff to be rostered on each recess and lunch and a first aid officer in the Health Centre.
- Ensure planned excursions are camps adhere to the Child Safe Standards.
- Keep risk register as part of OHS requirements.
- Include Child Safe Standards in our risk registers for Camps and Excursions.
- Risks are reviewed after any incidences and adjustments made.
- Ensure provisions are made for staff training and professional development around child safety.



- Ensure our school grounds are safe for children. For example, all external doors and most storerooms have locks on the outside but can be opened from the inside so children cannot be trapped, all internal doors do not have locks so children can easily get out

### **Standard 7- Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children**

At Huntingdale Primary School we:

- Display the school values- Kindness, Courage, Creativity and Personal Best throughout the school and weave these throughout learning in the school.
- Teach the 'Play is the Way' philosophy throughout the school with reference to the following virtues:
  - It takes great strength to be sensible
  - Be brave- participate to progress
  - Pursue your personal best no matter who you work with
  - Have reasons for the things you say and do
  - Treat others as you would like them to treat you
- Teach a dedicated SWB session each week (as a minimum).
- Classroom teachers will teach as part of our 'Creating Our Learning Community' (COLC) the Helping Hand Activity. On each finger students write someone they can talk to if they have a problem or are upset. The thumb is the Principal. Child safety and understanding child abuse will be discussed during this session, appropriate to the year level of the child.
- Teach as part of the curriculum healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality), resilience and child abuse awareness and prevention.
- Run targeted SWB Programs to help empower vulnerable children in our school.

### **Resources**

The following resources can be accessed to support this policy:

[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes)

[www.education.vic.gov.au/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/protect)

### **Document Status**

<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>School Council Ratification</b>	<b>Next Review</b>
October 2018	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2018	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2020