

# CAMPBELLFIELD HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY



**“At CHPS we are committed to developing safe, respectful, responsible and successful learners by promoting a stimulating, positive and inclusive environment”**

### **Our commitment to Child Safety**

At Campbellfield Heights Primary School we are committed to Child Safety. We want all our students to be safe, happy, resilient and empowered. At CHPS we support and respect all individuals, including students, staff and volunteers. We have a zero tolerance for Child Abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. We are committed to preventing child abuse by identifying risk factors early and removing and reducing these risks for children. Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Our school is also committed to regularly training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. Here at CHPS we are committed to protecting and respecting the culture of our Aboriginal and our culturally and/or linguistically diverse students as well as this we ensure we provide a safe and inclusive environment for students with a disability. Our school has extensive policies and procedures and training in place that supports all staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments. These policies and procedures are reviewed regularly.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

### **Our students/children**

This policy is intended to empower children who are the vital participants in our school. 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. We promote diversity and tolerance at our school and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistic diverse backgrounds
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate

### **Our staff and volunteers**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school. All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standard required when working with children.

### **Training and support**

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

Our school aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegation of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train and support our staff and volunteers to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

New employee and volunteers will be supported to ensure they understand our schools 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 (refer to Staff handbook – Code of Conduct). 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.

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 organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

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

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.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks on teaching staff to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. 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.

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.

#### **Fair procedures for personnel**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to all personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

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

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 a school take.

#### **Privacy**

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. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

#### **Legislative responsibilities**

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **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.
- **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.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

#### **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.

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).

#### **Allegations, concerns and complaints**

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has policies and practices (**refer to Mandatory reporting policy & Identifying & Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools Guidance (DET website)**) in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately 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.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour.

Maritsa Rousalis our Student Well Being Officer is our **Child Safety Officer** with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents, community members or children. All staff and volunteers must notify the Child Safety Officer, Principal or Assistant Principal with any Allegations, concerns and complaints. Processes are outlined in more detail in our Mandatory Reporting Policy & The Identifying & Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools Guidance (DET Website). <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

Please also refer to the **FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS - Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse Guide**

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

All staff can also contact the following services if they have heard or seen something of concern and need support

**Speak Up** – DET anonymous reporting line – 1800 633 462

**EAP** – Counselling Support for DET staff – 1800 337 068

**All adults must advise our School Child Safety Officer (Ms Maritsa Rousalis – Student Well Being) of any reports/allegations/incidents of suspected Child abuse. In her absence a member of the leadership team (Jo Howard-Principal, Susie Bellizia – Assistant Principal) should be advised.**

#### **Regular review**

This policy will be reviewed annually 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.

*This document to be read in conjunction with other relevant CHPS and DET policies, including CHPS Mandatory Reporting Policy, CHPS Child Safe Code of Conduct.*

*This document has been reviewed and ratified by School Council 28/11/2018*

# CAMPBELLFIELD HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

## CHILD SAFETY - CODE OF CONDUCT



**“At CHPS we are committed to developing safe, respectful, responsible and successful learners by promoting a stimulating, positive and inclusive environment”**

Campbellfield Heights Primary School is committed to the safety and well-being of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for ensuring our school is 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, DET policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal along with the Child Safety Officer will support the implementation and monitoring of the code of conduct and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe learning environments. The Principal along with the Child Safety Officer 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 Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The code of conduct applies in all schools situations, including school camps, excursions and in the use of digital technology and social media.

**All Campbellfield Heights Primary School Staff, Volunteers, contractors and other School Community Members involved in child-related work are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:**

- adhering to the school’s child safe policy and upholding the school’s statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, 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
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child’s self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the child safety officer (Maritsa Rousalis) or school’s leadership team (Jo Howard, Susie Bellizia)
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- reporting any child safety concerns to the child safety officer (Maritsa Rousalis) or school’s leadership team (Jo Howard, Susie Bellizia)
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

**All Campbellfield Heights Primary School Staff, Volunteers, contractors and other School Community Members MUST NOT:**

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)

- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the education, therapeutic or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by an adult towards students when they appear to be inappropriate
- 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 therapeutic setting
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors, one to one in cars)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact which children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership or child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

Any person in Breach of this Code of Conduct will be made subject to an investigation, and the appropriate authorities will be informed.

If you believe a person is in Breach of this Code of Conduct you are required to speak to the Schools Child Safety Officer or Leadership Team – please refer to Child Safety Policy for details.

**This policy will be reviewed annually**

***This document is to be read in conjunction with CHPS Child Safety Policy, Staff Handbook and CHPS Mandatory Reporting Policy.***

***This document has been reviewed and ratified by School Council 28/11/2018***