

# 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.

#### Reportable Conduct

Our school will notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child; or
- Misconduct involving any of the above.

#### 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 Engagement & Well Being Leader 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 policy was last ratified by School Council on the **19<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

*Signed by:*

*School Council President:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Faye Khalil*

*Principal:* \_\_\_\_\_ *(Jo Howard)*

*Date: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020*