

# 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 and children who are vulnerable.

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.**

### **Purpose**

Our Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organization 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 in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

### **Definitions**

#### **Child abuse**

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

#### **Child-connected work**

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training 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 for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions).

### **School staff**

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

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

### **Child Safe Principles**

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Campbellfield Heights 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 concerns
- 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
- Make and maintain records of Child Safe compliance evidence

### **Strategies to embed a child safe culture**

Our school encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. All child safety documents, are readily available online and in hard copy (School Office/Staff room) for all staff and students to read at any time.

### **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 and those vulnerable are safe and can participate

### **Child safety is everyone's responsibility**

**All Campbellfield Heights Primary School staff** are required to:

- Read & Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Policy & Code of Conduct
- Read & Act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary
- Sign and agreed that they have read the above documents
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations (Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults), Duty of care (applies to all school staff), Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, school counsellors and registered doctors and nurses), Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school), Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch), Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year (All DET employed staff)

#### **School leadership will:**

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

#### **School councils and school council members will:**

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes

#### **Child Safe Officer (in consultation with leadership/staff/students/school council):**

- is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register annually
- is responsible for ensuring all child safe policies and documents are made publically available
- providing training to new staff/existing staff on schools Child Safe protocols
- is responsible for the monitoring of the schools compliance with the Child Safe Standards

#### **Human resources recruitment practices**

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 and some contractors, including volunteers, are required to hold a VIT/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.

#### **Training and Supervision**

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 during induction and throughout the year to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. New employee and volunteers will be inducted into the school, supported and supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored through regular training and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels and in accordance with our school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

#### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

At Campbellfield Heights Primary School we have clear expectations for all staff, visitors and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including school council employees) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Our school will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. Our school will always take action to respond to a

complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, in accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Campbellfield Heights Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

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 school's Child Safety Officer** with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents, community members or children. All staff, visitors, contractors and volunteers must notify the Child Safety Officer (in her absence) The Principal or Assistant Principal with any Allegations, concerns and complaints. Processes are outlined in more detail in our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy The Identifying & Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools guide (DET website) <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

#### **Listening to, communicating with and empowering children**

Campbellfield Heights Primary 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. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse on schools website, on bulletin boards and displays around school grounds.

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 and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

**The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:**

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents
- Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters/social media/communication tools will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety
- Our school promotes the Child Safe Standards, by engaging in age-appropriate discussions of child safety with students, students making and displaying their own child safety network, child safety policies and procedures used and displayed are written in child-friendly language or a language other than English that is relevant to your school, the Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained parent information sessions and throughout the year

**The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:**

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school (SWPBS, Student Well-Being & Engagement Policy, Online policies)
- healthy and respectful relationships (First 20 days, RRRR weekly timetabled lessons, Anti-Bullying curriculum, NAIDOC, EID, Harmony Day, Are you ok day?, Words with Friends)
- resilience (Bright Futures, Breakthru, Kimochis, Well Being Week)
- child abuse awareness and prevention (Child Protection Week, Daniel Morecombe Safety lessons)

#### **Communications**

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website [link here](#)
- Regular reminders to school community of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school meetings
- Parent information sessions and volunteer/visitors induction processes
- School communication tools (newsletters, apps, social media) and noticeboards

### 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 schools 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. Our school will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in our school's Child Safe Risk assessment register.

### Support for staff

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 – 1300 361 008

**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 by the Child Safe Officer and approved by the Principal 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 the following CHPS/DET Policies & Documents

- CHPS Code of Conduct
- CHPS Student Child Safe Code of Conduct
- CHPS Visitors & Volunteers Policies
- CHPS Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf)  
[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions\\_ChildAbuse.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_SSO.pdf)  
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- The Identifying & Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools guide (DET website)  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

***This document has been reviewed by Child Safe Officer Maritsa Rousalis & Principal Jo Howard and ratified by School Council 15/07/2020***

This policy was last ratified by School Council on the **15<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

*Signed by:*

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

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

*Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020*