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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Implementation Date: 31 October 2016
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1. Purpose
The purpose of this policy is to explain how the school will embed a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse. Related school policies include, but are not confined to, duty of care, mandatory reporting, student engagement, and risk management.

2. Background
Ministerial Order No. 870: Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools

In 2016, the minister of education signed the above order. Its objective is to embed a culture of no tolerance for child abuse in registered schools. In the order, child abuse includes:
- Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming.
- The infliction of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm.
- The serious neglect of a child.

Child safety encompasses those matters that relate to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

The order outlines seven standards to be met by a registered school. These are:

1. Embedding an organisational culture of child safety;
2. A child-safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety;
3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations of what is appropriate behaviour;
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel;
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse;
7. Strategies to promote the participation and the empowerment of children.

3. The Seven Standards
Standard 1: Embedding an organisational culture of child safety
As a registered government primary school we have a legal and moral responsibility for keeping our children safe. At Strathmerton Primary School we are committed to taking

reasonable steps to accommodate the needs of all children irrespective of their culture, language, disability or vulnerability.

Standard 2: A child-safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety

At Strathmerton Primary School we have in place policies and procedures which address the issue of child safety. The school council is responsible for the implementation of these policies. Our current policies within the school include the child safe code of conduct, visitor's policy, mandatory reporting policy, critical incident & recovery policy, duty of care policy, cybersafety and wellbeing policy, social media policy, working with children check policy and yard duty policy. These form part of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requirements. The policies are formulated with staff, parents and the school council committee. The principal has the key responsibility for ensuring the government's child safe agenda.

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations of what is appropriate behaviour

School staff are expected and required to not engage in child abuse as defined by Ministerial Order No. 870. Further, school staff are expected and required to apply child safety practices to their professional activities. For example:

Acceptable behaviours
All staff, volunteers and school council members are responsible for supporting 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 (for example, during personal care activities);
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child;
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership;
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership;
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958;
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual office by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

Unacceptable behaviours
Staff and volunteers must not:
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- Develop any 'special' 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);
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- 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;
- 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 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 knowledge and/or consent of 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/devices such as a personal email account;
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, 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.

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Screening
Staff involved in child-connected work at Strathmerton Primary School must have an up to date 'Working With Children Check', proof of their identity and qualifications, an historical record of their work involving children and references which address their suitability for working with children.

Supervision
The principal must be satisfied that staff involved with child-connected work remain suited to that employment both initially and in an on-going sense.

Training
Induction of new staff engaged in child-connected work will include being briefed on the intent and detail of the child safe policy. In particular, Standard 3, above.

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
Refer to the school's policy on Mandatory Reporting.

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

CHILD SAFE RISK MANAGEMENT – STRATHMERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Risk Event or Environment	Existing Management strategies or internal controls	Likelih ood	Conseq uence	Current risk assess ment	New risk management controls or internal controls	Who is responsibl e?	Residual risk
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possibl e	Severe	Very High	• Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed • Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures Performance management procedures	Unlikely	Severe	High	• Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed • Refresher training for staff – e.g. eLearning mandatory reporting module	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possibl e	Major	High	• Refresher training for staff – e.g. eLearning mandatory reporting module	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Processes updated to require: • Criminal history search • Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety	Principal, School Council President	Low
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possibl e	Moderat e	Medium	• Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour • Ensure appropriate settings on all	Principal, School Council President	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing Management strategies or internal controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk assessment	New risk management controls or internal controls	Who is responsible?	Residual risk
					student technologies		
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	• Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks • Ensure code of conduct and strategies apply in all school contexts	Principal, School Council President	Low
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	• Refresher training for frequent contractors & Visitors policy for signing in at the school	Principal, School Council President	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing Management strategies or internal controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk assessment	New risk management controls or internal controls	Who is responsible?	Residual risk

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and the empowerment of children

Standard 7 is met through five strategies, although not limited to these. They are: the Bravehearts program, Personal Development program for the senior students, the Student Representative Council, volunteering work and our teaching and learning approach.

1.Bravehearts program

The Bravehearts organisation visits the school and presents to the junior students on an annual basis. Its program is all about empowering students to feel safe and how to respond to inappropriate attention.

2. Personal Development program

This annual program is designed and implemented by a health promotion officer from the local district health service who visits the school for two, 2 hour sessions. These sessions

are spaced at least a week apart for students to reflect upon and ask questions if needed about relationships and puberty.

3. Student Representative Council
At the start of each year the Years 1-6 students elect eight of their own senior students to the SRC for that year. The council comprises a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, along with four committee members.
The council is responsible for decision making regarding their learning, fundraising and extra-curricular activities to promote a healthy lifestyle, hosting assembly and involvement in discussions about the nature of the work they will undertake at school.
This group meets regularly and liaises with the classroom teachers, Parents & Friends group and the principal.

4. Volunteering work
All senior students participate in the local Meals on Wheels program. These students acquire appropriate skills in dealing with less fortunate people. The students gain a feeling of empowerment by being responsible and contributing citizens, whilst being aware of the strategies needed for a safe and secure environment to participate in this program.

5. Teaching and Learning
Through the school's positive behaviours program, all students are specifically taught the values of Supporting Each Other, Trying Your Best, Acting Safely and Respect. The students are supported in a positive and safe environment, where feeling secure at school is the norm. All students are actively encouraged to speak to any staff member if they have concerns of safety or fear.

Greg Brooks   Geoff Weppner
School Council President   Principal

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Date: ……………………..   Date: …………………………..