

CODE OF CONDUCT: CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is unacceptable. Ensuring children's safety is a top priority for the Victorian Government and Woodlands Primary School.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence
- a grooming offence; or
- the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect.

Our aim is to create a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice. To strengthen existing approaches to preventing and responding to child abuse and provide for consistency in how these issues are managed. We all have a responsibility for keeping children safe.

All registered schools are required to develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school. At Woodlands Primary school we will:

- embed a culture of child safety at the school
- allocate roles and responsibilities to ensure child safe practices are adhered to
- inform the school community about the strategies being employed at the school

WHAT IS ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO CHILD SAFETY?

Embedding an organisational culture of child safety is critical to reducing the risk of child abuse in schools.

To successfully embed a culture of child safety, a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse** must be led by the school council. This commitment must be shared, openly and transparently, by all members of the school community, including staff (including school employees, contractors and volunteers), parents and families, visitors and child.

All staff, volunteers and council members of Woodlands Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

All personnel of Woodlands Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Woodlands Primary School's Child Safe Environment Policy at all times / upholding Woodlands Primary School's statement of commitment to child safety at all time
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone 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 and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal 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 left alone with a child

- reporting any allegations of child abuse to a member of Woodlands Primary School's Principal Class team and ensure any allegation reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to a member of Woodlands Primary School's Principal Class team, if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.
- **Staff and volunteers must not:**
- 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)
- 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, because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or another urgent matter.
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Woodlands Primary School Principal Class team.

NB: These procedures are not intended to:

- prohibit or discourage any school staff from reporting an allegation of **child abuse** to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of **child abuse** ; or
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of **child abuse** .

IN THE CASE OF AN ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE, YOU WILL:

1. inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting);
2. protect within reasonable means any child connected to the alleged **child abuse** until the allegation is resolved; and
3. make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of **child abuse** and the school's response to it.
4. **phone 000 if you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse.**

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual mandate review cycle.

CERTIFICATION

This policy was adopted at the School Council Meeting held at Woodlands Primary School, October 2016

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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