



Child Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Langwarrin Park Primary School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation. It is to ensure that Langwarrin Park Primary School is an inclusive, safe and orderly environment for all students and to keep children safe from harm and allow every student to THRIVE.

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.

This policy has been developed in accordance with Ministerial order 870. This policy should be read in conjunction with Duty of Care Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, and Child Safe Incident Form, Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure. Langwarrin Park Primary School welcomes feedback on this policy from the school community.

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
- a child's exposure to family violence

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:

- the school grounds
- 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, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events)

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).

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

At Langwarrin Park Primary School our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

- Respect – for ourselves and others – Caring for, understanding, accepting and appreciating ourselves and others.
- Resilience– Bouncing back from difficulties and disappointments. Accepting challenges, trying hard and not giving up easily
- Citizenship- ¹

At Langwarrin Park Primary School we are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We support and respect all children. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and of all children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. We regularly provide training and educate staff on child abuse risks. We have a zero tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner.

Langwarrin Park Primary School ensures that all necessary resources are available to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations to act in the best interest of our students and keep them safe from harm.

Every person involved in Langwarrin Park Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

All teaching staff are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, which includes a police check. All non-teaching staff, external providers and volunteers are also required to

have a current Working With Children Check. Langwarrin Park Primary School has a database of all required documentation. Langwarrin Park Primary School has a Child Safety Officer to ensure compliance with this policy.

Child safety principles

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Langwarrin Park Primary School will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. 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;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

POLICY

Strategies to embed a child safe culture

Langwarrin Park Primary's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct,, the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures , [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available online and in hard copy for all staff and students to read at any time.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- 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
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - 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, 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)
 - For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of Langwarrin Park Primary's child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the Principal and Assistant Principals) 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 school leadership meetings and staff 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.

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As part of Langwarrin Park Primary's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document. A Child Safety Google form needs to be completed annually to indicate that they have read these documents and agree to abide by them..
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document

As part of Langwarrin Park Primary's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **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, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active 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 in 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 and Torres Strait Islander and Torres Strait Islander children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our staff and volunteers

Our Code of Conduct guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Training and supervision

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

- Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. This training occurs annually or more often as required.
- We support our staff and volunteers to:
 - develop their skills to protect children from abuse
 - promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
 - promote the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds
 - promote the safety of children with a disability.
- New employees and volunteers will be inducted to ensure they understand our school's 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 (please refer to this school's Child Safety Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).
- Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, and DET Emergency Management, as required.

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to 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 documentation, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

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.

Roles and Responsibilities

School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

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- The Child Safety Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 2 years
- The Child Safety Officer is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the School Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Child Safety Officer is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Langwarrin Park Primary's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register.

Recruitment

Langwarrin Park Primary School follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the [Department's website](#).

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with Child Safe Standards and Code of Conduct.

Langwarrin Park Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. 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.
- We encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information.
- We carry out reference checks and police record checks 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.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff 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. Immediate actions should include reporting their

concerns to the Child Safety Officer or PCO class who will work with them to report the incident to the appropriate channels, which may include:-DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Langwarrin Park Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The 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, Langwarrin Park Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

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.²
- 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.

Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

Langwarrin Park 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 by discussion with their teacher, the wellbeing team or through links on the school's website.

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

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

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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 on our website
- PROTECT Child Safety will be publicised to staff at school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community that we are a Child safe school

The school will use its THRIVE program to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

THRIVE is the umbrella program which encompasses all of our wellbeing and positive education programs, including Respectful Relationships.

Communications

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

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion
- Discussion of our Child Safe obligations and protocols during parent helper inductions, for student work placements and on school tours with prospective parents.

Confidentiality and privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

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- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)
- DET Child Safe Standards: Creating a Safe Environment
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/safeenviro.aspx>
- DET PROTECT
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	It is scheduled for review in March 2024