

Child Safe Policy



Riddells Creek Primary School

Background

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce seven child safe standards (the Standards) into law. The Standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria.

Ministerial Order No. 870 provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards.

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Riddells Creek Primary School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Safety Program designed to keep children safe.

The School has documented a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. At Riddells Creek Primary we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its Child Safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant Child Safety laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Child Safe Principles

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, Direct Contact Volunteers*, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility
9. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community
10. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
11. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support

*Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in School camps and excursions, incursions, coaching sporting teams, guest speakers, or assisting in learning activities.

Objectives

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote Child Safety within the School
- the creation of a positive and robust Child Safety culture
- the promotion and open discussion of Child Safety issues within the School
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to Child Safety in Victoria

Child Safety and Protection Program

Riddells Creek Primary is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safety and Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Safety and Reporting Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

1. clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
2. clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
3. strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report Child Safety matters
4. procedures for recruiting and screening School Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers
5. student wellbeing strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
6. policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities
7. a Child Safety training program
8. information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
9. guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
10. policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
11. a system for continuous improvement and review

As a part of Riddells Creek Primary's induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Safety and Reporting Program.

All staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and School Council members are provided with additional, ongoing Child Safety training at least annually.

Staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers are supported and supervised by RPPS senior staff to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to Child Safety.

Responsibilities

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At Riddells Creek Primary all members of the School Council and staff, as well as direct and indirect volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

School Council

Each member of the School Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Safety and Reporting Program and the Child Safe Policy to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal accountable for effective implementation.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that the Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Safety and Reporting Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safety culture is maintained within the School.

The School's Child Safety Officer

The Principal, and Assistant Principal as the Child Safety Officer, receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child safety within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Staff Members

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety and Reporting Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the School's Child Safety Officer.

Direct Contact Volunteers

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the School's Child Safety Officer.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers (or 'Indirect Volunteers') are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. All Indirect

Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All Indirect Volunteers are required by the School to be familiar with the Child Safe Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with School administrative functions or guest speakers.

Third Party Contractors

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches, guest speakers, exam invigilators, any employees engaged by the Riddells Creek Primary Parents Association and school cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

The School only uses Third Party Contractors that have undergone an extensive due diligence process that includes provision of our Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Direct Contact Contractors are:

- those who have direct contact** with students during the normal course of their work
- those who may be in a position to establish a relationship of trust with a student notwithstanding that unsupervised access to students would be rare (for example full-time maintenance personnel)
- any contractors whom a school is legally required to screen

**The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact
- face to face contact
- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication
- contact by email or other electronic communication

Indirect Contact Contractors are:

Indirect Contact Contractors are those contractors who do not meet the definition of "Direct Contact Contractor". Refer to Third Party Contractors' Responsibilities for more information.

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The School only uses third party contractors that have undergone an extensive due diligence process that includes provision of our Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

External Education Providers are:

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment. All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required to be familiar with our Child Safety Policy. Riddells Creek Primary may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

Reporting Concerns

Our Child Safety Program provides detailed guidance for members of the School Council, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report

child abuse concerns to our School's nominated Child Safety Officer. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, students, parents/guardians or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact the School's Child Safety Officer.

Our Child Safety Officer may be contacted via the Front Office or on 93039335. Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis' and all Personal Information will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Privacy Policy.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Duty of Care
- Statement of Commitment to Safety
- Code of Conduct
- School values and philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy
- Volunteers Policy
- External Contractors Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Inclusion and diversity Policy

Review Cycle

School Council Approved on:	Signed by School Council President:	Scheduled for review:
August 2019		August 2021