

VILLAGE SCHOOL- CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Policy Statement

Village School is committed to being a Child Safe organisation and embedding a child safe culture into our processes and procedures. This is to ensure that all children who attend the school are safe at all times. All children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, sexual orientation, or family or social background have equal rights to protection from abuse. Village School is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct policy outlines a commitment by the school to ensure that all workplace participants (including staff, volunteers, contractors, outside organisations and members of the School Board) observe child safe principles and expectations.

Village School has zero tolerance for child abuse and all staff employed by Village School are responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care, and to report information about suspected child abuse. The school has policies and procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in the school environment apply to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment.

Purpose

To identify the behaviours we will adopt to comply with the Victorian Government's 11 Child Safety Standards.

Scope

All Village School staff, volunteers and members of the School Board must abide by the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Standard #1

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

We will be culturally safe and respect the diverse and unique identities of Aboriginal children and young people in the following ways:

- At the beginning of our daily group meetings, and weekly whole school meeting we begin with an acknowledgement to country.
- During meetings we encourage everyone to speak about their culture.
- Establish relationships to build trust.
- Implement email signatures stating a recognition to the Aboriginal land we are on.
- Display first nations flags on the property.
- Hold Cultural Days to understand more about Aboriginal culture.
- Having a zero tolerance of discrimination.

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Standard #2

Child safety and well-being are embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and ensuring that it is embedded in our organisational cultural DNA in the following ways.

- Included in our staff induction program and employment documents.
- Communicated and documented at weekly staff meetings and weekly student focus meetings.
- The Child Safe policy is published on our website.
- We have our Standards displayed in our learning spaces.
- We have displayed a 'Child Safe' poster at reception.
- Employed a Mental Health nurse and a School Student/Family Counsellor.
- We have appointed an additional Child Safety Officer in addition to the Principal.

Standard #3

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.

- Through student led whole school meetings and daily class meetings.
- Village school has a culture based around mutual respect as referred to in our Philosophy document. Adults are referred to by their first names. No school areas are off limits to students. We have no 'staff room', rather we have a 'kitchen' where all are welcome.
- Everyone treated the same. Teachers put up their hands to speak during student led meetings and must wait their turn. If the students take their shoes off, the teachers do too.
- We encourage our students to use the 'Child Safe Bingo' card to determine whether our organisation is safe.
- Democratic schooling and decision making through voting on issues such as class preferences about themes, camps, school issues.
- Encouraging children to have a say and participate in all relevant organisational activities, especially on issues that are important to them.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or worried about their safety or the safety of another child.

Standard #4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well-being.

- The school hosts events such as cyber safety information evenings for parents.

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- Child safety information and policies are available to be viewed on our website, or in hardcopy at school.
- Community and families are kept informed about child safety and well-being through the appointment of our new Mental Health nurse and School Student/Family Counsellor.
- New families will receive information about child safety and well-being through their enrolment information pack.
- New electronic gates have been installed that close while the children are at school for safety.
- Body safety and child safe posters displayed in Office Reception area and classrooms.

Standard #5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

- Students have a say in their learning.
- The diverse needs of students are met by allowing them choice in ways to access the curriculum – differentiated and adjustments to suit the learner’s needs.
- We discuss with the children the difference between equality and equity. For example, fairness means not that everyone gets the same thing, but rather everyone gets what they need.
- We promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability, for example, during personal care activities.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example, having a zero tolerance of discrimination.

Standard #6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and well-being values in practice.

- All teachers must hold a VIT registration.
- All learning support, contractors and volunteers must have a Working with Children Check.
- Staff employed by the school have to sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- During recruitment phase, future employees will be vetted for suitability to work with children through thorough reference checking and interview questions.
- We have a democratic hiring process, where we have potential teachers take a class and then the Leadership team asks the students and staff for input following the lessons.
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.

Standard #7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

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- Have a child friendly focussed flow chart to inform our students, families and staff of the process for reporting any child safety issues.
- We are transitioning to using uEducateUs for reporting incidents and will train staff on how to use the system for reporting.
- Whole school meeting and class meeting to discuss with the children how and who to report an incident to. What is making the child feel unsafe? And what to do about it?
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to one of Village School's Child Safety Officer, who will ensure any allegation is reported.
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child/ren are safe.

Standard #8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

- Always adhering to Village School's Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Child Protection Manual at all times.
- All teaching staff complete annual Mandatory Reporting training.
- All staff completed Child Safe training in the new 11 Victorian Standards.
- Volunteers must have a valid Working With Children Check to assist in school events.
- All staff required to keep their First Aid current.

Standard #9

Physical and online environments promote safety and well-being while minimizing the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

- In accordance with our IT policy, students can only be online when there is an adult present.
- Students must sign an IT online usage agreement at enrolment time, or yearly for existing students.
- The librarian runs a CyberSafety unit with all students yearly.
- We maintain a Risk Register to identify positive risks and ways to mitigate them.
- First aid major incidents are recorded and monitored to see if there is a common thread for injuries.
- All gates are locked during school hours.
- Visitors need to sign in at the office.
- Teaching staff monitor before school and after school pick up and drop off to ensure that all children are picked up by the authorised parent/guardian. If children are going home with someone other than the authorised parent, then the office needs to be notified in writing to inform the teacher on duty. Ashley to remind parents.

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- Teacher on duty will bring children to the office at 3.45 if they have not been collected to wait for their parents there in safety. A phone call will be made to the parents to confirm someone is collecting their child.

Standard #10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

- All staff will review the Child Safe Standards annually, or when current legislation changes.
- Ensure there is a review of child safety and wellbeing policies and practices after any significant child safety incident and improvements are put in place where needed.
- Report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to the Board, staff, volunteers, the school community, families and students.

Standard #11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

These are the policies that we have that are reviewed and approved annually by the School Board:

- Child Protection Manual
- Child Safe Policy
- Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Student Welfare Policy

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 that may be construed as unnecessarily physical, for example, inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example, while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area.
- Expose children to inappropriate literature or online material.
- Put children at risk of abuse, for example, by locking doors.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in open discussion 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, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.

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- Have contact with a child or their family outside of Village School without the child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent, for example, no babysitting. This would exclude board/staff members such as parents, grandparents and other relatives who would have ongoing relationships, which would be expected and known by the community. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street is appropriate.
- Have any online contact with a child or their family, unless necessary, for example, providing families with e-newsletters.
- 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 of conduct to one of the Village School's Child Safety Officers or the Principal.

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Acceptance of Child Safety Code of Conduct

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct and to report any Child Safety concerns to the Principal or a nominated Child Safety Officer.

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Breach of Policy

Breach of this policy shall be considered, either misconduct, serious misconduct or gross misconduct, depending on the circumstances, and may result in disciplinary action which may lead to termination of employment.

If staff are aware of any potential breaches of policy, they are advised to speak with the Principal.

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Reference Documents

Village School Policies	Agreements, Acts & Regulations
Child Safe Policy	Australian Professional standards for Teachers
Child Protection Manual	Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005
Child Protection - Mandatory Reporting Policy	Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe) Act 2015 (Vic)
Student Welfare Policy	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
First Aid Policy	Child and Wellbeing and Safety Amendment Act 2015 (Vic)
	Ministerial Order 870

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