



Child Safe Policy

PURPOSE

- Surrey Hills Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and has a zero tolerance for child abuse.
- The school provides a child safe environment where children feel safe and are safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- Cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the provision of a safe environment for children with a disability is a shared responsibility.

IMPLEMENTATION

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. This commitment is the primary focus of our care and decision making.

In its planning, decision making and operations, Surrey Hills Primary School:

- Has developed a Child Safe Code of Conduct to include Acceptable and Unacceptable behaviour with respect to child safety and child abuse;
- Takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Observes the school's core values of: Respect, Responsibility, Excellence, Honesty and Fairness and Tolerance and Understanding which **underpin our commitment to child safety and the Child Safety Standards**
- Fosters a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risk of harm to children;
- Respects diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provides written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engages on the most suitable people to work with children and high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensures children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Reports suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Shares information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and

Values the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

Surrey Hills Primary School ensures:

- Compliance with Ministerial Order No. 870 and the Child Safety Standards and with the reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law.
- Staff and volunteers abide by the Child Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
- Processes are in place to protect children from child abuse.
- Procedures are in place to enable all staff and volunteers as well as parents/carers and children, to raise any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- Staff (including contractors), volunteers, visitors to the school and parents/carers, understand the school's child safety guidelines and how to behave appropriately with and towards children.

- Staff and volunteers are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- Staff and volunteers are supported to: -
 - Develop their skills to protect children from abuse
 - Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.
- New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand the school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. It is also for the purpose of checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate with reference to the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported depending on the severity and urgency of the matter through appropriate channels which may include:
 - The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - Child Protection Victoria Police.

At Surrey Hills Primary School:

- Students are empowered and are vital and active participants.
- Students are listened to and views are respected. Students are involved when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affecting them.
- We promote cultural safety; participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

This policy as well as our Child Safety Code of Conduct guides the school's staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation and covers all school environments both during and outside of school hours, including any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School Council or the Principal.

Recruitment:

- We take reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children.
- Selection criteria and advertisements clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. When recruiting staff and volunteers we are aware that we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

Legal Obligations:

- All people engaged in child-connected work, including volunteers, hold a current Working with Children Check.
- When employing staff, reference checks and police record checks are conducted.
- All teachers are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- Allegations of abuse and safety concerns are recorded using the forms:
 - Child Safety Incident Report form CS1 and/or
 - DHHS Child Protection/Police/Child FIRST Report CS2
- Records are confidential and securely stored.

Fair Procedures for Personnel:

- The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action is thorough, transparent, and based upon evidence.
- If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.
- 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. The school has 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 access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities:

This school takes its 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 police.

Failure to protect: A person in a position of authority in an organisation will commit this offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Risk Management:

The school proactively follows the Child Safety Standards to minimize risk. This is underpinned by the schools Risk Management Policy.

The school has risk management strategies to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks which include risks posed by physical environments (for example doors that can lock) and online environments (for example no staff member or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

The school's risk management includes:

- The **Child Safety Code of Conduct** – outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour with respect to child safety and child abuse. The Child Safety Code of Conduct is publically available.
- Screening as part of the staff recruitment process
- Sign in processes at the school office
- Working with Children Checks, Police Record Checks, Reference Checks
- On and off site supervision of children during recess and lunch breaks as well 15 minutes before and after school; staff carry mobile phones
- ICT eSmart Policy for students
- Teacher supervision of student internet usage and authorisation of the upload of material
- Protocols to ensure children do not move around the school individually during class time
- Out of bounds areas in the school to ensure that children are not placed at risk

Staff and volunteer training.

DEFINITIONS

School staff means:

An individual working in a school environment who is:

- Employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ERT Act) in the government teaching service or
- Employed under a contract of service by the school council under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

School environment includes:

- All on site locations both indoors and outdoors
- All other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events as well as bus travel)
- Online school environments (including email and intranet systems).

Child means:

- A child enrolled as a student at the school

Child connected work means:

- Work authorised by the governing school authority (the Principal) and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving –
 - A sexual offense or
 - An offense under section 49B of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- The infliction on a child of –
 - Physical violence; or
 - Serious emotional or psychological harm
 - Serious neglect of a child

Child Safety Officer is:

A person at this school who has knowledge of child safety issues, and could be a point of for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following any significant incident.

REFERENCES

Other policies which underpin this policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Student Supervision Policy
- School Camps and Excursions Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- 2016 Acceptable Use Agreement For Internet, Digital Technologies and Media 3-6
- 2016 Acceptable Use Agreement For Internet, Digital Technologies and Media P-2
- ICT/eSmart Policy
- Health Care Needs Policy
- Incursion and Excursion Policy – when learning with an external provider