



# CHILD SAFETY POLICY

## 1 Introduction

Templestowe Heights Primary School is committed to child safety.

The safety and wellbeing of our students is of paramount importance and the protection of children is the responsibility of everyone, including staff, contractors, parents and volunteers. All students who attend the School have a right to feel and to be safe.

The School is committed to upholding and meeting the Child Safe Standards under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and Ministerial Order 870. While the Child Safe Standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this document does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

## 2 Values and principles

The following values and principles will guide the School in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment.

- (a) All children are entitled to be safe, happy, respected and empowered.
- (b) We have zero tolerance of child abuse.
- (c) We will treat all allegations of child abuse very seriously.
- (d) We will identify child safety risks early in order to reduce or remove them.
- (e) We will provide our leadership team, staff, parents and volunteers with all necessary support to maintain a child safe school environment.
- (f) We will consider the diversity of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and children who are vulnerable.

## 3 Our commitment to child safety

To demonstrate its commitment to child safety, the School will:

- (a) appoint a Child Safety Officer;
- (b) embed and promote a culture of child safety to staff, contractors, volunteers, children and families;
- (c) ensure that child safety is a standing agenda item at School Council meetings; and

- (d) periodically review its Child Safety Policy and any associated policies and procedures.

To support, encourage and enable School staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters, the School will:

- (a) ensure that child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within the School community;
- (b) ensure that children, parents, staff and volunteers are informed of what to do and who to tell if they observe, suspect or are informed about child abuse; and
- (c) maintain and regularly review a code of conduct that clearly outlines appropriate behaviour with children; ensure that reporting policies and procedures are accessible to children in age-appropriate and culturally inclusive formats.

To support and assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse, the School will:

- (a) ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and informed of their legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse;
- (b) ensure that processes for reporting child abuse are appropriate, clear and robust, and that children and families feel comfortable following them; and
- (c) ensure that reports of child abuse are treated confidentially and with sensitivity and that children, families and staff who report child abuse or have a child safety concern are supported and treated fairly.

#### **4 Child Safety Code of Conduct**

The School has developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct that outlines the expectations of professional conduct and standards to which staff, contractors and volunteers must adhere.

All staff, contractors and volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct and must agree to abide by it.

#### **5 Staff recruitment and management**

The School will ensure that:

- (a) all applicants for roles that involve child-connected work will be informed about the School's child safety practices including the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- (b) each role that involves child-connected work will have a clear statement setting out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and the essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety;
- (c) it undertakes screening and background checks to obtain, verify and record information about any person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work;
- (d) it has appropriate arrangements in place in relation to the induction of new School staff into the School's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work; and

- (e) each staff member's continuing suitability for child-connected work is monitored and assessed

## **6 Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse**

The School has implemented clear procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse. These procedures will be periodically reviewed and improved to ensure that they:

- (a) comply with mandatory reporting laws and legal obligations to report and protect children from suspected child abuse;
- (b) are sensitive to the diversity characteristics of the School community; and
- (c) are accessible to children, staff, parents and the wider community; and
- (d) clearly describe the actions the School will take in responding to allegations of child abuse.

## **7 Identifying and removing risks of child abuse**

The School has developed and implemented risk management strategies to identify, manage and reduce the risk of child abuse in the School environment, taking into account the age and needs of students and the nature of the activities undertaken by students at School.

The School will:

- (a) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management practices and controls; and
- (b) ensure that School councillors and staff receive training on the School's child safety standards, the potential child abuse risks in the School environment and the collective and individual obligations for managing the risk of child abuse.

## **8 Child empowerment**

The School Council and the Principal will develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- (a) standard of behaviour for students attending the School;
- (b) healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- (c) resilience; and
- (d) child abuse awareness and prevention.

## **9 Availability of Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct**

The School will inform the school community about this Child Safety Policy and make it publicly available.

## **10 Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the School's policy review cycle.

*This policy was ratified by School Council on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021. This will be reviewed in March 2022.*