

# **PARKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **POLICY: Child Safety Policy**

**PROGRAM LEADER: Rod McKinlay**

**DATE RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: September 2016**

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### **RATIONALE**

Parkhill Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Parkhill Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse. This policy will apply to all members of the Parkhill Primary School community and be inclusive of all school related activities, processes and procedures.

Parkhill Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Parkhill Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays 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.

### **AIMS**

1. To provide a safe and caring school environment that meets the needs of all children and addresses their safety and wellbeing as core business for all staff, parents and students.
2. To protect children from harm.
3. To ensure that our school complies all the requirements of the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 870.
4. To raise community awareness about the importance of child safety.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Definitions related to Child Safety as outlined in Ministerial Order 870.

**Child abuse** includes—

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence or
  - an offence under section 49B(2) 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-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**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** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- 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).

**School staff** being an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- The school's Mandatory Reporting Policy outlines our clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a young person who might be in need of protection. All details regarding this process are found in this policy.
- The schools approach to child safety risk management can be found in the Duty of Care Policy. Parkhill Primary School is committed to undertaking proper risk management process.
- Parents who have concerns regarding the safety and/or wellbeing of a child are encouraged to report their concerns a teacher.

### **In its planning, decision-making and operations Parkhill Primary School will:**

- Be committed to child safety;
- Appoint the Assistant Principal as the primary Child Safety Officer and ensure that the role statement for this position clearly outlines the requirements for undertaking this vital responsibility;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility in meeting the requirements of this policy and other related policies and encourage any concerns to be raised, discussed and scrutinised, making it more difficult for abuse to occur or remain hidden;
- Take a proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives through the Student Representative Council, classroom circle time, and the application of the principles of student voice and choice in the classroom;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Respect the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and that of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and provide a safe environment for children with a disability.
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children through the school's Student Engagement Policy;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Include the Child Safe Standards in the school induction manual and processes;
- Ensure that all staff have the an up to date Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) card (which includes a National Criminal Records Check) or Working with Children Check;
- Ensure all volunteers meet the school's Working with Children Check Policy;
- 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 issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and/or wellbeing of children are at risk;
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers;
- Provide ongoing professional learning for staff;
- Collect, use and disclose information about particular children and their families according to Victorian Privacy Laws; and
- Facilitate opportunities for discussion in a range of forums across the school community including at; Staff meetings, Leadership Team meetings, School Council and selected Parents forums.

### **What Parkhill staff or teachers will to do ...**

#### **...if a child discloses an incident of abuse**

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully;
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred;
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing;

- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your school, or the police;
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe;
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them;
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this;
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your principal or your school's child safety officer/champion, police or child protection; and
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

**... if a parent/carer says their child has been abused or raises a concern**

- Explain that your school has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously;
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child;
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words;
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details;
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the School's management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection;
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe;
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together;
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be; and
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

The Child Safety Policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documents:

- Codes of Conduct (Students, Staff and Parent's)
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Student Engagement Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy
- Visitor's Policy

## **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four year review cycle.

## **APPENDICES**

- Nil

## **REFERENCES**

- DEECD - School Policy and Advisory Guide  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/azindex.aspx>
- Ministerial Order 870 - Child Safe Standards  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/schobligationsorder.aspx>
- Child Safe Standards <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>