

# Child Safety Standards Statement of Commitment



## **Rationale:**

The child safe standards policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

## **Scope**

This covers all staff, volunteers, contractors and whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy will apply across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

## **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Toongabbie Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Toongabbie Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Toongabbie 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.

Every person involved in Toongabbie 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.

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Toongabbie Primary School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
- 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
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
- 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 wellbeing of children is at risk
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## **Code of Conduct:**

### **Acceptable behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy,
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities,
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child,
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students,
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds,
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability,
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership.
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse, and
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

### **Unacceptable behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse,
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts),
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context,
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate,
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting,
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity,
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter,
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes, and
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

## Policy and procedures

Policies and procedures outlining Toongabbie Primary School's approach to the Child Safety Standards are detailed in the relevant student wellbeing policies listed in this document.

### A child-safe culture

Toongabbie Primary School's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

### Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/code of conduct

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Refer to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics. All staff will have a job description that includes have a clear statement that sets out the jobs requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes regarding child safety.

### Human resources practices and training

The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with them. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff induction will include: the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child connected work. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check, maintain a valid Working with Children Check and sign our Code of Conduct Policy to Ensure the Safety of Children.

### Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

### Risk reduction and management

The school believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

### Listening to children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves communicating with children and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and

parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

### Confidentiality and Privacy

Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. The collection, use and storage of information is included in school policies.

### Breaches

Breaches of Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Obligations are identified in the specific policies.

### Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.

### Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe)

*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 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 means:*

In a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act)* in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school 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)

## Related School Policies & Documents

This Child Safety Standards policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the school council approved school policies and documents:

## Links and references

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*  
[Ministerial Order No. 870](#)

### School Policy and Advisory Guide:

- [Duty of care](#)
- [Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Responding to Student Sexual Assault](#)
- [Risk Management](#)
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)

## External Resources

### Department resources:

- DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework
- *A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST* (PDF - 270Kb)
- *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*
- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module

### Other resources:

- Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum:
  - Government schools, see: FUSE (Edumail password is required before searching [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum](#))
  - Parents, see: [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum Parent Guides - Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment](#).
- Department of Health and Human Services:
  - [Child Protection](#)
  - [Child FIRST](#)
- [Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams \(SOCIT\)](#)
- [Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority \(2016\) Information Sheet](#). CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety
- [Commission for Children and Young People \(2015\) A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation](#), Version 2.0.
  - [State of Victoria \(2010\) Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#): A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Training, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools

This policy was last ratified by School Council in

November 2016