



## CAULFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

### CHILD SAFETY POLICY

POLICY NO. 1.16

#### **Rationale:**

All Victorian schools are required to have a Child Safety Policy that:

- Makes a commitment to child safety
- Provides an overview of the key elements of the school's approach to child safety
- Demonstrates how the school's policies and procedures create and maintain a child safe environment
- States what actions the school will take to:
  - demonstrate its commitment to child safety
  - monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy
  - support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
  - support and assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

#### **Policy statement:**

Caulfield Primary School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment that promotes learning and encourages curiosity, personal growth and wellbeing for all students. The school strives to develop adaptability and resilience in its students, so they can become valued members of the local and global communities, and be prepared for future life experiences.

In addition, Caulfield Primary School:

- Has **zero tolerance of child abuse**. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with robust policies and procedures.
- Has a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when there are concerns about a child's safety.
- Is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early; and to removing and reducing these risks.
- Has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Is committed to regularly training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- Supports and respects all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- Is committed to diversity, tolerance and the cultural safety of Indigenous children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and provides a safe environment for children with a disability
- Has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

#### **Implementation:**

##### *Recruitment*

Caulfield Primary School takes reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our students. During recruitment, the school develops selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate its commitment to child safety, and an awareness of its social and legislative responsibilities. The school understands that there are ethical as well as legislative obligations when recruiting staff and volunteers.

- The school actively encourages applications from indigenous peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.
- All people engaged by Caulfield Primary School, including volunteers and tradespeople, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. The school carries out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

### *Training and supervision*

Training and education is important to ensure that the whole school community understands that child safety at Caulfield Primary School is everyone's responsibility.

- Our school culture aims for all staff, students and wider members of our community to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- Through ongoing professional development, the school supports staff to:
  - Develop their skills to protect children from abuse
  - Promote the safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; indigenous children, and children with a disability
- The school ensures that all staff and volunteers understand Caulfield Primary School's commitment to child safety; making it clear that everyone has a role in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.
- New employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand the school's philosophy; demonstrating that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is appropriate.

### *Risk management*

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, Caulfield Primary School proactively manages risks of abuse to students. The school has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse. These include risks posed by:

- Physical environments or situational risk e.g. any doors that can lock
- Online environments e.g. no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a student on social media

### *Allegations, concerns and complaints*

Caulfield Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has procedures in place to investigate quickly and thoroughly.

- School staff members are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.
- The school works to ensure that all members of the school community i.e. staff, volunteers, children and families, know what to do and who to tell if they notice inappropriate behaviour; observe abuse or are victims of abuse. How? Who?
- All adults have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if there is a 'reasonable belief' that an incident took place.
- Factors contributing to 'reasonable belief' may be:
  - A child states that they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes a child may be referring to themselves)
  - Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
  - Someone else has raised a suspicion but is unwilling to report it

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Dept. of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the urgency and severity of the matter.

### *Legislative responsibilities*

Caulfield Primary 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 the police.

- Failure to protect. People of authority at Caulfield Primary School will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties. All staff who are mandatory reporters are aware of this role and its responsibilities.

#### *Privacy*

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 procedures in place to ensure that any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

#### *Fair procedures for personnel*

Caulfield Primary School's primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of its students. The school is also fair and just to personnel.

- Any decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, or undertaking disciplinary action are thoroughly researched, evidence based and transparent.
- All child safety concerns and allegations of abuse are recorded, including investigation updates.
- All records are securely stored.
- With any safety concerns or allegations of abuse within the school, the school provides updates to children and families on progress and any actions that the school takes.

#### *Regular review*

This policy will be reviewed every two years, and following significant incidents if they occur. The school will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute to the review process. Where possible the school endeavours to work with local indigenous communities, cultural and linguistically diverse communities, and people with a disability.

#### **Related Caulfield Primary School documents**

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Respect and Responsibility Policy
- Student Engagement Policy
- Excursions Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

#### **References**

For more information about:

- schools' duty of care
- 'reasonable belief' as the basis of child protection reporting
- types and indicators of child abuse
- legal obligations and procedures for mandatory reporting
- consequences of making a report

refer to the Victorian Department of Education and Training ['School policy and advisory guide': child protection – reporting obligations](#).

<b>Date of approval:</b> 2016	<b>Date of review:</b> 2019
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