

Mooroopna Primary School



Child Safe Standards Policy 2021

Preparing for Tomorrow

Table of Contents

Page 2	Standard 2	Statement of Commitment to Child Safe
Page 4	Standard 2	Child Safe Policy (Ratified by School Council on 15 th March 2021)
		Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (Including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures) (Ratified by School Council on 3 rd May, 2021
Page 13	Standard 3	Child Safe Code of Conduct 2021
Page 15	Standard 4	School Staff Selection, Supervision & Management Practices
Page 17	Standard 5	Response Procedures
Page 19	Standard 6	Risk Management
Page 20	Standard 7	Strategies to Promote Child Empowerment & Participation
Page 21		Key Documents Linked to the MPS Child Safe Standards Policy
Page 22		Appendices: Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT) resources
Page 24		Signed Acceptance of Mooroopna Primary School's Child Safe Standards Policy



Commitment to Child Safety

Background

In 2013, the Victorian Parliament held an Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse, resulting in the Betrayal of Trust Report. The Victorian Government has mandated that all organisations who work with children, including schools, meet the Child Safe Standards. Children have the right to be safe and protected, including at school. It is important that families feel confident that their child is safe and well whilst in the care of the school. At MPS, we are responsible for keeping our children safe. From August 1st 2016, all schools are required to meet the Child Safe Standards to achieve a zero tolerance to child abuse.

Vision

Mooroopna Primary School (MPS) prides itself on being an inclusive school. Our values and expectations are Motivated, Persistent and Successful. We all have the right and responsibility to ensure that everyone can Bee Safe and Happy, Bee Respectful and Bee Learners. We have high expectations of ourselves and others as demonstrated in our school expectations. We persist with our learning and care for ourselves and our school. We value diversity and our school motto of “Preparing for Tomorrow” underpins the core values of the school. Staff and students work together to develop emotional intelligences so that students understand how to have self-control, self-awareness, be motivated, manage relationships, develop empathy and skills of being friendly, safe and strong. We strongly value visual and performing arts, including our performance band and choir along with our Visual Arts program.

Statement of Commitment

MPS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

MPS has zero tolerance for child abuse.

MPS 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 children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in MPS 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.

MPS’s commitment to Child Safe has been developed in accordance with the Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870.

Principles of Implementation

In its planning, decision-making and operations MPS will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
7. 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.
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.



Child Safe Policy

Mooroopna Primary School

Rationale

Mooroopna Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. All staff and volunteers will be educated about the school's commitment to child safety through induction and training, policy documentation and regular review practices.

Implementation

- Training will involve recognising and responding to child abuse for leadership, relevant program management personnel, staff and volunteers, including what to do if an allegation is made or a concern raised or when a staff member observes abusive behaviour towards a child.
- Promotion of a confidential reporting culture for suspected abuse by ensuring the principal or principal's delegate takes responsibility for incidents at all levels.
- 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.
- Maintain a data base system that records child safety issues and responses to any incidents and that data is stored appropriately to protect the privacy of children.
- All children, and in particular Aboriginal children, children from linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability, will participate in all school activities with modifications considered to ensure maximum inclusion.
- A culturally safe environment will be provided for all children from diverse cultural backgrounds in partnership with families and community.
- The school environment will be modified to support children with a disability as deemed relevant and in accordance with the student's educational plan which will be informed by a multidisciplinary team approach.
- Develop and maintain relationships with families, communities, allied health services and relevant organisations to promote child safety within and at events associated with the school.
- The school's Child Safe Standards Policy and practices will be reviewed annually or more regularly as required, particularly following an incident.
- Child Safe procedures will be a regular meeting agenda item for leadership team and staff.
- Communication of child safe procedures and practices will be communicated regularly through the school's newsletter, assembly, school council, parent forums and other means as deemed relevant.
- The Statement of Commitment to child safety (page 2) will be included in all Position Descriptions and Roles of Responsibility documents for all staff members and in induction information for volunteers.
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.

- Maintain robust human resource and recruitment practices for all staff, volunteers and visitors to our school.
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's annual review cycle or as required following a child safety issue.

Ratification: This policy was last ratified by School Council on: 15th March, 2021



Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations (inc. Mandatory Reporting)

Mooroopna Primary School

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply to Mooroopna Primary School. The specific procedures that are applicable at our school are contained at Appendix A.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council-run events, activities and services.

POLICY

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests.

Mooroopna Primary School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation)
- Family violence
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect (including medical neglect)
- Grooming

The staff at Mooroopna Primary School are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

At Mooroopna Primary School we also recognise the diversity of the children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

Mandatory Reporting

The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic):

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals
- School staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- registered medical practitioners and nurses
- registered psychologists
- all members of the police force
- People in religious ministry

- Staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare coordinators, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse, and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Mooroopna Primary School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually. We also require all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#)*.

CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS Child Protection, see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) and [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#)*.

At Mooroopna Primary School we also encourage all staff to make a referral to Child FIRST when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the *Policy and Advisory Library: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#)*.

REPORTABLE CONDUCT

Our school must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;

- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child; or
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our principal must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health staff and school council employees.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they should notify the Regional Director.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library: Reportable Conduct*.

FAILURE TO DISCLOSE OFFENCE

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

"Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes:

- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection.

FAILURE TO PROTECT OFFENCE

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic). This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.

Further information

For more information about these offences and reporting obligations see:

[Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations.](#)

RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Child Safe Standards Policy
Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
Bullying Prevention Policy
Duty of Care Policy
Emergency Management Policy
Inclusion and Diversity Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 3rd May, 2021 and is scheduled for triennial review on 3rd May, 2024

CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES AT

MOORoopNA PRIMARY SCHOOL

For students

- All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a student does not know who to approach at Mooroopna Primary School they should start with their class teacher.

Managing disclosures made by students

When managing a disclosure you should:

- listen to the student and allow them to speak
- stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you").

When managing a disclosure you should AVOID:

- displaying expressions of panic or shock
- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
- going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault

- making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

General procedures

Our school will follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (Four Critical Actions) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

All staff at our school who believe that a child is in need of protection, even if it doesn't meet the threshold required for mandatory reporting or the staff member is not a mandatory reporter, should in the first instance, speak to Principal class staff or should make the required reports to DFFH Child Protection and/or Victoria Police as necessary.

At our school the Assistant Principal/Principal will be responsible for monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a staff member or any other person from reporting to the relevant authorities if they form a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of abuse.

Reporting suspicions, disclosures or incidents of child abuse

Responsibilities of all school staff

If a school staff member reasonably suspects or witnesses an incident of child abuse or receives a disclosure of child abuse, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid and call 000.
- Speak to Assistant Principal/Principal as soon as possible, who will follow the [Four Critical Actions](#).
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in the electronic file on the secure drive.
- If the staff member is a mandatory reporter and reasonably believes that a student has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse from which the child's parents have not protected the child, they must ensure that a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police has been made by the Assistant Principal/Principal. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the mandatory reporter must make the report.
- If the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child, they must ensure that a report to Victoria Police has been made by the Assistant Principal/Principal. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the staff member must make the report.

In circumstances where a member of the leadership team disagrees that a report needs to be made, but the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that the child is in need of protection and/or has been the victim of sexual abuse, the staff member must still contact DFFH Child Protection and/or Victoria Police to make the report.

Responsibilities of Assistant Principal / Principal

The Assistant Principal/Principal is responsible for promptly managing the school's response to an incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the incident, suspicion or disclosure is taken seriously. The Assistant Principal/Principal is also responsible for responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

If the Assistant Principal/Principal receives a report from a school staff member or member of the school community of a suspicion, disclosure or incident of child abuse, they must:

- Follow the [Four Critical Actions](#) as soon as possible, including:
 - Responding to an emergency
 - Reporting to authorities/referring to services
 - Contacting parents/carers and
 - Providing ongoing support.
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure, including actions taken and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely as an electronic file on a secured DET drive. They are also responsible for ensuring that any staff member who reported the incident, disclosure or suspicion to them also makes and keeps notes of the incident.
- At Mooroopna Primary School, the Assistant Principal/Principal will be responsible for ensuring that there is a prompt response to the disclosure and that the child is appropriately supported.

If the Assistant Principal/Principal is unavailable, a member of the leadership team will take on the role and responsibilities described in this section.

Duty of care and ongoing support for students

Fulfilling the requirements in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of abuse.

All staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students. All staff must ensure that Principal/Assistant Principal or other appropriate staff member is aware of any incidents, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible after they occur. This will allow appropriate supports to be put in place for the student affected.

For school visitors, volunteers and school community members

All community members aged 18 years or over should be aware of their legal obligations – see *Failure to disclose offence* above, in this Policy.

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details see the Four Critical Actions - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions/ChildAbuse.pdf>



Child Safe Code of Conduct 2021

Mooroopna Primary School (MPS) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of MPS will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of MPS will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

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 [Page 2] at all times and adhering to the school's Child Safe Policy [Page 4]
- 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 or 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 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 team
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations, including mandatory reporting procedures (see Key Documents) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- 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 purposes¹
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy² or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

This Code of Conduct was approved and ratified by the Mooroopna Primary School Council on the 15th March, 2021.

A Review of this Code of Conduct will occur annually or if there are any legislative or other changes in the interim.



Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Practices for a Child Safe Environment

Staff, Parents and Volunteers

Strong human resource practices promote Child Safe school environments and reduce the risk of child abuse. This policy guides our staff, parent helpers and volunteers on how to behave with children. All of our staff, parents and volunteers must agree to abide by our Child Safe Code of Conduct 2021 which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. Employees and volunteers in our school are supported by the Principal, Assistant Principal, leadership team and Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team - with specific roles of responsibility such as hearing or being informed about allegations or concerns, providing direction and support to others, maintaining documentation and ensuring policy and procedures are adhered to.

Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Mooroopna Primary School (MPS) understands that child safety is everyone's collective responsibility. Our school provides a climate for staff, students and community members to feel confident in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

Staff receive induction and ongoing training a regular basis with a particular focus on:

- Identifying, assessing and minimising risks of child abuse.
- Detecting and the reporting of potential signs of child abuse.
- MPS policy and procedures – including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy.
- Legislative requirements such as the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Maintaining a Working with Children Check.
- Cultural awareness and safety training to ensure the school maintains inclusive practices for Aboriginal children, children from linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities.

The school leadership team will also maintain proactive practices to ensure that staff and volunteers display appropriate child safe practices. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through the relevant channels including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

MPS will take all reasonable steps to employ skilled, high quality employees to work with our children. We adhere to the requirements of Ministerial Order No 870 to this end.

All advertisements will clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. We encourage applications from people of Aboriginal or diverse cultural backgrounds, and people with disabilities; and make merit based decisions on suitability for the position.

All teachers will have Victorian Institute of Teaching registration which includes National Criminal History Records checks. Education Support staff are required to undergo and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

All people engaged in 'child connected work' by MPS, including volunteers and tradespeople, are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this.

When recruiting new staff the emphasis will be on knowledge and understanding of MPS teaching and learning and wellbeing strategies including the delivery of child safe practices.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of our children is our primary concern. Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within our organisation.

We will respond in a fair and transparent manner to all reports. Decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff members, volunteers, parents or children – unless there is a considered risk to someone's safety. MPS has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, how it is stored, what will be done with it and who will have access to it.



Response Procedures

Mooroopna Primary School (MPS) has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child who may be in need of protection.

We take all allegations seriously and have procedures in place to investigate thoroughly and in a timely manner. Our staff members are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. We are proactive in our approaches and aim to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse, are a victim of abuse or notice inappropriate behaviour. (See procedures below).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred they must report the incident.

Factors that contribute to a reasonable belief may be:

- A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes in fact, a child may be referring to themselves)
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abused victim is observed
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour

Immediate action should include reporting concerns to the Principal or member of our school leadership team of the concerns and reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a report by contacting to DHHS [Department of Health and Human Services] Child Protection Unit, Police, DET or other appropriate agency. The report and course of action is to be documented.

When a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:

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 with others, such as with their parent/carer, the Principal or Assistant Principal, 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.

As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the Principal or Assistant Principal, police or child protection.

Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern:

Explain that MPS 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 Principal or Assistant Principal, 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 (follow link at the end of this Policy), or complete it together.

Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.

Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

NOTE: You need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, or an Aboriginal Engagement Officer.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.

Advice on communicating with people with a disability can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website:

Communicate and Consult with People with a Disability:

<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/communicate-and-consult-people-disability>

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Legislative responsibilities:

MPS takes our legal responsibilities seriously. We understand that every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in our school or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

Failure to Disclose

All adults, not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16.

Failure to Protect

Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation. In a school context, this may include Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals.

NOTE: While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities.

More information about Failure to Disclose is available on the Department of Education and Training website:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/reportobligations.aspx#link53>

More information about mandatory reporting is available on the MPS Child Protection Reporting Policy.



Risk Management

Mooroopna Primary School (MPS) believes the wellbeing of children is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. We recognise there are potential risks to children and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks under the 5 requirement areas identified in Ministerial Order No 870.

As part of our proactive practices we will conduct a risk assessment using the PROTECT Risk Assessment Template on the Department of Education and Training website:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/safeenviro.aspx#link82>

Requirement 1: The school leadership team must develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environments.

Requirement 2: The school's risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Requirement 3: If the school governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

Requirement 4: As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school's leadership team must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

Requirement 5: At least annually, the school leadership team must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school leadership team and school staff about:

- a) individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
- b) child abuse risks in the school environment; and the school's current child safety standards

An annual review process will take place, or following significant incidents if they should occur.



Strategies to Promote Child Empowerment & Participation

Mooroopna Primary School (MPS) has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children and their parents and carers. We encourage child and parent/ carer involvement and engagement that will inform safe school operations and builds the capacity of children and parents and carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainants account of things and take them seriously, check the understanding and keep the child (or their parents/ carer) informed about the progress.

Resources available at Mooroopna Primary School

- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Primary Welfare Officer
- School Chaplain
- Leading Teacher
- Program for Students with Disabilities Coordinator and Support staff team
- Koorie Education Support Officer
- Life Education Van
- Mooroopna Primary School – Bullying Prevention Policy
- Mooroopna Primary School – Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Mooroopna Primary School – Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence participation
- Staff Induction Booklet
- Casual Relief Teacher – Induction Handbook
- Contractor’s Induction Booklet
- Strategies based School Wide Positive Behaviours
- SWPBS matrix founded on the School Values Bee Happy and Safe, Bee Learners, Bee Respectful
- Respectful Relationships curriculum
- Student Leadership program
- Day for Daniel participation
- Annual participation in the Bravehearts program
- Individual Education Plans
- Bee Awards
- Parent Education Programs



Key Documents linked to the Mooroopna Primary School Child Safe Standards Policy

- Anaphylaxis Management Policy (Last ratified: 15/3/21)
- Annual Acceptable Use Agreement (ICT)
- Asthma Policy (Last ratified: 15/3/21)
- Attendance Policy (Last ratified: 1/4/19)
- Bullying Prevention Policy (Last ratified: 15/3/21)
- Camps Policy (Last ratified: 6/5/19)
- Child Safe Policy (Last ratified: 15/3/21)
- Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures (15/3/21)
- Digital Technologies Policy (Last ratified: 15/6/20)
- Duty of Care Policy (Last ratified: 6/5/19)
- Emergency Management Plan 2020-2021 (1/9/20)
- First Aid Policy (9/9/19)
- Health Care Needs (Last ratified: 15/3/21)
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy (Last ratified: 6/5/19)
- Photographing, Filming and Recording Students Annual Consent Form and Collection Notice
- Responding to Intruder Threat – Emergency Management Plan 2020-2021
- Staff Induction Policy: Induction Handbook, CRT Induction Handbook 2021
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy Policy (Last ratified: 16/3/20)
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (Last ratified: 16/3/20)
- Volunteer's Policy (Last ratified: 15/3/21)
- Visitors Policy (Last ratified: 1/4/2019)
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy (Last ratified: 15/3/21)



Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT)

Link to resources:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

- Identify child abuse
 - Types of abuse
 - I suspect a child is being abused, what now?
 - Responding to other concerns about the wellbeing of a child
 - Further information (and resources)
- Your reporting and legal obligations
 - Understanding your obligation to protect children
 - Duty of care
 - Reporting obligations
 - Failure to Protect
 - Report a Child in need of therapeutic treatment
 - Ministerial Order No 870: Child Safe Standards
 - How do these reporting obligations relate to the Child Safe Standards?
 - School councils that provide early childhood education or care services
 - More information
- Report child abuse: the four critical actions
 - Action 1: Respond to an emergency
 - Action 2: Report to authorities
 - Action 3: Contact parents or carers
 - Action 4: Provide on-going support
- Child Safe Standards: Creating a safe environment
 - Standard 1
 - Standard 2
 - Standard 3
 - Standard 4
 - Standard 5
 - Standard 6
 - Standard 7
 - Other useful information for schools
 - Information for students
 - Information for parents
- Identify and respond to student sexual offending
 - Report student sexual offending
 - Identify student sexual offending

- Problem sexual behaviour in children under 10
 - Problem sexual behaviour in children over 10
 - Support for students impacted by concerning student sexual behaviour
- Respond to child sexual exploitation and grooming
 - Defining child sexual exploitation
 - Grooming
 - Most at risk
 - Identify perpetrators of child sexual exploitation
 - Report child sexual exploitation and grooming
 - Talk to children about sexual exploitation
 - More information
 - Keeping children safe from sexual exploitation strategy
- Privacy and information sharing
 - Information sharing with school staff
 - Information sharing with DHHS and Victoria Police
 - Information sharing with Family Services
 - Information sharing with the School Community
 - Further guidance for principals
 - Further information
- Online learning for schools
 - Mandatory Reporting eLearning module



Signed Acceptance of Mooroopna Primary School's Child Safe Standards Policy

I have read, understood and accept to undertake all work associated at Mooroopna Primary School according to the Mooroopna Primary School Child Safe Standards Policy.

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Name

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Signed

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Date