



CHILD SAFE
STANDARDS AT
GEEELONG EAST
PRIMARY SCHOOL

2019



Child Safe Standards

Policy

RATIONALE

The *Education and Training Reform Act (2006 the Act)* provides the minimum standards that schools (and other education providers) must satisfy in order to be registered and remain registered in the Act.

Ministerial Order 870 specifies the actions that schools must take to meet the child safe standards outlined in the *Act (2006)* and these actions take into account the diversity of schools. This order defines protecting children is everyone's responsibility - parents, communities, governments and business all have a role to play. Therefore Government school staff have a duty of care to students by taking reasonable care to avoid acts of omissions which they can reasonably foresee would likely result in harm or injury to the student and to work for the positive wellbeing of the child. All staff must understand and abide by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Geelong East 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. Geelong East Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse. Geelong East 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 children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. Every person involved in Geelong East 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.

1. Strategies to embed on *organisational culture of child safety*, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. A *child safe policy* or statement of commitment to child safety
3. A *code of conduct* that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Screening, supervision, training and other *human resources practices* that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. Processes for *Responding to and reporting suspected child abuse*
6. Strategies to identify and *reduce or remove risks* of child abuse
7. Strategies to promote the *participation and empowerment of children*

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment to the care, safety and wellbeing of all our students at Geelong East Primary School. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse at school, online and in other locations provided by the school.

This policy applies to all school staff, including employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

POLICY COMMITMENTS

We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are enjoying learning and play without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

In our planning, decision-making and operations Geelong East Primary School 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 following our school protocol.

Our commitment to our students:

- (a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school
- (b) We commit to providing children and young people with positive, safe and nurturing experiences
- (c) We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us
- (d) We commit to taking action to ensure children and young people are protected from abuse or harm
- (e) We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing
- (f) We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment

Our commitment to parents and guardians:

- (a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children
- (b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures
- (c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people
- (d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues
- (e) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse

Our commitment to our school staff (employees, volunteers and contractors):

- (a) We commit to providing all Geelong East Primary School staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles
- (b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns
- (c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by Geelong East Primary School staff about keeping children and young people safe from harm
- (d) We commit to providing opportunities for Geelong East Primary School employees, volunteers and contractors to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person as needed

RESPONSIBILITIES

Every person employed or volunteering at Geelong East Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all students.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in each member of staff role description, does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person develops a belief of a child who is at risk of abuse,

The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

School Leadership

The principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at Geelong East Primary School recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety.

Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)

Responsibilities of School Staff (employees, volunteers and contractors)

Responsibilities include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal school processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS

At Geelong East Primary School we expect employees, volunteers, visitors and contractors to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the school. All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements.

We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct for all adults, which recognises the critical role that school staff play in protecting students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, visitors and contractors for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect. Our Code also protects school staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN CHILD SAFETY

At Geelong East Primary School, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

Our school's **Mandatory Reporting Policy**, -sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law

Our school also follows the Department of Education's "Four Critical Actions for Schools- Responding to Incidents, disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse". (Which is displayed in every office across the school).

RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors, visitors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

At Geelong East Primary School we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise. We will conduct the Risk Assessment tool provided by DET annually, unless required sooner, to

identify any changes in risks or strategies. All staff will be briefed on our child safe standards and associated policies annually.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwth)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- *Respectful Relationships Framework (Mandated as of 2018)*

Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

- a) **Failure to disclose offence:** Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
- b) **Failure to protect offence:** This offence will apply when a child under the age of 16 under and under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation becomes a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- i) **Grooming offence:** This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

BREACH OF POLICY

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, Geelong East Primary school may start the process under Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance guidelines for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the Regional Director. Relevant notification should also be made to the Department of Education and Training.

Where any **other member of the school community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with established policies and procedures, and/or contact Department of Education (Conduct and Ethics Branch and Legal Branch) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICIES

- [Policy 2.2: Guidelines Relating to the Employment of Staff \(currently under review\)](#)
- [Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Policy 2.19a: School Guidelines –Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#)
- [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)
- Mandatory Reporting

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools cyclic review process.

Ratified May 2019



Child Safe Standards

Code of Conduct

Child Safe Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers of Geelong East Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of Geelong East Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to the **Geelong East Primary School** child safe policy at all times / upholding the **Geelong East Primary School** statement of commitment to child safety at all time
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to **Geelong East Primary School** Inclusion Team/ leadership, and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns the **Geelong East Primary School** Inclusion Team/ leadership
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps.)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our leadership team's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate)
- have any online contact with a child or their family
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the **Geelong East Primary School** Inclusion/ leadership.

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

I agree that the content of this document is clear and I understand my role as a member of Geelong East Primary School and that I must adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: Signature: Date:



Mandatory Reporting

Policy

RATIONALE

A broad range of professional groups are identified in the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) as mandatory reporters. Mandated staff members must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

The following professionals are prescribed as mandatory reporters under section 182 of the CYFA:

- primary and secondary school teachers and principals (including students in training to become teachers)
- registered medical practitioners (including psychiatrists)
- nurses (including school nurses)
- police.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to make a report. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

IMPLEMENTATION

At Geelong East primary School we will ensure the health and welfare of all children are protected through supporting any person who is registered as a teacher under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, including principals, is mandated to make a report to Child Protection. In the course of undertaking their professional duties, mandated staff members are required to report their belief, when the belief is formed on reasonable grounds, which a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury.

A copy of the PROTECT DET procedure will be visible at the front office of the school at all times.

Non-mandated staff members

Section 183 of the CYFA states that **any person**, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Under the current Ministerial Order No. 870, protecting children is **everyone's** responsibility- parents, community and staff. Those members of staff who are not mandated to report (except sexual offences where ALL are mandated to report), do have to follow the policy and procedures of Geelong East Primary school and notify the Educational Adjustment Team/ Leadership with any 'reportable' information. The staff member will be advised by the Educational Adjustment Team/ Leadership on what will need to occur next.

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused
- a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused.
- the staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development
- the staff member observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

Reporting a belief

Staff at Geelong East Primary School, whether or not mandated, need to report their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

Those members of staff who are not mandated to report (except sexual offences where ALL are mandated to report), must follow the policy and procedures of Geelong East Primary school and notify the Inclusion Team/ Leadership with any 'reportable' information.

If you form a belief that needs to be reported then all staff are advised to follow the "Four Critical Actions for Schools: responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse" which is displayed in all office rooms across the school.

Protecting the identity of the reporter

Confidentiality is provided for reporters under the CYFA. The CYFA prevents disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with legislation, except in specific circumstances.

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family of the report
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

Information provided during a protective investigation may be used in a court report if the risks to the child or young person require the case to proceed to court. In these circumstances, the source of the information may be required to provide evidence to the court. If Child Protection decides that the report is about a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, they may refer the report to a community-based child and family service and disclose the identity of the reporter to that service. However, the CYFA provides that neither Child Protection nor the community-based child and family service may disclose the reporter's identity to any other person without the reporter's consent.

Professional protection for reporters

If a report is made in good faith:

- it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

This means that a person who makes a report in accordance with the legislation will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation of the report.

MAKING A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION

The CYFA allows for two types of reports to be made in relation to significant concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child – a report to Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST.

A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after taking into account all of the available information, the staff member forms a view that the child or young person is in need of protection because:

- the harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development
- the harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development
- the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child or young person from harm.

Where during the course of carrying out their normal duties, a school staff member forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, the staff member must make a report to Child Protection regarding this belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable.

Staff members may form a professional judgement or belief, in the course of undertaking their professional duties based on:

- warning signs or indicators of harm that have been observed or inferred from information about the child
- legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting
- knowledge of child and adolescent development
- consultation with colleagues and other professionals
- professional obligations and duty-of-care responsibilities
- established protocols
- internal policies and procedures in an individual licensed children's service or school.

Upon receipt of a report, Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required.

In most circumstances, Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report. When the report is classified by Child Protection as a Wellbeing Report, Child Protection will, in turn, make a referral to Child FIRST.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal. If the principal does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the teacher's obligation to do so if they have formed a reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. If the teacher's concerns continue, even after consultation with the principal or member of the Wellbeing team, that teacher is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of their concerns.

FAILURE TO REPORT

Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a **child under 16** must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence under **section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Victoria)** and applies to **all adults** in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. The obligation is to disclose that information to the police as soon as it is practicable to do so, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

For further information about the 'failure to disclose' offence, see: **section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Victoria)**

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, sport coach or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child **under 16** who is in the care or supervision of the organisation must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child in the organisation from the risk of sexual abuse from an adult associated with the organisation is a criminal offence contained in **section 49C (2) of the Crimes Act 1958(Vic.)**. In a school context this will include the principal and the business manager and may also extend to School Counsellors, heads of departments and heads of school.

For further information about the 'failure to protect' offence, see: **section 49C (2) of the Crimes Act 1958(Vic.)**

ROLE OF STAFF

Geelong East Primary School staff have a duty of care to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care and staff must always act in the best interests of those children and young people. If a staff member has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person it is important to take immediate action.

Note: The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

The roles and responsibilities of staff in supporting children and young people who are involved with Child Protection may include acting as a support person for students, attending Child Protection case plan meetings, observing and monitoring students' behaviour, and liaising with professionals.

Confidentiality

Staff must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of suspected child abuse and neglect, and may discuss case details and the identity of the child or the young person and their family only with the Educational Adjustments team/ leadership.

When a child or young person has moved to another school, the Assistant Principal/Wellbeing Coordinator must use professional judgement as to what information needs to be passed on. This will be guided by usual procedures for passing on information about a child's general wellbeing or special needs, and the role of the school in any ongoing care plans.

Interviews at Victorian schools

Child Protection may conduct interviews of children and young people at school without parental knowledge or consent. However, a child will be interviewed at a Victorian school only in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the child's best interests to proceed in this manner. Child Protection will notify the school of any intention to interview a child or young person. This may occur regardless of whether the school is the source of the report to Child Protection.

When Child Protection practitioners arrive at the school, the school administration office will follow our Visitors policy and request their identification before allowing Child Protection to have access to the child or young person.

Support persons

Children and young people should be advised of their right to have a supportive adult present during interviews. If a child is too young to understand the significance of the interview, the Principal or Assistant Principal will make arrangements for a supportive adult to attend with the child.

A staff member may be identified as a support person for the child or young person during the interview. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the Child Protection practitioner should always authorise the staff member to receive information regarding Child Protection's investigation. This may occur verbally or in writing using the relevant Child Protection proforma.

Independent persons must refrain from providing their opinions or accounts of events during interviews. A principal or their delegate may act as an independent person when the child or young person is to be interviewed, unless they believe that doing so will create a conflict of interest.

Advising parents, carers or guardians

Staff **do not require** the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so. It is the responsibility of Child Protection to advise the parents, carers or guardians of the interview at the earliest possible opportunity. This should occur either before, or by the time the child arrives home

Ensuring that a Child Protection interview takes place

The school does not have the power to prevent parents, carers or guardians from removing their children from the school and should not attempt to prevent the parents, carers or guardians from collecting the child. If a parent/carer or guardian removes a child before a planned interview has taken place, the principal and/or their nominee should contact Child Protection or Victoria Police immediately.

Staff Training

Staff will be informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements as part of their initial induction to the school and will be required to complete the Online Mandatory Reporting Module on the DET website annually. Updates will also take place annually as part of the Performance and Development/Staff meeting rotation.

References:

Crimes Act 1958(Vic)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/protecting-children-together>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children%2c-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource>

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/586465/information-guide-registered-teachers-principals.pdf

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools cyclic review process.

Ratified May 2019



Child Safe Standards

Reporting Checklist for Staff

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES AND SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

If you have had an incident, disclosure or have suspicions of child abuse you need to follow these steps.

Key= **Staff** **Principal Class**

<p>1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY</p> <p>If there is no risk of immediate harm go to Action 2.</p> <p>If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• separating alleged victims and others involved• administering first aid• calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns• identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police. <p>Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.</p>	<p>STEP 1:</p> <p>If there is no immediate risk of harm then you need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Document OBJECTIVELY what has occurred or been disclosed2. Document the students Date of Birth, Address and parent names of all involved <p>If you are mandated to report continue to step 2</p> <p>*If you are not mandated to report, then you need to hand this information over to Inclusion Team/ Leadership for further advice.</p>
<p>STEP 2:</p> <p>ABUSE IS WITHIN THE SCHOOL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Call Geelong Police on 5225 31002. Record Intake worker's FULL NAME and the time you called.3. Inform Leadership team of your report immediately after <p>ABUSE IS WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Call DHHS on 1800 075 599	

2. Record Intake worker's FULL NAME and the time you called.

3. Inform Leadership team of your report immediately after

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Security Services Unit

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- School Principal and/or school chairperson

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
You **must also** report to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- DET Security Services Unit

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
You **must also** report to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
You **must also** report to:

- School Principal and/or chairperson

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- **not to contact** the parents/ carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

Step 3:

Principal to liaise with authorities and agencies who will direct the principal (or nominated staff member) on what to do next.

STEP 4:

Principal will ensure the school is providing the student with ongoing support through a "Student Support Plan".

Principal will also ensure staff are supported and will offer assistance through the Educational Assistance Program

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a *Student Support Plan* in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Out of balance?



24 hours - 7 days
Call us today on 1300 361 008

The EAP is easily accessible, voluntary and can provide support on a range of personal and work related issues such as:

- Responsibility at work
- Work-life balance
- Depression/Anxiety
- Stress Management
- Managing Change

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides short-term counselling and support. The service is provided by professionally qualified psychologists or social workers. Your EAP is personal and strictly confidential.

A printable checklist is available on COMPASS for all staff to access that can assist in ensuring they are completely prepared for the report to authorities/agencies.

See – “Reporting Checklist” in Appendix

Evaluation:

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools cyclic review process.
- Ratified May 2019

Appendix



Making a report about an incident, disclosure and suspicions of child abuse.

DETAILS:

Date: _____ **Time of disclosure:** _____

Student Name:

Student D.O.B:

Student Address:

Student Parent/Guardian Name:

Student Parent/Guardian Contact:

Background or relevant information about the student and or family: (ie: newborn in the home)

WHAT HAPPENED

Dot point what has happened using an objective approach



-
-
-
-

Who do I need to call?

Abuse within the school Geelong police **5225 3100** or Abuse in family/community DHHS **1800 075 599**

Name of intake worker:

Time of call:

Comments:

MANTRA for information requested that is outside your disclosure-“Under school policy I am not obliged to give that information however, you may Contact my Principal Karen Chaston or Mandy Duthie on 5248 4885”



Volunteers and Visitors

Policy

RATIONALE

Government schools have a duty of care to students by taking reasonable care to avoid acts of omissions which they can reasonably foresee would likely result in harm or injury to the student and to work for the positive wellbeing of the child. All staff and volunteers must understand and abide by the professional, moral and legal obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices. In order to ensure the safety of all students, Geelong East Primary School will follow the DET and Department of Justice guidelines in relation to Working with Children Checks. In addition, school volunteers involved with the collection and/or management of money must have a satisfactory Police Check to ensure the protection of those funds.

PURPOSE

To ensure the safety of all children in the school under the Child Safe Standards, and to make certain school volunteers adhere to school guidelines when helping in the school.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The school wants to encourage the involvement of community volunteers in school activities.
- Volunteers may work in a variety of capacities within the school, or outside the school boundaries. E.g. at sporting events, excursions or camps.

- Volunteers may come from the immediate school community, e.g. parents, grandparents, neighbours, or from other groups and organisations, e.g. church groups, Tertiary Institutions, Service Clubs, Ardoch Foundation.
- All volunteers participating in a school activity involving volunteers must be supervised by a school staff member.
- Any volunteer participating in a school activity must have a satisfactory Working with Children (WWC) Check, participated in an annual Induction Program at the school and signed the School's Volunteer Agreement which includes the child safe code of conduct.
- Volunteers who handle money, e.g. School Banking helpers, Canteen helpers, Parent Club members, must also have a current satisfactory Police Check.
- A record of each volunteer's WWC and/or Police Check will be kept in the school and updated regularly.
- Any tradesperson, e.g. plumber, electrician, builder, working in view of students must have and show a current WWC Check or be directly supervised by a school staff member.
- It is the responsibility of the school staff member organising an activity to ensure that volunteers have the required WWC and/or Police Check and have completed the induction program.
- All volunteers must follow the usual sign in/out procedures before commencing activities.



School Volunteers Agreement

Agreement

School volunteers are asked to read this declaration carefully. For security and confidentiality reasons the agreements contained in this document are prerequisites to parents and friends intending to assist in class /school programs. The school greatly appreciates the commitment and generosity of parents offering such assistance, but must, at all times ensure that the children's learning and welfare has priority over all other matters.

I wish to offer my services in a voluntary capacity as a classroom and / or program helper at Geelong East Primary School.

In doing so, I am aware of the need for child safety and security at all times as well as an expectation that I will maintain strict confidentiality about individual children's academic progress and welfare. I am also aware that I am offering assistance to the class or program teacher and will be guided by the teacher's advice and instructions.

As a classroom and / or program helper at Geelong East Primary School, **I agree to:-**

- Undertake a criminal records check for school volunteers processed through the Education & Early Childhood Department. There is no cost for this check.
- Attend a School Volunteer Induction program each year prior to commencing as a school volunteer and completing the necessary DET OHS induction documentation.
- Work co-operatively with teachers as partners in education to provide support and assistance to students.
- Follow the advice and directions of the teacher-in-charge of the program.
- Maintain strict confidentiality about the academic progress and welfare of students involved in the program.
- Discuss any issues of concern regarding student safety, the class or school program with the teacher-in-charge of the program or with the Principal or Assistant Principal.
- Inform the school on occasions when I am unable to attend at the agreed time.

- Make every effort to attend any meeting called to discuss the school volunteer program.
- Promptly notify the office of any personal injuries sustained while assisting in the school.

As a classroom and / or program helper at Geelong East Primary School, **I agree that I must not:**

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Be in the school playground at recess or lunch breaks unless directly accompanied by a staff member (this does not include teachers on yard duty)
- Exhibit behaviours with children, which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example sitting on lap.)
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our leadership team's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate)
- Have any online contact with a child at Geelong East Primary School
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the **Geelong East Primary School** Inclusion Team/ leadership.

In the School

Volunteers may only be in the school playground at recess and lunchtimes if directly accompanied by a staff member. Staff on yard duty need to give their full attention to the students in the yard and are unable to supervise volunteers in the yard while on duty.

Volunteers are welcome to access tea and coffee in the staffroom outside the school's scheduled recess and lunch breaks (11:00 – 11:30 and 1:30 – 2:15).

Staff often use these times to catch up with fellow staff members about a range of things, which can be both school, and non-school related topics, the content of which may be confidential or highly personal.

Geelong East Primary school greatly appreciates and values our volunteers. Many programs would not be possible without you. Thank you for your commitment to our school.

Mandy Duthie

Assistant Principal
Geelong East Primary School

Code of Conduct and Volunteer's Agreement

I have read and agree that the content of the Child Safe Standards Code of Conduct document and Volunteer's Agreement is clear. I understand my role as a volunteer at Geelong East Primary School and that I must adhere to the Code of Conduct and will conduct myself in accordance to this code and the Volunteer's Agreement:

Name: Signature:

Date:

Children/s names: _____

The areas I would like to assist with are (please specify):

- | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading/Writing Program | Class _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics Program | Class _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bike Ed Program | Class _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Excursions | Class _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camps | Class _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport | Class _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents Club | Class _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Canteen | Class _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | Class _____ |

Signature _____

Date ____ / ____ / ____

I have a current working with Children check (WWC)

I have participated in the 2019 Induction Program

Principal's signature _____



Safe Environment

Policy

RATIONALE

Schools should be a safe place for everyone including students, teachers and other staff, families and members of the local community. The involvement and commitment of the whole school community is required to achieve a culture in which safe and respectful schools are everyone's concern and responsibility.

It is essential that all schools promote and provide a supportive learning community where all students feel, and are, safe. Students have a fundamental right to learn in a safe, supportive environment and to be treated with respect. School staff also have the right to teach, work and participate in an environment that is safe and supportive. Similarly, parents and other local community members have a right to feel safe, supported and respected in the school context.

PURPOSE

Geelong East primary School acknowledges the importance of an environment that contributes to the health and wellbeing of all staff and students. It is recognised that every member of Geelong East Primary School has an impact on students' health and can contribute to creating a safe environment. All members of our school community including staff, students, families and volunteers will be supported to meet this policy.

Our commitment:

- provide a safe, inclusive and empowering school environment for students, families, staff and visitors
- deliver safety education in one or more learning key areas of the curriculum as a part of a whole school approach to health and wellbeing
- ensure families, students and staff are key partners in promoting a safe environment
-

As a health promoting school, we will promote the safety and wellbeing of children, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

IMPLEMENTATION

Healthy policies

- Staff, families and students are involved in guiding the development and implementation of the whole-school safe environment policy and are provided with information about policy requirements.
- If a student is suspected of being at risk of or experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or bullying difficulties the school will implement the positive behaviour policy or student welfare policy under the direction of the Principals and Welfare team.

Healthy physical environment

- The school provides a welcoming and inclusive physical environment, which reflects the diversity and interests of the students, families and staff.
- The school ensures the use of appropriate and properly fitted protective equipment during physical activity to reduce risk of injury.
- The school takes action to minimise hazards from road traffic, particularly during pick up, drop off periods and other high risk times.
- The school provides a safe, inclusive and empowering social environment that promotes a culture of respect, fairness and equality.
- The school implements strategies to promote positive and responsible behaviour and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Staff and families recognise that they are role models and are encouraged to demonstrate behaviours that promote safety.

Learning and skills

- Social and emotional learning, safety education and related health messages are incorporated across the curriculum from Foundation to year 6 and are delivered in one or more key learning areas of the curriculum with a particular focus on **Respectful Relationships Framework**.
- The school provides a curriculum and alternative programs that actively engages and builds students' self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management and relationship skills.
- Collaborative group activities that encourage inclusion, participation, team-work and cooperation are incorporated in the curriculum.
- Staff are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote safe environments and behaviours.

Engaging children, young people, staff and families through **Respectful Relationships**

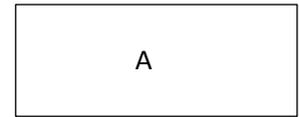
- Families, students and staff are key partners in developing and supporting safety initiatives and are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies on a regular basis to support safety in the school and at home.
- Students are engaged in developing and implementing safety initiatives via junior school council, student action teams or other representative structures.
- Staff are encouraged to develop competencies to facilitate engagement of families and students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Community partnerships

- Staff are encouraged to work with local health professionals, services and organisations to increase the school's capacity to deliver safety initiatives and promote safe environments.

- The school works with local government and other agencies to minimise safety hazards in the surrounding area.

School Map of facilities used:



C

B

A: Community Basketball Team (outside school hours)

A: Bethany Playgroup (Friday mornings- line of sight to canteen and Performing Arts teacher)

B: Outside School Hours Care Camp Australia

C: Meeting room for Paraprofessional meetings (line of sight to school office and next to Principals office)

EVALUATION AND REFERENCES

1 Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs 2011
National Safe Schools Framework

http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/NSSFramework.pdf

2 DEECD What is Bullying?

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/what.aspx> (last updated 28 September 2013)

3. DET Respectful Relationships Framework 2016

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools cyclic review process.

Ratified May 2019