



ST JOHN VIANNEY PS
PARKDALE

Child Safety Standards

Overview

2018

Introduction

St. John Vianney Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and will take active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safety Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations & responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all children under their care.

In accordance with requirements of the [Victorian Government's Ministerial Order No 870](#), St. John Vianney Primary School maintains a culture of 'no tolerance' to child abuse. To achieve this it has established a holistic Child Safety Strategy incorporating the processes, policies & procedures listed below.

St. John Vianney Primary School Child safety Strategy includes, but is not limited to the:

1. Establishment of strategies for embedding a culture of child safety at the school;
2. Maintenance & communication of a policy affirming the school's commitment to child safety and the promotion of an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential;
3. Maintenance & implementation of a Child Safety Code of Conduct;
4. Established processes for screening, supervision, training, and other human resource practices to reduce the risk of child abuse & promote a child safe learning environment;
5. Maintenance & Communication of procedures for responding to and reporting child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
6. Risk Management strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse;
7. Maintenance of strategies to promote student participation & empowerment in creating an environment where they feel respected, valued and are capable of reaching their full potential.

Scope

St. John Vianney Primary School Child Safety Standards apply to any individual employed by the school, employed under contract, volunteers or contracted service providers. Failure to comply with any aspect of the school's Child Safety Standards may result in criminal proceedings in accordance with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.), the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust Report 2013.

Definitions

Child: Any child or young person enrolled as a student at the school.

Child Connected Work: Work authorised by the school's Principal, members of the Leadership Team or Board performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or are reasonably expected to be present.

Child Abuse: Includes:

- a. Any Act committed against a child involving:
 - i. A sexual offence
 - ii. An offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- b. The infliction , on a child of:
 - i. Physical violence
 - ii. Serious emotional or psychological harm
- c. Serious Neglect of a child.

Child Neglect: The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child, where they are in a position to do so, with conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

Child Physical Abuse: Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour.

Child Protection: Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

Child Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can also be:

- Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g. a teacher); the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated.

- Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion.
- Sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion.
- Non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14-year-old and an 11-year-old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse.

Child Safety: Encompasses matters relating to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners.

Reasonable Belief: When a staff member is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a ‘reasonable belief’. A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

School Environment: Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use by a child during or outside of school hours including:

- a. A campus of the school
- b. Online school environments, including email & intranet systems
- c. Other locations provided by the school for a child’s use including school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, school community and other events.

School Staff: Any individual working in the school environment who is:

- a. Directly engaged or employed by the school Principal or Board
- b. A volunteer or contracted service provider
- c. A minister of religion.

Our School’s Commitment to Ensuring Child Safety

All students enrolled at St. John Vianney Primary School have the right to feel safe. The wellbeing of students will always be our school’s first priority. The school aims to create a child safe environment where children feel valued & respected by committing to the following arrangements for students, parents, carers, staff members, clergy, volunteers and contractors.

Our Commitment to our Students:

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

Our Commitment to Parents and Carers

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

Our Commitment to our School Employees, Clergy, CRTs, Volunteers & Contractors:

- We commit to providing all staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers (CRTs), volunteers & contractors with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and the protection of students and young people. This will include regular briefings & annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by staff members, students, caregiver's clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We commit to providing adequate resources to support staff members, clergy, CRTs, volunteers & contractors meet and exceed their Child Safety obligations.
- We commit to appointing a 'Child Safety Officer', to further promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand, meet and exceed their Child Safety obligations.

- We commit to providing support to any member of the school community who reports a child safety complaint, suspected abuse, disclosure or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- We commit to providing opportunities for staff members, clergy, CRTs, volunteers & contractors to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

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



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School Policy

2017

Introduction

St. John Vianney Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and takes active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safety Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations & responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all children under their care.

In accordance with requirements of the [Victorian Government's Ministerial Order No 870](#), St. John Vianney Primary School maintains a culture of 'no tolerance' to child abuse and to support this has established minimum Child Safety Standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate St. John Vianney Primary School's commitment to ensuring Child Safety and to illustrate the measures implemented by the school to maintain a safe education environment, as well as processes for responding to suspected abuse.

Scope

This policy & associated procedures apply to all staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

Commitment to Child Safety

All students & young people attending St. John Vianney Primary School have the right to feel safe. The school affirms its commitment to child safety by adopting a 'zero tolerance' to child abuse and by actively implementing and managing strategies to help protect children from harm.

Initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety of students and young people at St. John Vianney Primary School include the following:

- » An annual assessment of the effectiveness of its Child Safety Management Strategies to identify areas for improvement.
- » A Code of Conduct defining workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

- » Processes for the recruitment, support, training & supervision of staff members, clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors who participate in 'Child Connected Work'.
- » Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected Child Abuse.
- » Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people in the establishment of Child Safety strategies.
- » A commitment that promotes safety of Indigenous children, children with disabilities and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

St. John Vianney Primary School maintains policies, procedures and strategies to create a child safe environment in the following areas.

Risk Management

St. John Vianney Primary School recognises the importance of minimising the potential of Child Abuse or harm and uses this process to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general Occupational Health & Safety risks the school proactively manages risk via a formal assessment process.

Code of Conduct

St. John Vianney Primary School enforces a Code of Conduct for all staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance and support to individuals so that they feel valued, respected and fairly treated. It is provided to any person engaged in 'Child Connected Work' and is available on the school website & in the Employee Handbook.

Recruitment, Support, Training & Supervision

St. John Vianney Primary School adopts Administrative & Human Resource practices to ensure its screening, recruitment & performance management processes identify and engage the most suitable candidates for positions available at the school. Recruitment and screening processes, as well as Police and Working With Children's Checks are minimum requirements for those engaged in 'Child Connected Work'.

Staff Members are provided with regular development opportunities, support, supervision & training to assist with addressing child safety matters.

Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Concerns or Abuse

St. John Vianney Primary School has appointed a Child Safety Officer, Kerry Slater, with specific responsibilities for responding to reports or complaints made by any member of the school community relating to child safety concerns or abuse. The school's Child Safety Officer works closely with members of the leadership team, staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, contractors, students and the parent community to ensure Child Safety Standards are maintained and all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct are immediately addressed.

Where staff members have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a student or young person they are mandated by law to report their concerns immediately to the Principal, Child Safety Officer or a Members of the Leadership Team before contacting DHHS Child Protection. Staff members will be supported through all aspects of the reporting process.

The school's reporting & complaints procedure is located on the school website.

Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people

St. John Vianney Primary School works with students to ensure that they are empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and encourage them to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or afraid. Staff members actively encourages students & young people to express their views on matters that directly affect them. The school educates students and young people on strategies they can adopt if they feel unsafe.

Valuing Diversity

St. John Vianney Primary School values diversity and does not tolerate discriminatory practices.

To achieve this the school:

- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous children and their families.
- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from cultural and/or linguistically different backgrounds.
- » Welcome children with disabilities and their families and actively promotes their participation.
- » Seek to employ staff members from a culturally diverse background.

Review of this Policy

St. John Vianney Primary School reviews its Child Safety Code of Conduct every three years more frequently in the event of a complaint or when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children.

Principal's Signature: 

Date: 31 / 01 / 2018

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