



Serpell Primary School

Child Safe Policy



Rationale

The Serpell Primary School Child Safe Policy demonstrates a strong commitment of the Principal, School Council, staff and volunteers to Child Safety. This policy applies to all school activities including excursions, camps and Out of School Hours Care program. All children have a right to feel and to be safe. We are sensitive to the diverse characteristics of the school community, ethnically and linguistically. We support and respect all children and are committed to the safety of children from diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe school environment for children with a disability.

The welfare of the children in our care is paramount. We have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing school environment that encourages curiosity, promotes learning, personal growth and wellbeing for all students. The school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks and all staff undertake Mandatory Reporting training.

Definitions

Definitions (from Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools)

ETR Act means the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 as amended from time to time.

Child means a child enrolled as a student at the school.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child abuse includes –

- (a) any act committed against a child involving –
 - (i) a sexual offence; or
 - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of –
 - (i) physical violence; or
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) serious neglect of a child.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Proprietor, in relation to a school, means the person who is ultimately responsible for the way the school is managed and conducted:

- (a) in the case of a Government school, the Secretary;
- (b) in the case of a non-Government school, the proprietor of the school.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- (a) A campus of the school;
- (b) Online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- (c) Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School governing authority means:

- (a) The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
- (b) The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
- (c) The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

School staff means:

- (a) In a Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - (i) Employed under Part 2.4 of the ETR Act in the government teaching service; or
 - (ii) Employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act;
- or

- (iii) A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- (b) In a non-Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - (i) Directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
 - (ii) A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
 - (iii) A minister of religion.

Aims

Our Students

Students at Serpell are encouraged to have a strong student voice. They are empowered, vital and active participants. As a future focussed International School, Serpell is striving to develop our students as contributing global citizens. We build confidence in understanding the ways that language, nationality, ethnicity and religion shape people and communities and we encourage our students to be multi lingual and maintain their language of origin.

Our Staff and Volunteers

All of our staff, parent helpers and volunteers must agree to abide by our Duty of Care which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. We follow a Duty of Care which provides guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Duty of Care in our Induction program. New staff members are allocated mentors to ensure they are aware of our Duty of Care practices.

Serpell Primary School applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of all staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. We provide support and supervision so everyone feels valued, respected and fairly treated.

School Culture

Our culture aims for all staff, students and wider members of our community to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of all children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.
- Welcome children with disabilities and their families and act to promote their participation.
- Seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Implementation

1. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with relevant policies and procedures. We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
2. We protect children when a risk is identified, in addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we manage risks of abuse to our students.
3. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (refer to eSmart policy).
4. All staff have a legal, ethical and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety.
5. All staff complete Mandatory Reporting training requirements and other professional development deemed necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children. All staff are required to regularly

complete and update DET Mandatory Reporting eLearning modules, along with the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

6. The Principal has the responsibility to respond to any complaint made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints processes are outlined in the Mandatory Reporting Policy.
7. The Duty of Care policy outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards all children. It aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.
8. All staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:
 - Adhering to our Child Safe Policy, and other relevant policies;
 - Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
 - Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions;
 - Welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive;
 - Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way;
 - Modelling appropriate adult behaviour by listening to children and responding to them appropriately;
 - Reporting and acting on any breaches of the Duty of Care, complaints or concerns;
 - Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.
9. Staff and volunteers must NOT
 - Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse;
 - Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children;
 - Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality;
 - Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
 - Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
 - Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers or social networking sites with children. (Except in the case of pre-existing relationship with a student. The staff member must be disclosed this to the principal.)
10. We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child harm or abuse to occur and use this to inform our policy procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we manage risks of abuse to all children. Staff are responsible for completing risk assessments for all school activities.
11. Staff and volunteers encourage children to express their views and suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We teach children to understand their basic human rights and responsibilities. This includes how to recognise and understand their feelings and knowledge about their safety in all school environments. They investigate this through curriculum programs such as, Life Education / Family Life and Cyber Safety programs.
12. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting application (Incident Reporter). All records are securely stored.

Companion Policies:

The Serpell Primary School Child Safe policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Duty of Care
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- eSmart Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

Resources:

- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority: <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/resources.html>
- Education and Training: <http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/schools/>
- Child Safe Standards <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/chilsafestandards.aspx>

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the School Council on the 21st of May 2018.