



LOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Loch Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school.

RATIONAL & BACKGROUND:

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards commence from 1 January 2016 for most organisations working with children, with the aim of promoting cultural change in the way organisations manage the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The child safe standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

The child safe standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations that provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

The Child Safe Standards

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangement. (See Appendix 1 & 2)

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety. (See Appendix 3)

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. (see Appendix 4)

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel (See appendix 5)
Further information can be found at VIT website and Working with Children Policies

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (See Appendix 6)
DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse (Appendix 7)

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children
(See Student Engagement Guidelines)

All Victorian Schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety (Ministerial Order 870) that details:

- The principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- The action the school proposes to take to:
 - i. Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy;
 - ii. Support encourage and enable school staff parents and children to understand identify discuss and report child safety matters and
 - iii. Support or assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY

Loch Primary School will develop an annual action plan which outlines the actions it will take to ensure the effective implementation of the Child Safe Standards including the appointment of a Child Safety Officer. The Child Safety Officer should have sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate) to undertake the role effectively. Currently the Child Safety Officer position of responsibility is held by the Principal, Tracey King.

Appendix 1 Child Safety Action Plan Appendix 2 Child Safety Officer Policy and Role Description

SCHOOL COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Loch Primary School is committed to the safety and well being of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making with particular attention upon the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse back grounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

Loch Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety which we follow rigorously.

Loch 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. Every person involved in Loch 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.

Loch Primary School will implement the Child Safe Standards to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school and promote an organisational culture that manages the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Our school has developed policies and procedures that aim to keep children safe. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Appendix 3: Commitment to Child Safety

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Loch Primary School 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.

Our Child safety Code of Conduct clearly describes the behaviours expected from staff, volunteers, visitors and other members of the community involved in our school. All staff members at our school are expected to have read and to implement the Child Safety Code of Conduct at all times.

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

- adhering to Loch Primary School child safe policy at all times
- upholding Loch Primary School statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- 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 Loch Primary School Child Safety Officer, Tracey King, and ensure any allegation to be reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to Loch Primary School's Child Safety Officer Tracey King
- 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

As staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children) or amount to grooming behaviour.
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- 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 their disability, age, gender, vulnerability, sexuality, culture, race, or ethnicity.
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's or Principal'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 student or their family unless necessary or appropriate
- in the school environment, or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct includes behaviour expectations and guidance on the following topics:

- Making a professional judgement
- Personal Living space
- Gifts, rewards and favouritism
- Infatuations
- Communication
- Social Contact
- Sexual Contact
- Physical Contact
- Behaviour management
- Personal Intimate Care
- One to one situations and home visits
- Transporting
- Trips and Outings
- Photography and videos
- Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

To promote child safety in the school environment we acknowledge the following:

All students have a right to:

- Take part in learning programs that meet their individual needs
- Feel secure and to be safe in a caring and supportive environment
- Work and Play without interference in an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness
- Have learning continue without disruption in a supportive environment
- Be valued for their individuality including: race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity
- Expect the schools rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.

All students have a responsibility to care and values themselves others teachers and the school community

- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others
- Treat others with respect and good manners
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour modelling and supporting school rules
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same
- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others
- Explore their full potential in their learning

School staff adhere to the following standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children.

- School staff provide opportunities for all students to learn
- School staff treat their students courtesy and dignity
- School staff work within the limits of their professional expertise
- School staff maintain objectivity in their relationships with students
- School staff are always in a professional relationship with the student in their school whether at school or not.

Appendix 4: Code of Conduct

OUR CHILDREN

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in Loch Primary School. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance at Loch Primary School and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

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

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children at Loch Primary School. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers as well as children and their families are given the opportunity to contribute to development of the code of conduct.

TRAINING & SUPERVISION

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Loch Primary School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Loch Primary School culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and / or diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly and participate in induction activities to ensure they understand Loch Primary School's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. (Please refer to the Code of Conduct and DET values to understand appropriate behaviour further.) Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Human Services Child Protection and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

RECRUITMENT

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Loch Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child related work, including volunteers are required to hold a working with Children check and to provide evidence of this check. Please see the Working with Children Check website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information.

We carry out reference check and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police records checks are used only for the purpose of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

FAIR PRODECURES FOR PERSONNEL

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decision we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

PRIVACY

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

CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT

At Loch Primary School our child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. Our school Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct clearly outlines our commitment to implementing the 7 Standards for Child Safety as outlined in the Ministerial Order No. 870.

At Loch Primary School our process includes risk assessment (see matrix below), implementation of controls and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

Risk Rating Matrix

RISK RATING		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

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 and doors that can lock and online environments (for examples, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisation social media)

- If the school identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one of more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specific the actions which the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (Risk Control). 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.

- As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls
- At least annually the school must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school about:
 - Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
 - child abuse risks in the school environment and
 - The school's current child safety standards

Child Safety Risks and Risk Management Strategies

The list below comprises an inventory of potential child safety risk and risk management strategies.

Risks

- Lack of an organisational culture of child safety
- Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues
- Natural trust of long term employees (who may have developed issues over time)
- Children alone with one other person unsupervised
- Recruitment of an inappropriate person
- Inappropriate behaviour not reported
- Harassment via email, SMS or other media
- Unsupervised recreational or other activities
- Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)
- Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues
- Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps
- False allegations

Risk Management Strategies

- Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy
- Child safety code of conduct
- Child safety reporting procedures
- Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour
- Counselling and other resources
- Clear windows in walls to enable visibility of occupants
- Non-lockable doors in hot spots
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks
- Supervision or monitoring of activities
- Online searches (Google, Facebook etc)
- Performance management procedures
- Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety
- Criminal history checks and confirming the currency of

At Loch Primary School we believe that our in-depth Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct enable the monitoring of risk and risk management.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHILD EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The school will develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- Resilience
- Child abuse awareness and prevention
- The school must promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user friendly to children

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- All Victorian Teachers have a legal responsibility to report incidents where children's safety is at risk. Victorian Government School employees are expected to follow the DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>
- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our school will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Mandated staff members (Teachers and Principals) 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. Staff Members whether or not mandated need to report to the principal 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 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.

These procedures do not:

- Prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- State or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation
- Require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
- Prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse:

- Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies
 - Mandatory reporting policy
 - Student engagement policy
 - Duty of care policy

Appendix 5 Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures **ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

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

REGULAR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. Loch Primary School will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute to reviews. Where possible Loch Primary School will work with local indigenous communities, culturally and / or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

This policy was last updated on Monday 18th December and is scheduled for review in December 2020. School Council was presented with this policy in February 2019.
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Child Safe Definitions:

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes.

Child abuse includes—

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

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 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.

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 campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- 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 staff means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
 - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
 - a minister of religion¹.
- **School governing authority** means:
 - The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.