



LOCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safety Standards

Code of Conduct

Rationale:

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

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

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

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

All staff members at Loch Primary School are expected to have read and to implement the Child Safety Code of Conduct at all times.

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 continued without disruption in a supportive environment.
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity.
- Expect the school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.
- To be safe in every aspect of daily life at school, including Out Of School Hours Programs, camps and excursions.

All students have a responsibility to:

- Care and value 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 adheres 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 with 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 students in their school whether at school or not

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, parents, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work, individually we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- 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

Unacceptable behaviours

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

- ignore or disregard any 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

This Code of Conduct sets out specific guidelines and professional boundaries of behaviour to clearly state acceptable and unacceptable adult/child relationships and behaviours. All staff members at our school are expected to have read and to implement the following 'Child Safety Code of Conduct' at all times.

Making a professional judgement

Adults Loch Primary School will:

- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child
- Record interactions and share them with a member of the Principal Class.
- Ensure actions taken are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a leadership team member
- Be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others

- Not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.

Personal/living space

Adults at Loch Primary School will;

- Not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and care givers, School Leadership, or the home has been designated as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers
- Be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- Not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Gifts, rewards and favouritism

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Be aware of their organisation's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared
- Only give gifts to an individual child part of an agreed reward system
- Ensure that when operating reward systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

Infatuations

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Deal with infatuations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned
- Make sure their own behaviour is beyond reproach
- If they become aware of an infatuation developing or any indications that it may, record it and discuss it with the School Leadership member so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

Communication (including the use of technology)

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries this includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- Not share any personal information with a child
- Not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role
- Not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless the need to do so is agreed with School Leadership and parents
- Only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by their organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with School policy

- Only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible
- Not use internet or web-based communication channels to send messages
- Use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the schools policy.

Social Contact

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Not have social contact with children unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with School Leadership
- Not have secret social contact with children and/or their parent(s);
- Always approve any planned social contact with children with School Leadership
- Advise senior management of any social contact that has occurred which may raise concern
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing.

Sexual Contact

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Not engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity, to do so would be considered a criminal offence;
- Not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically
- Not discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children
- Ensure relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism
- Ensure language, attitudes and demeanour do not give rise to comment or speculation
- Be aware that consistently conferring in appropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as part of a grooming process, and as such will give rise to concerns about behaviour.

Physical Contact

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities, never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary
- Seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable
- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Not indulge in horse play
- Always encourage children, where possible to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and sensitive to issues of gender
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with School Leadership and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan

- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Behaviour Management:

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child
- Not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments
- Ensure any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Never use corporal punishment
- Follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property
- When, using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident
- Be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, i.e. bullying, changes in home circumstances

Note: the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Personal/Intimate Care

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Adhere to the school's code of conduct
- Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- Explain to the child what is happening
- Carefully and sensitively observe the emotional responses of the child, and record and report any concerns to School Leadership and parents, if appropriate
- Respect children's privacy at all times
- Avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, other than as part of an agreed care plan
- Not change, in the same place as children
- Not shower or bathe with children
- Not assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves

One to one situations/home visits

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Ensure that when working alone, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed to
- Avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas
- Always inform colleagues and/or parents about one to one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- Avoid the use of 'engaged' signage on doors where ever possible, these create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- Carefully consider the need of the child when in one to one situation and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry towards you
- Agree what the purpose for any home visit with School Leadership team unless it is an acknowledged and integral part of your role

- Never put yourself into a one to one situation when little or no information is available about the child.

Transporting

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Ensure requirements around seat belts and car seats are adhered to
- Not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of School Leadership and been agreed with parents
- Ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive
- Record details of the journey in accordance with agreed DET procedures
- Ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance;
- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned.

Trips and Outings

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with by School Leadership
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken
- Have parental consent to the activity
- Never share beds with children
- Not share bedrooms unless it is a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been agreed with the School Leadership, parents and children.

Photography and Videos

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Be clear about the purpose of any activity involving photography and what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded
- Be able to justify the reason for having images of children in their possession
- Avoid making images in one to one situations or situations that may be construed as secretive or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by their school
- Immediately report any concerns if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found
- Have parental consent to take, display and/or distribute any images of children
- Not use images that may cause distress or offence
- Only use mobile phones or any other devices that have a camera to take images of children that has been authorised by their school
- When taking photographs and videos of students using a mobile phone all images and videos must be uploaded by the end of the school day and deleted from mobile phones.

Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

Adults at Loch Primary School will:

- Not access, make or store indecent images of children on the internet, to do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation
- Not make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment
- Follow their schools guidance on the use of IT equipment
- Ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through Information, Communication Technology
- Ensure that any materials shown to children are age appropriate
- Immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the School Leadership and follow the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

Implementation:

Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

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.

Reporting a belief

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, Tracey King who is the Child Safety Officer, 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.

Failure to protect offence

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

Failure to Disclose offence

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

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

Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Reporting Obligations – Policy and Procedures in response to allegations of child abuse, reportable conduct, failure to disclose, failure to protect and grooming.

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 and Procedures Policy 2014*
- *Student Engagement Policy 2014*
- *Duty of Care Policy 2014*
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the Department Mandatory Reporting online Professional Development
- Ensure that we follow the staff selection checklist before any staff member is offered employment.
- Ensure that any Out of School Hours program providers have copies of our school policy.
- Provide a safe environment that staff can come and discuss their child safety concerns with the Principal.
- Provide students regularly with exposure to numbers such as Kids Helpline through the mechanism of our eSmart curriculum.

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

- The school authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
 - standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
 - healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
 - resilience; and
 - 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.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>

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

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

- 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 staff 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.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with the whole school community as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

<p>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.</p>
