



# CHILD SAFE POLICY

## Child Safe Standard 2

*A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety*

### **PURPOSE**

Orchard Grove Primary School's Child Safe Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES**

Orchard Grove Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Orchard Grove Primary School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment that engages curiosity, promotes learning, personal growth, and wellbeing for all students. We strive to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who are active, adaptable, and resilient lifelong learners. We aim to promote international-mindedness and develop students who are valued and respected members of our local and global communities and be prepared for future life experiences.

At Orchard Grove Primary School our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

Respect – treating people with dignity and property with care

Valuing Diversity – accepting and celebrating difference

Integrity – displaying honesty and trust with ourselves and others

Working Together – shared effort and responsibilities when working towards common goals

Fostering Growth – promoting academic, social, emotional and physical development.

Orchard Grove Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We are 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. Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

Every person involved in Orchard Grove Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play 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.

## Child Safety Principles

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Orchard Grove 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 concerns;
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; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

## POLICY

### Strategies To Embed A Child Safe Culture

Orchard Grove Primary School culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy and:

[Code of Conduct](#) (see Appendix below)

The school's **Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures**

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/Uploads/child-safe-code-of-conduct.pdf>,

[Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the

[Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available online and in hard copy at the school's office for all staff and students to read at any time.

As part of Orchard Grove Primary School child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the Principal and Assistant Principals) will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
  - Act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary
- Read the school's Child Safe Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations including:
  - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
  - Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
  - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
  - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
  - Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
  - Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation).
  - For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of Orchard Grove Primary School child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **school councils and school council members** will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- The Child Safety Officer (Leeanne King) is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safe Policy every 3 years.
- The Child Safety Officer (Leeanne King) is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safe Policy. The school community should approach the Child Safety Officer (Leeanne King) if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safe Policy.
- The Child Safety Officer (Leeanne King) is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Orchard Grove Primary School other child safety policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register.

## RECRUITMENT

Orchard Grove Primary School follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices which are available on the [Department's website](#).

All volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check. This will include requiring all volunteers on fete stalls, fundraising committees etc. to hold a Working with Children Check.

## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations or suspicions 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. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

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

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safe Policy (this document), the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on the school website. They will also be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by school staff to the Principal or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with Orchard Grove Primary School **Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures** where required.

# REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including school council representatives) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Orchard Grove Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff or volunteers from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and

Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Orchard Grove Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found at [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#).

## RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Orchard Grove Primary School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Orchard Grove Primary School will ensure that it monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in the school's risk assessment register (Link: [child safe standard 6 risk assessment](#)).

### Listening To, Communicating With And Empowering Children

Orchard Grove Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need.

Students can access information on how to report abuse from their classroom teacher, school administration area, and the [school website](#).

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at Orchard Grove Primary School to read;
- [PROTECT Child Safety posters](#) will be displayed across the school;
- The Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff as part of the annual Staff Training 'Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and Other Obligations ([Child Safe Standard 6](#)):
- Age appropriate discussion of child safety with students. This will include child safety when on camps and excursions;
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- Resilience; and
- Child abuse awareness and prevention.

Specific programs include but are not limited to:

Respectful Relationships (F-6); Mind, Body and Relationships (Years 5 & 6); e-Smart (F-6); In@OGPS (F-6); School Values (F-6); Zones of Regulation (F-6); Positive Education (F-6).

## Communications

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safe Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website
- Once per term reminders in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion
- Discussing child safety at school tours with prospective parents, at parent information sessions or in class, volunteer induction processes, and/or by placing posters throughout the school.

## Confidentiality And Privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information are included in the Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

## DEFINITIONS

### Child Abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

## Child-connected Work

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

### Child Safety

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

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

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email, Compass and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events)

### School Staff

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

DET Policy and Advisory Library:

- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)

### Child Safe Standard 5

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)  
Child Safe Standard6
- [Risk assessment register](#)

### PROTECT

- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Child Safe Policy:

- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations \(including Mandatory Reporting\) Policy and Procedures](#)
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Duty of Care Policy

## **Review Cycle And Evaluation**

Presented to School Council: 2021

To be reviewed: 2024



## Appendix 1: Code of Conduct

Orchard Grove 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 Orchard Grove 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 Orchard Grove Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member 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.

### Acceptable Behaviours

As staff, 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:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy when the school has a policy in place;
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership team or child safety officer (Leeanne King, Assistant Principal);
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse;
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

### 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 concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse;
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts);

- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context;
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate;
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting;
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity;
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter;
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes[1];
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy [2] or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Ratified by Council: 2021  
Review Date: 2024

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[1] SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

[2] SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet.