

Policy Number	Ratification Date	Reviewed	Review Date
12	Sept 2016	Nov 2017	2018



# CHILD SAFETY POLICY

## Purpose

At Elsternwick Primary School we are committed to creating a child safe environment – this means a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.

At Elsternwick Primary School, we recognise that positive relationships are foundational for learning. Our purpose is to build caring and respectful relationships between school, students and families so that young people develop resilience and independence and feel safe, and are confident to take risks in order to achieve personal excellence.

Our ongoing commitment is that our children feel safe, and that they are safe – this means they can learn!

We believe that everyone has a right to be their best, we work hard to ensure that all our young people, including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse, are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and those with diverse needs, including with disabilities, are able to be their best.

The student engagement and inclusion policy outlines our approach to diversity, this includes our bullying policy to ensure that no child should feel unsafe to learn and grow.

This is our school's approach to implementing the child safe standards. Our school aims to 'walk the talk' and will continuously strive to better the way we do things.

## Scope

This policy applies to all school staff this means teachers, DET employees, volunteers, contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

It also applies across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

## Statement of Commitment

Elsternwick Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. You can read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety [here](#).

## Policy and Procedures

Elsternwick Primary School has a number policies and procedures that focus on the wellbeing and safety of our student. These policies are reviewed regularly, often in consultation with the school community, and are available on our website or from the front office in hard copy format.

We encourage our young people, parents/carers and families to be familiar with our policies and to feel empowered to speak up should they feel we are not meeting the high standards we have set for ourself.

Our school follows the Department of Education and Training's policy and procedures for identifying and responding to child abuse. This means we have made the Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools Guidance available to all our staff and school community from the [www.education.vic.gov.au/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/protect) website.

Our mandatory reporting policy sets out the key responsibilities for our staff and ensures that we have adopted, and follow, the four critical actions for responding to and reporting incidents of child abuse.

There are also fact sheets for parents and carers, primary students and staff for identifying and responding to child abuse. To align with the principle of diversity underpinning the Standards, these fact sheets are available in 14 community languages and also in an Easy English version.

### **Elsternwick Primary child-safe culture**

Elsternwick Primary School is already a friendly and safe environment for staff and students.

Our focus on developing our child safe culture means that we are working to empower our staff and all members of the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns about child abuse. Our goal is by having this open, transparent approach, it makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

The schools' child safety policy and other information to ensure our school creates a child safe culture can be found on our website at <http://elsternwickps.vic.edu.au>.

### **Staff understand their roles and responsibilities/ Code of conduct**

School leaders and managers 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 Elsternwick Primary School's Child Safety Code of Conduct in addition to their existing professional codes.

The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

### **Human resources practices and training**

Elsternwick Primary School applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.

All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

We follow the requirements of the Department of Education and Training, this includes the approach of the Recruitment in Schools Guide as well as a child safety focus within our position descriptions across different class contracts.

Because the child safe standards definition of school staff extends to volunteers and service contractors, we are working to create general role descriptions for our volunteers and contractors. The Volunteer and Visitor Policy outlines the requirements for both volunteering and visiting our school.

### **Reporting a child safety concern or making a report**

Elsternwick Primary School has clear expectations for all adults, including staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to an incident, allegation, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.

Our mandatory reporting and other obligations policy sets out the key responsibilities for our staff and ensures that we have adopted, and follow, the four critical actions for responding to and reporting incidents of child abuse.

To better inform our school community fact sheets for parents and carers, primary students and staff are available at [www.education.vic.gov/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov/protect) - these fact sheets outline how to identify and respond to child abuse, for students it is about what to do if they feel unsafe  
To align with the principle of diversity underpinning the Standards, these fact sheets are available in 14 community languages and also in an Easy English version.

## Risk reduction and management

Elsternwick 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.

The school's approach to Child Safety risk reduction and management can be found on the website at <http://elsternwickps.vic.edu.au> the approach follows the Department of Education and Training's risk management framework.

## Listening to children

At Elsternwick Primary School we have 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.

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 of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers) informed about progress.

## Confidentiality and Privacy

Elsternwick Primary 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 School Privacy Policy.

## Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

## Definitions

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

**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 being: 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 such as an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

### **Related policies and documents**

[Protect Resources](#)

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)

[DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework](#)

[School Privacy Policy](#)

[Recruitment in Schools Guide](#)

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Risk Management](#)

[Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority – Child Safe Standards Resources](#)