

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2 – CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY

LEGISLATION

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015, which amended the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 to introduce the Child Safe Standards that would apply to all organisations involved in child related work in Victoria.

Ministerial Order 870 - Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools provides guidance on how the Standards apply to a school setting. It came into effect on 1 August 2016.

PURPOSE

The Child Safe Policy sets out the school’s approach to creating 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.

Montpellier Primary School is committed to providing a safe, healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students. As a community we want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We want our students to be resilient, develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills. As a community we support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Our school values relationships that are built on mutual respect, inclusivity, honesty and trust and we teach students Habits of Mind to reinforce this. There is zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures. We meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child’s safety, which we follow rigorously. Our school is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, removing and reducing these risks. As a community we support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. Montpellier Primary School has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, casual relief staff, volunteers, and the school community to ensure:

- A shared understanding of our school values and school wellbeing processes.
- A collective responsibility for student wellbeing in all school related environments.
- Provision of successful experiences for all children, where a sense of belonging and wellbeing are strengthened.
- We empower children who are vital and active participants in our 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
- Children develop positive social behaviours and problem solving skills.

- Staff are confident, skilled and proactive in the management of student wellbeing issues
- Communication processes and protocols are clear and well known to ensure the effectiveness of student wellbeing support.
- All staff are required to follow Mandatory Reporting processes.

POLICY

Student safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between school, staff, students, home and the community and is primarily guided by the following health and wellbeing practice principles:

- Principle 1 - Maximise access and inclusion.
 - Principle 2 - Focus on outcomes.
 - Principle 3 - Evidence - informed and reflective practice.
 - Principle 4 - Holistic approach.
 - Principle 5 - Person- centred and family sensitive practice.
 - Principle 6 - Partnerships with families and communities.
 - Principle 7 - Cultural confidence.
 - Principle 8 - Commitment to excellence.
- All staff are aware of the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedures Policy and their responsibilities. Reporting is guided by the Protect 4 guidelines.
 - Families also have access to the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedures Policy and expectations of the school.
 - All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the Child Safety Code of Conduct. This is also written in a user friendly way and on display for all visitors and families to view.
 - The school leadership and wellbeing team coordinate student engagement and wellbeing and promote and acknowledge demonstration of the school values.
 - The school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
 - A Child Safety Policy has been endorsed by School Council.
 - The Child Safety Policy is provided for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings. This includes non-teaching staff. External teachers, ICT staff, etc. are also given the document.
 - All staff have access to a copy of Ministerial Order 870.
 - Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website.

Child abuse: a definition:

Any act committed against a child involving –

- A sexual offence; or
- An offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and

The infliction, on a child, of – •

- Physical violence; or
- Serious emotional or psychological harm; and

Serious neglect of a child.

- See the Department’s web portal Protect: Identifying Signs of Child Abuse

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 (Refer to Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedures).

- All school staff undertake the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning module annually. A register is kept by office staff to ensure all staff complete this training.
- Montpellier Primary School has rigorous human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Montpellier Primary School will adopt a proactive and strategic stance with issues of student wellbeing, rather than operating in a consistently reactive mode. The wellbeing process guides this work.
- Montpellier Primary School will implement wellbeing support structures and programs which prioritise and address the identified needs of individual students or the school as a whole and that help implement the aims of the policy. Refer to the Code of Conduct, Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy.
- 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 a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

The school will endeavour to implement and maintain programs such as: -

- Brave Hearts Program
 - Restorative practices
 - Visiting presenters such as 'The Resilience Project', Life Education, Project Rockit
 - DET teacher guidelines on Bullying
 - Cyber Safety programs
 - Lunchtime activities
 - Student wellbeing forums
 - School Chaplain
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- Montpellier Primary School has a rigorous human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
 - Montpellier Primary School takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children.
 - Montpellier Primary School develops selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
 - 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.
 - Montpellier Primary School carries out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. (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)

The school will provide the following support structures:

- Monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences.
- Behaviour Management plans as required.
- Protocol for Mandatory Reporting and other reporting obligations.
- Student Behaviour Tracker- Compass
- Behaviour will be monitored and discussed regularly at PLCs and if required, at Leadership Team meetings.

- Leaders will continue to self-reflect on the implementation of the Montpellier Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Yard behaviour will be monitored daily by the yard duty teachers. Positive behaviours will be acknowledged and unacceptable behaviour will be addressed and recorded at the time of the incident in Compass.
- Compass wellbeing entries will be reviewed by Leadership with trends, hot-spots and repeated offences measured for the purpose of monitoring our student wellbeing throughout the school.

The school will also access services to provide support for students and staff which include:

- Network School Support Services Officers and Visiting Teachers as required.
- Providing support for 'at risk' children, including teacher guidance and counselling.
- Department of Human Services case managers and support workers.
- Relevant DET support staff.
- School Nurse

The school will endeavour to cater for children identified with specific welfare issues by:

- Creating support groups.
- Monitoring performance and behaviour.
- Providing ongoing support.
- Engaging with organisations such as CASA, DHHS, Barwon Family Child and Youth services, The Orange Door, Berry Street, Drummond Street, Child First.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedures Policy
- School Policy and Advisory Guide - Child Protection Reporting Obligations
- DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES:

- Victorian Government, Education and Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No. 870
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) Information Sheet. Child Safe Standard 2: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0
- Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- eLearning module: Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations
- State of Victoria (2010) Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools

Review cycle

This policy was last updated and ratified on 16/09/19 following review and development by School Council. It is scheduled for review in September 2021