Child Safety Commitment and Policy

Bunyip 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. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Principles of Child Safety:

"In its planning, decision-making and operations Bunyip Primary School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children, have high quality staff, volunteer supervision and professional development;
- 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 issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers."

Child Safety Code of Conduct:

Students

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 school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.

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.

Staff / Contractors / Volunteers

Bunyip 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 Bunyip 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 Bunyip 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.
- 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
- 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
- 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.

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 need to report to the principal or assistant 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 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. *(Please refer to the Bunyip PS Mandatory Reporting and Procedures Policy for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse.)*

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*
  - *Student Engagement Policy*

> ➢ *Duty of Care Policy*

> ➢ **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 will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented risk controls.
- The school will ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school staff and School Council 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.
- The school will ensure that 'child safe' is standing agenda item on both the fortnightly staff meeting agenda and the monthly School Council meeting agenda
- At least annually, the school will conduct briefing sessions for members of staff and School Council, to ensure a high degree of awareness of the child safe standards and the school strategy

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation
- Bunyip Primary School will 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 will promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Evaluation

Ratified by School Council: December 2017

To be reviewed in: March 2019

IMPLEMENTING CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4- DEPARTMENTAL AND SCHOOL ACTIONS

The table below outlines the steps to implement the requirements of Standard 4.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action

1. *Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have clear statements regarding the child safety requirements of the role and the expectations of the occupant*	• The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated and requires that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the following standard 'Child safe environments' clause:
	"Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website."
	• In the near future, position descriptions generated in Recruitment Online (ROL) will be automated to include a standard clause regarding child safety.
	• The Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include the text italicised in the below:
	  - Preamble:
	    The aims of the Department include: " … the provision of a child safe environment"
	  - Schedule B – Accountabilities of a principal – Student Support:
	    "Pt 2) Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general well-being of all students in attendance at the school including compliance with the Child Safe Standards "
	This will apply for future contracts.
		• Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions include the standard 'Child safe environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.
		• For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3.
		• Note that the Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include reference to the Standards, and all contracts offered on or after 1 August will include the revised wording.

2. *All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).*	• As above	• As above
3. *In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected*	• The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated to include that, the Principal, prior to an external applicant person commencing employment, must be satisfied that the person: *"meets the Child Safe Standards." (insert link to CSS site"* This can be found [here](#).	• Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant *meets the Child Safe Standards* prior to the applicant's employment.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
4. *The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information about a particular individual within the previous 12 months*		
5. *The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to induction and continuing suitability for child connected work*	• Advice on alignment of/ changes to Induction will be developed in 2016. • Advice on alignment of/ changes to Performance and Development will be developed in 2016, with changes to be determined for the 2017-18 Performance and Development cycle.	• Note that further advice on requirements related to Induction and Performance and Development will be developed in 2016 to ensure schools fully meet this Standard.
6. *The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety*	• As above.	• School Councils to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2]

APPENDIX TWO

Identifying and responding to all forms of child abuse in Victorian schools.

PRINCIPALS CHECKLIST
Fulfilling your role when an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse comes to your attention
If there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse concerning a student or staff member at your school, as a Principal, you are responsible for:

Reporting and recording
- ☐ Ensuring that **the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse** have been followed
- ☐ Ensuring that your staff complete the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template for all Victorian Schools**
- ☐ Undertaking the review process included within the template between 4-6 weeks after a report is made.

On-going communication
Ongoing liaison/communication with:
- ☐ DHHS Child Protection and Victoria Police
- ☐ Regional Office and SIRU if engaged (Government schools)
- ☐ Parents/carers of all impacted students (where appropriate, following advice from authorities)
If an international student is impacted:
- ☐ Liaison with International Education Division (Government schools)

If an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Student is impacted:
- ☐ Liaison with Koorie Education Officer (Government schools)

If a staff member is implicated:
- ☐ Liaison with Victoria Police
- ☐ Ongoing communication and action as set out by the Employee Conduct Branch (Government schools)

Providing on-going support

Overseeing the development of a short-term action plan for all children impacted by suspected abuse in consultation with:
- ☐ The Region and the Student Incident and Recovery Unit (government schools)

Ensuring ongoing education and support services are provided for all children involved via:
- ☐ Formation of a Student Support Group
- ☐ Developing, implementing and reviewing a *Student Support Plan* in partnership with children and their parents/carers, allied health workers and external support agencies where appropriate (this plan should list appropriate school-level and non-school based supports and should assist students in returning to school)
- ☐ Addressing concerns as they arise

Provision of school based wellbeing services
- ☐ Continued monitoring of the situation and the health and wellbeing of impacted children and staff members
- ☐ Ensuring the provision of ongoing support for the children, families and staff members involved.

Child Safe Standard 6: Risk Assessment

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Unlikely	Major	Medium	• Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed • Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available	Principal, School Council	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear Mandatory reporting procedures Performance management procedures	Unlikely	Severe	Low	• Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed • Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module	Principal, Whole Staff	Low
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Major	Low	• Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module • Child Safe Policy provided to all persons entering school site.	Principal, Office Staff	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Low	Processes updated to require: • Criminal history search • Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety	Principal, Selection Panels	Low
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	• Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour • Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies	Principal, Staff, School Community	Low
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child	Unlikely	Moderate	Low	• Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks • Ensure Code and strategies	Principal, Whole Staff	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
	safety				apply in all school contexts • Clear child safety reporting procedures		
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	• Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors • Child Safe Policy provided to all persons entering school site.	Principal, Office Staff	Low