

Child safety commitment and policy



Statement of commitment to child safety and child safety principles

Bunyip Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We are committed to ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment where children and young people:

- are safe and feel safe
- have their voices heard about decisions that affect their lives
- feel respected
- have their dignity and self-esteem fostered to enable them to thrive in their learning and development.

This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability and children who are vulnerable. Bunyip Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

School vision and values

Bunyip Primary School's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe environment is guided by our school vision and values. At Bunyip Primary School our vision is 'to empower students to embrace learning, achieve their personal best and build their social, emotional and physical well-being.'

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

- Respect – for ourselves and others
- Responsibility – being accountable for our actions
- Resilience – the ability to bounce back.

Every person involved in Bunyip Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the well-being and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Implementation

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether 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 and covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

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 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).

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.

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 for 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.
- Demonstrate school expectations and values.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.
- Respect the rights of others to learn.
- Explore their full potential in their learning.

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

Bunyip Primary School will deliver appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour and expectations for students attending the school;
- our school values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- 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.

Strategies to embed a child safe culture

Bunyip Primary School's 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, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and

Procedures, [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 office for all staff and students to read at any time.

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
- 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
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - Duty of care
 - Mandatory reporting obligations
 - Reportable conduct obligations
 - Organisational duty of care
 - For more information on these obligations, see Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools.

As part of Bunyip Primary School's child safe culture:

School leadership (including the principal and assistant principal) 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 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.
- Ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.
- Be responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the school Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- Be responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.

School staff responsible for mandatory reporting are required to:

- 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

- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.

School council members will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings [Note that there is no requirement to discuss child safety at every school council meeting, but it is best practice to have child safety on the agenda at some meetings to show that the school is embedding a culture of child safety and school council members are informed and understand the issues]
- 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
- When hiring employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe (unless delegated to the principal).
- Review and update the Child Safety Policy every 3 years.

Recruitment

Bunyip Primary School follows the Department of Education and Training's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the DET's website.

All prospective volunteers must comply with Bunyip Primary School's Volunteers and WWCC policies.

Training and supervision

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

Our school culture aims for all staff (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 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 support our staff through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

New employees will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safety 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.

All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work.

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 employees) 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.

Bunyip Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff 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, Bunyip 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 www.bunyipps.vic.edu.au

Risk reduction and management

Bunyip Primary School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the school's risk assessment register. 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.

Bunyip Primary School 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.

Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies:

- Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures Policy
- Student Engagement Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

If a risks of child abuse in identified in the school environment the School Leadership 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.*)

The school leadership 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.

- 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.

Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

Bunyip 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 at the school administration office or the school chaplain's office.

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 Bunyip Primary School to read at the school office or www.bunyipps.vic.edu.au
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform 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 and expectations for students attending the school;
- our school values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

Communications

Bunyip Primary School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safety 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
- Reminders of our school's commitment to child safety will be in the school newsletter

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 is included in the Department of Education and Training's Schools' Privacy Policy.

Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [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](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

Evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Ratified by School Council: May 2021

To be reviewed in: May 2024

Appendix 1: 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety 	Unlikely	Major	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child safety code of conduct Clear mandatory reporting procedures Performance management procedures 	Unlikely	Severe	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures 	Possible	Major	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module Child Safe Policy provided to all persons entering school site. 	Principal, Office 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
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration 	Unlikely	Major	Low	Processes updated to require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal history search • Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety 	Principal, selection panels	Low
Engagement with children online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child safety code of conduct • Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety 	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child safety code of conduct • Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety 	Unlikely	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks • Ensure Code and strategies apply in all school contexts • Clear child safety reporting procedures 	Principal, all 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
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate monitoring 	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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