



## Moe - South St Primary School 4662 Child Safe Policy



**South St Primary School** is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school.

### **Background:**

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards will commence from 1 January 2016 for most organisations working with children, with the aim of promoting cultural change in the way organisations manage the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The child safe standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

### **Purpose**

South St Primary School implement the Child Safe Standards to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students at the School and promote an organisational culture that manages the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Our School has developed policies and procedures that aim to keep children safe. The standards will provide a framework to identify gaps and improve policy and practices around child safety.

South St 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.

Every person involved in South St Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays 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.

The Child Safe Standards

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

**Standard 1:** Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements (See appendix 1)

**Standard 2:** A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety (See Appendix 2 Our Commitment to Child Safety)

**Standard 3:** A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children (see Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy)

**Standard 4:** Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel (See VIT and Working with Children Policies)

**Standard 5:** Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>)

**Standard 6:** Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse (Appendix 4)

**Standard 7:** Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children (See Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy)

## Appendix One:

### South St Primary School School Child Safe Definitions:

#### Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe).

**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** means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
  - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
  - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, 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 is an intermediary)
  - a minister of religion<sup>1</sup>.
  - **School governing authority** means:
    - The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
    - The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
    - The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.
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## Appendix Two:

### South St Primary School Our commitment to child safety

South St Primary School is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have 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 and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Our schools is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

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.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If we believe immediate action is required, we will refer the matter to the Student Welfare officer or a member of the schools leadership team who would then report concerns to DHHS child protection or another appropriate agency.

#### Our children

This policy is intended to 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.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

## **Our staff and volunteers**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

## **Training and supervision**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our 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 discussing any allegations 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.

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

New employees and volunteers will be assigned a mentor and have regular contact to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this school's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## **Recruitment**

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school 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. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)> for further information

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment. 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.

## **Fair procedures for personnel**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using a data base, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored on the administration drive.

## Privacy

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. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

## Legislative responsibilities

Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- All Victorian Teachers have a legal responsibility to report incidents where children's safety is at risk. Victorian Government School employees are expected to follow the DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>
- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our school will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

## Risk management

In Victoria, schools are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

The 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.

## Allegations, concerns and complaints

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.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
  - behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed<sup>2</sup>
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- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

### **Regular review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.



## Appendix Three:

### South St Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct (Currently under review)

#### Basic Belief

This belief is based on Values as listed in our Strategic Plan. At the heart of this is the development of the potential of all children (academically, intellectually, interpersonally and emotionally), regardless of any negative influences from home background and/or peer culture, through instilling children in the Foundations of:

- Being Safe
- Being a Learner
- Being Respectful

We implement School Wide Positive Behaviours.

We believe therefore, that each child has the right to learn in a pleasant, safe environment among people who are friendly, co-operative and mutually respectful of each others rights and property. In such an atmosphere each child should be provided with the opportunity to develop self-respect, self-discipline and knowledge.

Each child must recognise the right of others to learn and grow in this environment and respect the right of the teacher to foster this learning and growth.

The code of conduct is based upon the following principles:

All children have the right to:

- feel secure and to be safe in a caring and supportive environment
- work and play without interference, in an atmosphere of harmony and co-operation
- express their feelings and opinions assertively
- be valued for their individuality, including that of race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity
- learn in a supportive atmosphere

The following responsibilities support these rights:

- treat others with courtesy, kindness and respect
  - listen to others with mutual respect
  - maintain a safe and secure school environment
  - model and support school rules
  - develop responsibility for their own actions
  - value others, for their individual differences
  - work to achieve personal best whilst allowing others to do the same
- In addition
- All children will be encouraged to exhibit pride in their school
  - Rules will be fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved

- Teachers should expect to be able to teach in an atmosphere of order and co-operation
- Parents have an obligation to support the school in its efforts to maintain a productive teaching and learning environment
- Principal and staff have an obligation to implement the Code of Conduct fairly, reasonably and consistently respecting the rights of all involved.

### Discipline Guidelines

At South Street Primary School we have a consistent and positive approach to behaviour that will foster a school climate; where children's personal responsibility and self-discipline are developed; where real compliance is achieved because fairness and a focus on making things right is part of the process.

We are committed to the following strategies:

- Developing children's understanding of Expectations of expected behaviours in line with our Values.
- Giving positive reinforcement to improve self-esteem, for example, acknowledgement tokens certificates, special yard prizes, student of the week (See "Features of good practice" for further examples of Positive reinforcements)
- Acknowledging student achievements in the school newsletter and at assemblies
- Requiring children to be accountable for their own behaviour
- Strategies such as those described by Bill Rogers and Helen McGrath. These are excellent for developing positive classrooms built on trust and mutual respect. (See later - "Ideas for Best Practice") The book 'Behaviour Management: A Whole School Approach' by Bill Rogers (available from library) will be used as the basis of developing and managing classroom and whole school codes of behaviour.
- The Assertive Discipline model of behaviour management is recommended as the guideline for the development of self discipline and classroom management. "Ideas for Best Practice" outlines a suggested model of Assertive Discipline. See later)
- Encouraging understanding and awareness of the school rules
- Providing adequate supervision in the school grounds
- Teachers, parents and students should work together in a co-operative manner to establish an environment conducive to self respect and self discipline.
- Staff should adopt a positive approach to each child clearly communicating achievable behaviour expectations and the consequences for both acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.
- The booklet "Happiness is Remembering the Rules" outlines the classroom and playground codes of behaviour. These codes of behaviour are to be discussed with all children at the beginning of each year.
- Each family will be provided with a clear statement of the school and classroom discipline procedures and expectations at the beginning of each school year. (Appendix B).
- The principal, staff and parents will confer on a particular child's behaviour and program as required.
- Referral to other agencies will take place when required.
- Provision will be made for regular review of the policy.
- Early each year, teachers will establish a set of classroom rules for their own class which are consistent with the whole school rules
- Classroom rules are displayed prominently in each room and conveyed to all parents in a positive manner

- A dress code (school uniform) policy is in place to develop a sense of pride and belonging to the school
- A Sunsmart policy has been developed to educate children about the skin damage caused by harmful ultra violet rays
- Specific anti-bullying strategies that aim to promote positive student behaviour, prevent anti-social behaviour, and encourage respect, compassion and co-operation should be promoted throughout the school

## Bullying

### What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse  
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls  
Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

### Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

### Objectives of this Policy

- All staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child shows any of the following:

- an unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- feeling ill in the mornings
- wagging school
- doing poorly in their school work
- becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence
- crying themselves to sleep, having nightmares
- asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully)
- refusing to talk about what's wrong

- having unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- beginning to bully other children, siblings
- becoming aggressive and unreasonable

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

#### Procedures for managing Bullying

1. Bullying incidents should be reported to staff as soon as they occur.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by the Principal/Assistant Principal.
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

#### Sanctions

Breaches of school rules may incur some penalty or action. Those penalties or actions will be a logical consequence of the misbehaviour. A logical consequence is based on goodwill and not retaliation. It is concerned with present and future behaviour and differs from punishment in that logical consequences are:

- Respectful of all parties
- Reasonable expectations
- Relationship-building
- Related to the behaviour

Other actions may include but not limited to:

- Restorative justice
- Behaviour management programs aimed at changing bullying behaviour
- Monitoring to ensure a recurrence of the incident does not take place.

Serious and continued breaches of school rules may involve the use of a range of strategies. These may include:

- discussing the behaviour problems with the student and reaching an agreement for future behaviour
- Behaviour management agreements (See Appendix C)
- monitoring and providing feedback to students on their behaviour
- allowing the student a "cooling off" period using a non-judgmental approach
- providing counselling and training sessions for individuals to modify inappropriate behaviour
- involving parents/caregivers to assist with modifying behaviour (See Appendix D)
- seeking support and guidance from relevant departments and agencies
- implementing procedures set out in DEET guidelines which incorporate Discipline Procedures, 1994 and Ministerial Order No. 1, Discipline of Students may lead to suspension/expulsion procedures in line with Department of Education & Training guidelines.

#### Principal's Discretion

The Principal at his/her own discretion, after consultation with relevant staff, may need to depart from the school guidelines to safeguard others.

**Appendix Four:**

**South St Primary School  
Child Safety Risk Management Program**

At South St Primary School our child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. Our school Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct clear outline our commitment to implementing the 7 standards for child safety as outlined in the Ministerial Order No. 870.

At South St Primary School our process includes risk assessment (see matrix below), implementation of controls and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

**Risk Rating Matrix**

RISK RATING		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

## Child Safety Risks and Risk Management Strategies

The table below comprises a listing of potential child safety risk and risk management strategies.

### Risks

- Lack of an organisational culture of child safety
- Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues
- Natural trust of long term employees (who may have developed issues over time)
- Children alone with one other person unsupervised
- Recruitment of an inappropriate person
- Inappropriate behaviour not reported
- Harassment via email, SMS or other media
- Unsupervised recreational or other activities
- Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)
- Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues
- Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps
- False allegations

### Risk Management Strategies

- Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy
- Child safety code of conduct
- Child safety reporting procedures
- Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour
- Counselling and other resources
- Clear windows in walls to enable visibility of occupants
- Non-lockable doors in hot spots
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks
- Supervision or monitoring of activities
- Online searches (Google, Facebook etc)
- Performance management procedures
- Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety
- Criminal history checks and confirming currency of

At South St Primary School we believe that our in-depth Child Safe Policy's and Code of Conduct enable for the monitoring of risk and risk management.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in  
This policy will be ratified every 2 years.