



PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy and Procedures: Child Safe

Park Orchards Primary School (P.O.P.S.) is a community of students, staff, parents, carers and families working together to create a safe, diverse, engaging and respectful learning environment. P.O.P.S. 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 that respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development. P.O.P.S. has zero tolerance for child abuse.

This policy must be read alongside the [P.O.P.S. Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy](#). Other relevant policies are listed at the end of this policy.

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 is an intermediary);
- or a minister of religion.

VRQA 4.1(a) Student Safety

1. RATIONALE:

Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details the principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment and the actions the school proposes to take to:

- demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safe policy and procedures;
- support, encourage and enable school staff, parents and carers, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
- support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

2. PURPOSE:

- To reduce or remove the possibility of abuse for all of our students.
- To provide students with a safe environment where they feel physically and emotionally secure.
- To provide school staff with education about duty of care and mandatory reporting requirements so that they are able to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
- To inform and educate our whole school community about the Child Safe Standards.
- To promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children who are vulnerable or have a disability

3. GUIDELINES

- All students have a right to:
 - feel secure and to be safe in a caring, inclusive, supportive and positive environment
 - be valued and treated with respect, fairness and courtesy by all members of the school community
 - be supported in challenging situations
 - to be free of harassment, bullying and any predatory behaviour, including online.
- Parents, carers and all school staff expect children to be safe at school and while engaged in school related activities eg. school camps and excursions.
- School staff adhere to the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Teachers have a legal responsibility to respond to incidences involving abuse and neglect, according to procedures determined by Victorian Child Safe Standards, Mandatory Reporting requirements and the Department of Education, as soon as they form **a belief on reasonable grounds** that a child is in need of protection.
- P.O.P.S. has clear expectations for 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 the DHHS Child Protection 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. P.O.P.S. will take action to respond to a complaint.
- 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
- The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the website via the **Child Protection Reporting policy and procedures**.
- School staff work within the limits of their professional expertise and follow mandated processes when they suspect abuse.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- Teachers will take part in professional development in Mandatory Reporting (biannually) and other school student wellbeing practices including Circle Time and Restorative Practices, and they will be provided with information about the procedures they must follow to respond to incidences of child abuse.
- Teachers will establish positive relationships with each student, to get to know the students in order to know if there is a risk to their safety.
- Teachers will develop risk assessment procedures for classroom programs, excursions and camps.
- Classroom programs, including protective behaviours, Tribes Learning Communities' program, Family Life and Life Education programs (biannual), Circle Time, Cyber Safety and social and emotional learning will teach students about all aspects of safety.
- The school community will be informed about school goals and procedures relating to child safety via all forms of school communication such as the POPS Paper, school website (www.pops.vic.edu.au) and parent information sessions provided by the school.
- P.O.P.S. 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 School Privacy Policy.
- P.O.P.S. 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.

Other policy and procedures which underpin this policy (all accessible via www.pops.vic.edu.au):

- Behaviour Management
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention
- Camping
- Child Protection Reporting
- Duty of Care
- Incursion and Excursion
- Onsite Supervision of Students
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing
- Working With Children Check

RELEVANT REFERENCES:

- **Victorian Education Department Child Safe Resources – Protect**
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx>
- Child Protection business hours: 8.45am - 5.00pm (Monday - Friday), North Division Intake - 1300 664 977
- DHHS Child Protection on 131 278.
- **If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000**

5. EVALUATION

- 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