



OAK PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Oak Park Primary School is committed to **keeping all children safe from harm**. This commitment is central to all of the school's procedures, practices and decision making processes and applies to all school environments (including physical and online environments).

The school further commits to a **zero tolerance of child abuse in any form**.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is an act by parents or caregivers which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time.

In Victoria, under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 a child or young person is a person under eighteen years of age.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity and the child's parent or caregiver has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

Emotional abuse

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.



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Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

Our staff and volunteers

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

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 organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational 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 and volunteers 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 supervised regularly to ensure they understand Oak Park Primary 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 organisation'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.



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Our School Values

The values and commitments outlined below are the foundations of everything we do at Oak Park Primary School. They are embedded in the curriculum and expressed through our learning outcomes. These values are not just about what we expect the children to do, but it is expected that all members of our school community, including visitors will consistently display and live the values.

We value	This is	Behaviours that demonstrate our values
Resilience	At OPPS being resilient means being able to adapt to and learn from a challenge appropriately, no matter how big or small.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We persist, even when the work is hard ➤ We are willing to try and start quickly ➤ We ask questions ➤ We seek help when needed
Respect	At OPPS we value ourselves, each other and the environment. We are considerate, open-minded and caring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We treat others the way we would like to be treated ➤ We are aware of how others are feeling ➤ We treat everyone equally and fairly ➤ We take turns ➤ We support others so that they can also 'shine' ➤ 'if we can't say something nice, we say nothing' ➤ We listen to others ➤ We are accepting of differences and try hard to understand others ➤ We try hard to help others ➤ We support and encourage others ➤ We celebrate successes of others
Responsibility	At OPPS we take the actions needed to make things better, considering the impact on ourselves and others and have the courage to take ownership of all our behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We follow agreed protocols ➤ We complete what we are meant to complete; we follow through ➤ We do what we have to do even when it is difficult ➤ We keep our environment clean and safe ➤ We play safely



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Children's Rights

Students at Oak Park Primary School have at least the following rights:

- to be safe and feel safe
- to be cared for at school when they are not well until a parent or carer can look after them, or get help from a doctor or other professional in the event of an emergency
- to be allowed to be a child and be treated with respect
- to feel proud and strong in my own culture
- to have a say and be heard
- to be provided with information
- to tell someone if I am unhappy
- to receive feedback on my learning that will help me to improve
- to learn and to have fun and do activities that I enjoy
- to be provided with the best possible education that Oak Park PS can provide
- to be able to develop life skills and grow up to become the best person I can

Child Safety Standards

The Victorian government has introduced compulsory minimum child safe standards that apply from 1 January 2016 to all organisations providing regulated or funded services for children. The child safe standards form part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in our community.

The purpose of the child safe standards is to drive continuous improvement in the way organisations prevent child abuse, encourage reporting and improve responses to allegations of abuse. The child safe standards closely align with existing regulatory requirements for early childhood services and many services will already be taking steps to implement the standards.

In complying with the child safe standards, the following principles must be applied to each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability



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The child safe standards are as follows:

- **Standard 1:** Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- **Standard 2:** A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- **Standard 3:** A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- **Standard 4:** Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- **Standard 5:** Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- **Standard 6:** Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- **Standard 7:** Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Guidance and information to assist services to understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, is available on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](#).

Reporting obligations

Mandatory reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection.

All other school staff members who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person:

- is in need of protection, should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.
- is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection.

If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person they should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.

In cases where staff have concerns about a child or young person, they should also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.

Reporting criminal child sexual abuse - failure to disclose offence

Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited



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circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

The offence applies to **all adults** in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. To read more information about the 'failure to disclose' offence, see: [Department of Justice and Regulation – Failure to disclose offence](#)

[eLearning Module](#)

A new eLearning module that supports early childhood teachers to meet their responsibilities as mandatory reporters of child abuse is now available online.

The module *Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations for the Early Childhood Sector*, supports all professionals in early childhood settings to respond effectively to children whose safety, health or wellbeing may be at risk.

The module provides information about the roles and responsibilities for protecting children, and specific advice on how to identify, respond to and report concerns regarding the safety, health and wellbeing of children. It also provides advice about new criminal offences that have been introduced to protect children.

The module can be accessed here: [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations for the Early Childhood Sector](#)



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Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

Please note: There are copies of the guide outlined below in the office. Please see the Principal or the Primary Wellbeing Officer if you need further support with this.

A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

Protective concerns

You are concerned about a child because you have:

- received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect
- observed indicators of abuse or neglect
- been made aware of possible harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role.

At all times remember to:

- record your observations
- follow appropriate protocols
- consult notes and records
- consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
- consult with other support agencies if necessary

STEP 1	RESPONDING TO CONCERNS	STEP 2	FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS	STEP 3	MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST	STEP 4	MAKE A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If your concerns relate to a child in need of immediate protection; or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm*. Go to Step 4 If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. Go to Step 3 In all other situations Go to Step 2. <p>* Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions of child abuse and indicators of harm in the Protocol – <i>Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people</i></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the level of immediate danger to the child. Ask yourself: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have I formed a belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm? YES / NO and Am I in doubt about the child's safety and the parent's ability to protect the child? YES / NO If you answered yes to a) or b) Go to Step 4 If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. Go to Step 3 		<p>Child Wellbeing Referral</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contact your local Child FIRST provider. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See over for contact list for local Child FIRST phone numbers. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details. 		<p>Mandatory/Protective Report*</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contact your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See over for contact list for local Child Protection phone numbers. For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, call 131 278. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details. <p>* <i>Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are able to report their concerns to Child Protection</i></p>

For further information refer to *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools*



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Contact Numbers

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9488 9488
Western	(03) 9291 6500
Southern	(03) 9794 3555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

Office for Children and Licensed Children's Services:

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9412 5333
Western	(03) 9275 7000
Southern	(03) 9096 9555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

Important information for government schools

Principals of Victorian Government schools must report all incidents to the Emergency and Security Management Unit on 03 9589 6266.

Victorian Government schools should contact the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit (SCIAU), Student Wellbeing Division, for advice and support when responding to allegations of student sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviours.

The SCIAU can be contacted on 03 9637 2934 or 03 9637 2487.

Victorian Government School Principals should refer to the flowchart – *Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault Compulsory Actions for Principals* at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/childprotection/childprotection.htm>

Department of Human Services Child Protection

METROPOLITAN REGIONS		METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Eastern	1300 360 391	Box Hill	(03) 9843 6000
North and West	1300 664 977	Preston	1300 664 977
		Footscray	1300 360 462
Southern	1300 655 795	Dandenong	(03) 9213 2111

RURAL REGIONS			
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Barwon South Western			
	1800 075 599	Geelong	(03) 5226 4540
Gippsland	1800 020 202	Traralgon	(03) 5177 2500
Grampians	1800 000 551	Ballarat	(03) 5333 6530
Hume	1800 650 227	Wangaratta	(03) 5722 0555
		Wodonga	(02) 6055 7777
Loddon Mallee	1800 675 598	Bendigo	(03) 5434 5555

After hours Child Protection Emergency Services (AHCPEs)

Statewide number for all emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours (24 hours, 7 days a week): **131 278**

Victoria Police 000

Catholic Education Offices

Catholic Education Office, Melbourne	(03) 9267 0228
Catholic Education Office, Ballarat Diocese	5337 7135
Catholic Education Office, Sale Diocese	5622 6600
Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst Diocese	5443 2377

Independent Schools Victoria (03) 9825 7200

Other

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association, Inc.	(03) 9481 0800
Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit	(03) 9247 6666
Centre Against Sexual Assault	1800 806 292
Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children's Hospital (for specialist counselling and medical assistance)	(03) 9345 6391
Child Safety Commissioner	(03) 8601 5884
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	(03) 8388 1855

CHILD FIRST

Local Catchment Area	Contact
Barwon South Western	Greater Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast Colac – Otway, Corangamite 5232 5500 Warrnambool, Moyne, Glenelg, Southern Grampians 1300 889 713
Gippsland	East Gippsland 5152 0052 Wellington 5144 7777 La Trobe, Baw Baw 1800 339 100 South Gippsland, Bass Coast 5662 5150
Grampians	Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarrambat, Horsham 1800 195 114 Ararat, Pyrenees, Hepburn, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool 1300 783 341
Hume	Wodonga, Towong, Indigo 1800 705 211 Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Wangaratta 1800 705 211 Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira 1300 854 944 Mitchell, Murrindindi 1800 663 107
Loddon Mallee	Greater Bendigo, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander 1800 260 338 Buloke, Goonawarra, Swan Hill, Mildura 1800 625 533 1800 MALLEE
Eastern Metropolitan	Yarra Ranges, Knox, Maroondah 1300 369 146 Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Booroondara 1300 762 125
North and West Metropolitan	Nilumbik, Whittlesea, Banyule, Yara and Darebin (03) 9450 0955 Brimbank, Melton 1300 138 180 Hume, Moreland 1300 786 433 Hobson's Bay, Manbyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Wyndham 1300 786 433
Southern Metropolitan	Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong (03) 9705 3939 Aboriginal children and families (Casey, Cardinia and Great Dandenong) (03) 9794 5973 Frankston, Mornington Peninsula 1300 721 383 Kingston, Bayside, Glen Eira, Stonington, Port Phillip 1300 367 441



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Recruitment, selection and management of staff (including contractors and volunteers).

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. Oak Park Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

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> 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 and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

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 our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.



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Prevention and Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations 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.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

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.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Oak Park Primary 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 (see information about failure to disclose above).

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
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.