



# Dandenong West Primary School

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## WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE POLICY – CSS6

### RATIONALE

The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations. Under the Act, child abuse includes five categories of abuse as outlined below.

While the standards apply specifically to child abuse, organisations should look to promote children's health and wellbeing in a broader sense.

### PURPOSE

- To ensure child abuse is clearly defined at Dandenong West Primary School.
- To ensure staff, parents/carers, volunteers, visitors, external providers and contractors are aware of the total compass of child abuse.
- To ensure the school has in place strategies to enhance the Child Safe Standards and Standard 6 in particular.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care to students.

### DEFINITIONS

#### **Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are significantly over-represented in institutions including child protection, youth justice and out-of-home care systems. The reasons for this are complex and influenced by past policies like forced removals, the effects of lower socio-economic status and differences in child rearing practices and intergenerational trauma. Additionally, impacts of abuse are heightened for Aboriginal children who may not feel culturally safe enough to report abuse.

Organisations need to consider cultural safety of Aboriginal children across the implementation of all the standards. This overview includes non-exhaustive examples of how organisations could do this for each standard.

#### **Cultural Safety for Children from a Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Background**

There is a lack of data on the incidence of abuse of children from Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. However, it is understood that these children face unique risks leading to their involvement with child protection services, including distrust of social service providers. Culturally and/or linguistically diverse children, particularly those from refugee or asylum seeker communities, are also more likely to have experienced trauma or displacement and loss (or have parents who have) before coming to Australia. Culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and families may also experience communication barriers when it comes to reporting abuse and knowing where to go for support.

Organisations need to consider cultural safety of culturally and/or linguistically diverse children across the implementation of all the standards. This overview includes non-exhaustive examples of how organisations could do this for each standard.

#### **Children with a Disability**

People with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community and should be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities. In particular, people with a disability have the same rights as other members of the community to live free from abuse.

Children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused compared with children without a disability. A number of factors may contribute to the risk of abuse including physical impairments or difficulties with speech and communication, memory, literacy, vision and hearing impairments, and reliance on caregivers. People with a disability often receive less sexual education than their peers. These factors may also contribute to poor recognition of abuse of children with a disability.

Children with a disability are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need if they have been abused. Children with a disability are very diverse, with a wide range of needs depending on the nature of their disability and the individual characteristics and circumstances of the child.

Organisations need to consider the safety of children with a disability across the implementation of all the standards. This overview includes some examples of how organisations could do this for each standard.

## DEFINITIONS

	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Possible Physical Indicators</b>	<b>Possible Behavioural Indicators</b>
<b>Physical Violence</b>	Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).	Unexplained bruises Burns and/or fractured bones	Showing wariness or distrust of adults Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury) Fear of specific people Unexplained absences Academic problems
<b>Sexual Offences</b>	Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.	Presence of sexually transmitted diseases Pregnancy Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge	Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age Difficulty sleeping Being withdrawn Complaining of headaches or stomach pains Fear of specific people Showing wariness or distrust of adults Displaying aggressive behaviour
<b>Serious Emotional or Psychological Abuse</b>	Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.	Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development Physical signs of self-harming	Exhibiting low self-esteem Exhibiting high anxiety Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful Self-harming
<b>Serious Neglect</b>	Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.	Frequent hunger Malnutrition Poor hygiene Inappropriate clothing	Stealing food Staying at school outside of school hours Aggressive behaviour Misusing alcohol or drugs Academic issues

## IMPLEMENTATION

- The school will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others as listed above clearly understand the imperative of being aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse.
- Training as per the Communication Schedule will be provided.
- The school will use prominently displayed notices as per the Informing the School Community Policy.
- **Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.** Notify the Principal at the earliest practical time.

## REFERERNCES

- Duty of Care Policy
- Police and DHHS Interviews Policy
- Responding to Student Sexual Offending Policy
- Information Privacy Policy
- Communication Procedures and Schedule
- Child Safe Standards

## REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on 18 Feb 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2 years year or if the guidelines change.

Ratified by school council on 20/2/2019