



# Dandenong West Primary School

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## HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES POLICY – CSS4

### RATIONALE

- It is important for schools to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse. At Dandenong West Primary School, we foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target schools. We believe that robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.
- To achieve this, we provide opportunities for school staff and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support school staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.
- Dandenong West Primary School reinforces our commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of school staff and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.
- Carefully developed policies and procedures not only help to identify the most suitable persons to work with children in the school, they can also deter unsuitable persons from applying or being appointed, either in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- The school needs to be clear about the role and responsibilities of each position, particularly when they involve working closely with children.
- A job description or duty statement should include a clear outline of the role and also state the expectation that staff must provide a child safe environment. It should clearly spell out:
  - the organisational context
  - duties and tasks of the role
  - qualifications, experience and attributes a person must have
  - the level of responsibility and supervision associated with the position
- A well-developed job description is more likely to attract suitably qualified staff and volunteers. When roles and responsibilities are unclear, unsuitable people are more likely to apply because the organisation may not look as professional and capable of identifying unsuitable applicants.

### PURPOSE

- To ensure Dandenong West Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of Ministerial Order 870.
- To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
- To raise awareness of the importance of child safety with staff.
- To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
- To ensure the school selects the best and most suitable staff for any position teaching or non-teaching.
- To ensure the school develops procedures and practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel and are compliant with the Child Safe Standard 4.
- To ensure the promotion of:
  - the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
  - the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - the safety of children with a disability

## IMPLEMENTATION

- The school will ensure that newly recruited and existing staff and volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of the relevant policies and procedures and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.

### Recruitment - Screening

- The school will develop clear duty statements and job descriptions and ensure that appropriately qualified staff conduct interviews.
- Job advertisements will clearly state that the school is committed to child safety. This should be included in all advertisements, duty statements and other documents.
- Job advertisements will contain statements such as:
  - We are committed to excellence and to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.
  - All applicants must have full registration from the Victorian Institute of Teaching and be four year trained.
  - Applicants must provide the names of three referees who can comment on previous experience in relation to the selection criteria.
  - A valid Working with Children Check and a criminal record check is mandatory.
  - We are a child safe and equal employment opportunity employer.
- Applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and from people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are encouraged.
- Referee checks will be carried out.
- The school will ensure decision-making is rigorous, defensible and transparent.
- The school is aware of the requirements of privacy legislation and laws relating to unlawful discrimination.
- Applicants will be told what will happen to any information they provide and who will have access to the information.
- Selection processes will be fair and just; however, the safety and wellbeing of children will be the primary consideration.
- During the interview process, applicants will be informed that a Working with Children Check and a criminal record check will be undertaken.
- For further information on avoiding charges of discrimination on the basis of a criminal record, the school will refer to The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's publication "*On the Record: Guidelines for the Prevention of Discrimination in Employment on the Basis of Criminal Record*".  
Notwithstanding any of the above, the school will adhere to the recruitment requirements as described in DET's Recruitment Guide, July 18 2016.

### Post-Employment Supervision and Ongoing Training

- The school has in place a rigorous professional learning program for all staff.
- New staff are provided with information about matters such as the philosophy, vision, mission and values of the school, curriculum, students with medical conditions, school polices, OH&S and routine matters e.g. yard duty requirements.
- Graduate teachers are provided with additional induction opportunities generally over several school terms, including strategies to enhance teaching and learning.
- Mentoring, coaching and in-house training strategies are used for all staff.
- All staff must have a Professional Learning Plan based on the school's Professional Learning Plan which is linked to the School Strategic Plan.
- Leadership development opportunities are a key component of the school's professional learning program for senior staff.
- There is a significant budget allocation made for professional learning.
- The school is developing a formal induction program for volunteers, external providers (and contractors) to ensure they have appropriate information about the child safe culture of the school.
- The school regularly will provide information, training and education for School Council, staff and volunteers about child safety on a needs basis, including:
  - what child abuse is
  - how to identify and reduce child abuse risks
  - understanding and appreciating Aboriginal culture and other cultures and languages they may engage with in their role
  - the importance of ensuring culturally safe environments for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and how to promote this
  - the importance of ensuring safe environments for children with a disability, and how to promote this

- what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children, such as inappropriate sexualised play, bullying and fighting
- what is inappropriate behaviour between children and adults, with reference to the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- school policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy)
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
- The school will support staff to build resilience and cope with child abuse incidences
- As part of the process, the school will monitor the currency of all Working with Children Checks and advise staff, volunteers and external providers two months before the expiration date.
- The school will know it has successfully implemented Standard 4 when:
  - interviews, police record checks (including identity checks), reference checks and Working with Children Checks (where necessary) are undertaken for staff and volunteers
  - recruitment processes select appropriate staff and volunteers, and discourage inappropriate staff entering the organisation relevant staff and volunteers are trained in child safety, and understand and practice appropriate behaviour

### **Child Safety Officer**

School staff and volunteers are supported through the appointment of a School Child Safety Officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel and to children.

This will assist us in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with Department of Education and Training (DET) legal requirements and policies and procedures.

The designated School Child Safety Officer also provides a single contact for children, parents and school staff/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with Dandenong West Primary School.

### **Training and Induction**

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. School staff, volunteers, visitors, external providers and contractors (in addition to parents/carers and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

School staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New school staff will be provided support and information when they begin their new role, and existing school staff provided support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by school staff, volunteers and others as above to ensure that Dandenong West Primary School meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

Our staff has committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by following child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted in Dandenong West Primary School Code of Conduct Policy (Child Safe Standard 3). Training provided will enhance the skills and knowledge of our school staff and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

#### **Training**

- higher education training and accreditation
- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training meeting key objectives

Training can also be informal such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local Culturally And/or Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching

## **Supervision**

Supervision of school staff, volunteers and others is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members are present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision.

As a matter of good practice, new school staff members and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including Dandenong West Primary School's internal reporting procedures (such as your Child Safety Officer, School Principal and/or School Leadership Team, the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

## **Performance and Development Review**

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve school staff and volunteers' skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance is measured against Dandenong West Primary School's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

## **Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures**

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

School staff, volunteers and others will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within Dandenong West Primary School. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Our Code of Conduct is to be publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Dandenong West Primary School's disciplinary procedures clearly outline what school staff or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner

## **REFERERNCES**

Creating a Child Safe Organisation Guide

Child Safe Standards Toolkit - [www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/safety/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/safety/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx)

Protect – Identifying All Forms of Child Abuse in Victorian Schools 2016 [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/child safe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/child safe)

## **REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION**

This policy was last updated on 18 Feb 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2 years year.

Ratified by school council on 20/2/2019

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The table below outlines the steps to implement the requirements of Standard 4.

Requirement	Departmental Action	Dandenong West Primary School Action
<p><i>Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have clear statements regarding the child safety requirements of the role and the expectations of the occupant</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated and requires that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the following standard 'Child safe environments' clause: "Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website.</li> <li>In the near future, position descriptions generated in Recruitment Online (ROL) will be automated to include a standard clause regarding child safety.</li> <li>The Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include the text italicised in the below:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preamble: The aims of the Department include: "... the provision of a child safe environment"</li> <li>Schedule B – Accountabilities of a principal – Student Support: "Pt 2) Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general well-being of all students in attendance at the school including compliance with the Child Safe Standards "</li> </ul> <p>This will apply for future contracts.</p> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>positions include the standard 'Child safe environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.</li> <li>For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3.</li> <li>Note that the Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include reference to the Standards, and all contracts offered on or after 1 August will include the revised wording.</li> </ul>
<p><i>All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).</i></p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As Above</p>
<p><i>In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated to include that, the Principal, prior to an external applicant commencing employment, must be satisfied that the person: <i>"meets the Child Safe Standards."</i> (insert link to CSS site" This can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant <i>meets the Child Safe Standards</i> prior to the applicant's employment.</li> <li>The school need not comply with the requirement if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information about a particular individual within the previous 12 months</li> </ul>

<p><i>The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to induction and continuing suitability for child connected work</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on alignment of/ changes to Induction will be developed in 2016.</li> <li>• Advice on alignment of/ changes to Performance and Development will be developed in 2016, with changes to be determined for the 2017-18 Performance and Development cycle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note that further advice on requirements related to Induction and Performance and Development will be developed in 2019 to ensure schools fully meet this Standard.</li> </ul>
<p><i>The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.</i></p>	<p>As above</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Councils to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2]</li> </ul>