



# Child Safe Standards

## POLICY

### PURPOSE

Ararat Primary School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

### SCOPE

Ararat Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment.

This policy applies to all members of the school community including:

- Teachers including CRT
- Non-Teaching Employees
- Volunteers
- Student/Pre-Service Teachers
- Students
- Parents/Carers

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Ararat Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

The school's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our school philosophy and values.

Ararat Primary School's values describe the guiding principles and beliefs of the school community, and are designed to underpin all that we do. These values assist the school to provide an environment where our community of learners can be happy, safe, expressive, creative, and engaged in learning. We expect staff, students, parents, carers and family members to model these values in all interactions

- Aspiration
- Respect
- Resilience
- Courage

Ararat Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, including (but not limited to) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable and children who are in out of home care.

Every person involved in Ararat Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play 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.

## Child safety principles

To support schools to create a child safe organisation and protect students from all forms of abuse, and in accordance with the Child Safe Standards, Ararat Primary School will:

- Facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within Ararat Primary School.
- Work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
- Prevent child abuse within Ararat Primary School.
- Advise all parties of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs
- Provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation
- Provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
- Provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

### Roles and responsibilities

**The principal of Ararat Primary School is responsible for:**

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse
- Providing information to all adults within the Ararat Primary School community regarding their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with policies and procedures;
- Providing information to all staff, contractors and volunteers regarding their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing information to staff, contractors and volunteers regarding their child protection responsibilities.

**All school leaders must ensure that they**

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate/minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Teachers should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

**All staff/volunteers/parents/contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:**

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Ararat Primary School's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Sign in at the front office;
- Staff will report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Volunteers, parents and contractors should report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to a teacher or member of the principal class (or, if the teacher/principal class are involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety

## RECRUITMENT

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with the school must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. All other staff applying for a role with the school must hold an employee Working With Children Check. Ararat Primary School may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at Ararat Primary School and during their time with Ararat Primary School at regular intervals. Ararat Primary School will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy. This policy states that Volunteers who are involved with repetitive programs, tasks or school activities, who do not hold a Victorian Institute of Teaching registration are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check.

## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations or suspicions 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. This training occurs annually or more often as required

We support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect all children from abuse,

The school will follow a formal induction process for all new and returning employees and volunteers, this will include being referred to the Child Safety Policy (this document), the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on the school website. They will also be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by school staff to the Principal or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with Ararat Primary School's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures where required.

## REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteer in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including school council employees) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/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.

Ararat Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Ararat Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found on the School website.

## RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Ararat Primary 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.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Ararat Primary School monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety.

## LISTENING TO, COMMUNICATING WITH AND EMPOWERING CHILDREN

Ararat Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers.

We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse [at the School office](#)

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 and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

## COMMUNICATIONS

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community, including (but not limited to):

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website and at the School office
- Reminders in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

This school 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 Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#)

## DEFINITIONS

### ***Child abuse***

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

### ***Child-connected work***

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

### ***Child safety***

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***

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events)

### ***School staff***

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or

a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

## RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Related policies and documents include:

- Ararat Primary School Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register
- Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools
- Four Critical Actions for Schools

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)

## EVALUATION

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community

This policy was last ratified by School Council in.

**November 2019**