

<p>Mill Park Primary School</p> 	<p><b>Child Safe Standards Policy</b></p>	<p><b>Responsibility:</b> Principal <b>Revised:</b> 2018 <b>Next Review:</b> 2020</p>
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**DEFINITIONS:**

Mill Park Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Mill Park Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

**AIMS:**

Mill Park Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Indigenous Australians and children from culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

**RATIONALE:**

Every person involved in Mill Park Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays 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 made.

Children at Mill Park Primary School will be encouraged to be empowered, vital and active participants within the school community. We involve our students when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

**GUIDELINES:**

Planning, decision making and operations at Mill Park Primary School will:

- take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- value and empower children to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
- ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise issue
- report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
- value the input of and communicate with families and carers.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

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, students and members of the wider community 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 at Mill Park Primary School understands that children's safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our culture aims for all staff, students and members of our community to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We support our staff through ongoing professional development to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and promote the cultural safety of Indigenous Australians, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

We ensure all staff and volunteers understand Mill 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 our Code of Conduct

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.

**Recruitment:**

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Mill Park Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We encourage applications from Indigenous Australians, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged by Mill Park Primary School, including School Council members, PFA, volunteers and trades people, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this documentation.

We carry out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

**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 where appropriate we provide updates to children and families on the progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

**Privacy:**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

**Legislative responsibilities:**

Mill Park Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority at Mill Park Primary School will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are Mandatory Reporters must comply with their duties.

#### **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 currently at the school through social media).

#### **Allegations, concerns and complaints:**

Mill Park Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff 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.

#### **EVALUATION:**

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 to the policy guidelines. Where possible we do our best to work with local Indigenous Australian communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability in gaining guidance/feedback and advice.