

Chandler Park PS Child Safe Policy 2018

Rationale

Within the Chandler Park community we support and respect all children, as well as our staff, families and volunteers. Chandler Park Primary School is committed to child safety. All children, regardless of background, indigenous status, cultural background, linguistic diversity or disability have the right to be safe, happy and empowered.

Aim

- At Chandler Park Primary School we are committed to the safety and empowerment of all children.
- Chandler Park has a zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently. As a school we have a legal and moral obligation to contact The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) if we are concerned about a child's safety and well-being.
- Chandler Park Primary School is committed to the prevention of child abuse and identifying risks early, whilst removing and reducing these risks where possible. We employ an extremely thorough process when recruiting all staff and volunteers, which includes Working With Children Check (WWCC) checks as a minimum for Educational Support (ES) staff, and a current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration and licence registration for teaching staff.

Diversity and acceptance – We promote and encourage diversity, and celebrate the diverse cultural inheritance of our students, staff and school families at Chandler Park.

Implementation

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES- CURRICULUM BASED

- Children participate in daily discussions that focus on building relationships, developing social skills and promoting emotional wellbeing. This includes the use of bucket fillers, daily circle time, buddy program, YCDI lessons and reflective learning practices, such as peer feedback to promote and give students a voice. We ensure Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a significant part of our daily curriculum.
- Chandler Park has introduced a wide range of lunchtime clubs and sporting activities for students, which helps to engage the students, promote peer connectedness and school connectedness.
- Children are taught specific personal safety lessons as a part of the curriculum in all classes from Prep to Grade 6.
- Chandler Park uses the Method of Shared Concern as a tool to manage student misbehaviour. The process focuses on repairing student relationships and giving all the students the opportunity to share their recount of the experiences in a fair and just manner. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their deeds and to show empathy towards their peers and the relationships that have been affected. Other natural consequences which arise from behaviour where others are hurt physically or emotionally, will also be applied.
- Chandler Park's four values of Respect, Collaboration, Resilience and Innovation are promoted throughout the school and these values are used as the building blocks to creating and maintaining a safe, supportive and challenging learning environment.

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES- OPERATIONAL

- All staff are required to participate in regular training and education on child abuse risks, which ensure that everyone understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. All staff are also required to regularly complete e-learning modules relating to Mandatory Reporting.

Chandler Park PS Child Safe Policy 2018

- Throughout the recruitment process all applicants are considered based upon skills and qualifications. Prior to employment applicants must respond to key selection criteria in writing and short-listed applicants attend an interview.
- All teaching staff must have VIT registration, which includes a police check and all support staff and volunteers must have a Working With Children Check.
- Prior to recruitment being completed, the school checks the DET Suitability For Employment database on EduPay regarding staff who are not able to be re-employed, to ensure the applicant does not have restrictions placed upon them.
- All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
- Staff are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. They understand the responsibility they have as mandated professionals, to report potential issues of physical and/ or emotional harm to the Department of Health and Human Services.
- As a part of the staff Induction program staff are informed of correct protocols should they have concerns of a child's safety. This process is reviewed annually with all staff and recorded in the Staff Hand Book.
- We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, including investigation updates. Such records are not available to all staff, as is regulated under the Privacy Act.
- Volunteers are supervised to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse.
- 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.
- The Principal and Assistant Principal act as the over-arching Student and Staff Well-being leaders, and take responsibility to ensure all people on the school site understand the zero tolerance for child abuse throughout the school, and at all times. Child safety is one of their major concerns at the school.
- School policy is that staff who need to be in a classroom or meeting room alone with a child must either leave the door open whilst knowing all school locks allow anyone to leave the building at any time, even when the building is locked from the outside; or speak with the child in an open space; or be with another staff member or students. In this way, both students and staff are highly visible at all times.
- If it is required of a staff member to assist a child with toileting and/ or showering, there must always be two staff present.
- If a staff member has any suspicion of untoward behaviour toward a child, it must be reported to the Principal or Assistant Principal immediately, whether this has occurred during the school day, or out of hours. From there, appropriate mandatory reporting will commence. Staff will complete the Incident Report (see Appendix A)
- If a child makes a statement which could mean they are being abused, this too, must be reported. For Educational Support staff, they are asked to discuss this with the Principal or Assistant Principal, and follow through with normal reporting procedures.
- Staff will not decide anything said, is unlikely to be true. If something reportable is said, appropriate procedure must be followed.
- If the school is being used outside of school hours, the same policy is relevant to those people working at the school. This policy will be given to anyone hiring the school facilities, or using the school as a meeting place.
- Staff will adhere to the process outlined in Appendix B

Chandler Park PS Child Safe Policy 2018

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- At Chandler Park staff take their 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 in our organisation 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.
- Chandler Park Primary School has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.
- Staff take all allegations seriously and the school has procedures in place to manage allegations quickly. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.
- All staff have a responsibility to report suspected abuse.
- If an adult suspects that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing this 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 annually and following significant incidents if they occur.

This Policy was ratified by the School Council at the meeting held on 15th August 2017

SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT- Stewart Winton

Chandler Park PS Child Safe Policy 2018

APPENDIX A

INCIDENT REPORT

All incident reports must be given to the principal, Naomi Reed

Incident details

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No

Yes, Aboriginal

Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

Please describe the incident

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	
What did you see?	
Other information	

Chandler Park PS Child Safe Policy 2018

Parent/carer/child use

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

Office use:

Date incident report received:	
Staff member managing incident:	
Follow-up date:	

Has the incident been reported?

Child protection	
Police	
Another third party (please specify):	

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes No

APPENDIX B

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, the Principal, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Complete an incident report form (See Appendix A)
- As soon as possible after the disclosure report the disclosure to the principal, Naomi Reed police or child protection and record the information using the child's words.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern

- Explain that Chandler Park has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to record all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the principal, Naomi Reed, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
- You need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).
- If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.
- Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters. Advice on [communicating with people with a disability](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities>.
- **If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

Chandler Park PS Child Safe Policy 2018

Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about [failure to disclose](#) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website

<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

More information about [mandatory reporting](#) is available in the *Child protection manual* <www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting>.

Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](#) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

Further information about [failure to protect](#) can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation website

<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence, and the Department of Health and Human Services website>.