



LAKES ENTRANCE PRIMARY SCHOOL Child Safe Environment Policy

Purpose:

The child safe environments policy describes a school's commitment to keep children safe and from harm. It forms the foundation of the school's procedures, practices, decision making processes and ultimately the schools culture with respect to child safety, creating a child safe organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, meeting the Child Safe Standards (clause eight of Ministerial Order No 870)..

Scope:

All staff employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR) in the government teaching services or under a contract of service by the School Council under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act, volunteers, or contracted service providers whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy will apply on school campus, online school environments (including email and intranet systems), other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events including those outside of school hours.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:

Lakes Entrance Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Lakes Entrance Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Every person involved in Lakes Entrance 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 they make.

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Lakes Entrance Primary School will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Policy and procedures:

Policies and procedures outlining Lakes Entrance Primary School's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below.

A child-safe culture

Lakes Entrance Primary School's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Understanding of Roles and Responsibilities /Code of Conduct

School leaders and Team leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. (*Refer to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics*)

Human resources practices and training

The school will follow best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check/ Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration. This policy will be included in advertising for new staff. Screening and review of existing staff will be part of the performance appraisal procedures.

We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or other appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns

Risk reduction and management

The school believes the wellbeing of children is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes are followed. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

The school has child safety strategies for all physical school environments and its online environment (e.g. intranets, online learning systems, social media)

Including

- Clear boundaries of roles between staff and children
- Proactive strategies to detect inappropriate behaviour such as online searches (Googles, Facebook, etc.)
- Visitors are appropriately screened, supervised and made aware of the school's child safety strategies.

Listening to children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

The school will support, encourage and enable parents to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters. The school will support, encourage and enable children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters. The school will support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. The school follows DET policy in regard to the collection, use and storage of information.

Breaches

Breaches of Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Obligations are identified in the specific DET policies. There are clear boundaries of roles and responsibilities between staff and children.

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe

Child abuse includes

- Any act committed against a child involving –
 - a sexual offence or an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
 - The infliction, on a child, of- Physical violence or Serious emotional or psychological harm
 - Serious neglect of a child

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

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

School staff means:

In a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act)* in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

Legislative Responsibilities

Lakes Entrance Primary School takes its 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 the age of 16 year have an obligation to report the information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:**
A person in a position of authority in an organisation will commit this offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk but negligently fail to do.

Related policies and Documents

School Policy Advisory Guide – Duty of Care
School Policy Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations
DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework

Child Safe Standards Managing the risk of Child Abuse in Schools Ministerial Order
No 870
Child Safe standards website: www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards
VIT- Victorian Institute of Teaching – Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of
Conduct and Ethics

Ratified by School Council
Reviewed by School Council

July 2016
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