



## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Mount Martha Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Mount Martha Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Mount Martha Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media

**Child abuse is unacceptable. Ensuring children's safety is a top priority for the Victorian Government.**

### What is child abuse?

Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence
- a grooming offence; or
- the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect.

Our aim is to create a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice. To strengthen existing approaches to preventing and responding to

child abuse and provide for consistency in how these issues are managed. We all have a responsibility for keeping children safe.

All registered schools are required to develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school. At Mount Martha Primary we will:

- embed a culture of child safety at the school
- allocate roles and responsibilities to ensure child safe practices are adhered to
- inform the school community about the strategies being employed at the school

### **What is organisational culture and how does it relate to child safety?**

Embedding an organisational culture of child safety is critical to reducing the risk of child abuse in schools.

To successfully embed a culture of child safety, a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse** must be led by the school council. This commitment must be shared, openly and transparently, by all members of the school community, including staff (including school employees, contractors and volunteers), parents and families, visitors and child.

**All staff, volunteers and council members of Mount Martha Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.**

### **All personnel of Mount Martha Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:**

- adhering to Mount Martha Primary School's Child Safe Reporting Policy and Procedures at all times / upholding Mount Martha Primary School's statement of commitment to child safety at all time
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to a member of Mount Martha Primary Schools , Principal Class team and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to a member of Mount Martha Primary Schools , Principal Class team, if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

**Staff and volunteers must not:**

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical.
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children

- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Mount Martha Primary School Principal Class team.

**NB: These procedures are not intended to:**

- prohibit or discourage school any staff from reporting an allegation of **child abuse** to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of **child abuse** ; or
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of **child abuse** .

In the case of an allegation of **child abuse**, you will:

1. inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting);
2. protect within reasonable means any child connected to the alleged **child abuse** until the allegation is resolved; and
3. make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of **child abuse** and the school's response to it.
4. **phone 000 if you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse.**

**REVIEW PERIOD**

This policy was last ratified September 12<sup>th</sup> 2019 and is scheduled for review on September 2022

