



## CHILD SAFETY

### Purpose

The Mount Martha Primary School the Child Safety Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments. It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

### Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers, and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

### Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student
- volunteer.

### Statement of commitment to child safety

Mount Martha Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.



We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

## Roles and responsibilities

### School leadership team

Our school leadership team (comprising Principal Class Team and Learning Specialists) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The school leadership team will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families, and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

### School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct [MMPS Website Policy Page](#).
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures [MMPS Website Policy Page](#).
- , including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

### School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community



- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety,
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

#### Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Mount Martha Primary School has a child safety champion team (social and emotional learning team, school improvement team and wellbeing team) to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#)

Our Principal Class Team are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- Our Principal Class Team are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- Our Principal Class Team are responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register. [MMPS Website Policy Page.](#)

Our school has also established a Social and Emotional Learning Team along with our School Improvement Team (Principal Class and learning Specialist) and our Wellbeing Team (Principal Class and SSSO key contact) who meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. These three groups will take on the responsibility of being the child safety champion team. Our Principal Class Team monitors the Child Safety Risk Register

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments. We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school. The Child Safety Code of Conduct [MMPS Website Policy Page.](#) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

## Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our school we identify, assess, and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

**Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safety Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.**



- Ensure child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices enable school staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- Developed and endorse a Digital Learning Policy on online conduct and online safety.
- Developed procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties that ensure the safety of students.
- Supervise students in all settings, including the playground, excursions, and camps.
- Give particular attention to the safety, diverse needs, and vulnerabilities of students in each activity or setting. Consider whether there are any barriers that might prevent students from raising concerns.
- Inform students and their families about appropriate use of the school's technology, safety tools and how to seek help and report concerns including cyberbullying and online grooming.
- Keep up to date with current online safety issues and expert information from specialist government and non-government bodies including the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner, and eSmart Schools.
- Promote activities in the school community that connect schools and communities and raise awareness to prevent bullying and violence (e.g. National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence).
- Create a respectful, sensitive, and safe environment for people who may be experiencing family violence. that enables a child or young person to feel comfortable to talk about their experiences of family violence and seek support.

#### *Manage risk in physical spaces*

- Identifies and documents the school's child safety risks in the school's risk register or equivalent and ensure strategies are in place to manage those risks.
- Considers the range of school environments and the nature of physical spaces including onsite buildings and grounds, classrooms, corridors, and pick-up and drop off areas.
- Considers off-site physical environments for student use and where reasonably possible, inspect these sites and venues for events, excursions, and camps ahead of time.
- Considers risks arising from child-to-child and adult-to-child interactions in physical and online spaces.
- Considers cultural safety. Are there elements of the physical school environment that would be unwelcoming to Aboriginal people?
- Informs staff, volunteers, and students where appropriate of identified risks and risk management strategies.
- Keeps records of risk management activities, including risk assessments for camps and excursions.
- Provides training and refresher training to staff and relevant volunteers on risk management policies and procedures.

#### *Supervise appropriately*

- Informs students about spaces that are off limits, including out-of-bounds areas, storerooms, and staff rooms.
- Nominates ratios of staff and volunteers to students for different types of activities.
- Keeps records of any court orders in place regarding access or intervention orders and communicate to staff who can collect students in these circumstances.
- Uses observation aids when appropriate, such as observation windows and CCTV and consider the balance between appropriate visibility and respecting staff and students' privacy.
- Informs students know how to raise concerns and where to go if they need help.



- Keeps records of incidents that occur, including accidents and medical events.
- Review incidents against policies and procedures, including seeking student feedback on how incidents were handled and how safe they felt, and make improvements as needed.

*Promote student safety online*

- Give students opportunities to learn, play, create, entertain, make new friends, and stay connected.
- Facilitate age-appropriate ways to use the internet and social media for students utilising Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships, and also Office of the e-Safety Commissioner
- Inform students about online safety risks, including:
  - cyberbullying and trolling
  - invasion of privacy or digital surveillance
  - inappropriate sharing of images
  - phishing, harvesting of personal information or data theft
  - identity theft
  - offensive images and messages
  - age-inappropriate online content
  - grooming.
- Outline acceptable use of personal devices for students in Personal Mobile Devices Policy
- Prohibit the use of student email addresses to sign up to unauthorised third-party services and communicate this expectation to students and the school community.
- Use filtering software on school-based devices.
- Encourage parents to use parental controls on personal devices.
- Advise students on how they can seek help from a trusted adult if they are exposed to inappropriate imagery or content that upsets them.
- Monitor online activity and respond to breaches of the online policies and procedures with appropriate consequences.

*Promote acceptable behaviour by staff and volunteers*

- Guidelines for taking, storing, and using images of children and students – including photos and video recordings.
- Review communication protocols regularly, considering emerging services and technologies, such as disappearing message services.
- Uphold policies and report breaches in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Protect student privacy by supporting students to limit the amount of information provided online.

*Consider procurement and third parties*

- Require vendors to provide evidence of compliance with the Child Safe Standards when establishing contracts to deliver services to students.
- Ensure a Privacy Impact Assessment is undertaken for any software handling student personal information.
- Ask contractors to provide their Working with Children Clearance upon entry to the school.



- Provide contractors with a copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Policy.
- Office Staff are responsible for collecting child safety compliance information about third party providers.
- Keep records of due diligence processes.
- If a vendor is found to be non-compliant with the Child Safe Standards: cease all activities with the vendor until the issue is resolved
- if appropriate, inform the vendor of the non-compliance and provide an opportunity to rectify the problem, or if the issue is serious, contact the relevant authorities

Refer to [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 9](#)

## Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Mount Martha Primary School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

Cultural safety includes being provided with a safe, nurturing, and positive environment where Aboriginal children:

- feel comfortable being themselves
- feel comfortable expressing their culture, including their spiritual and belief systems
- are supported by carers who respect their Aboriginality and encourage their sense of self and identity.

Being able to express their culture makes Aboriginal children stronger and safer. Aboriginal children and young people who do not feel safe being themselves and expressing their individuality may be less willing to report abuse. *Providing* safe environments for children has positive, lifelong impacts that cannot be underestimated, and cultural safety is a key dimension of safety for Aboriginal children.

### Key elements of cultural safety

#### *Understand identity*

Identifying as Aboriginal is one part of a child or young person's identity. Like everyone, Aboriginal people have different life experiences and characteristics. Recognising that each person is unique with their own characteristics, strengths, and challenges.

#### *Respect culture*

Culture and identity are linked. By supporting Aboriginal children to feel strong in their identity schools also help them enjoy their cultural rights. Australia's colonial history has caused significant trauma and hurt that individuals, families and communities still feel today. However, Aboriginal communities have a long history of resilience and growth in the face of adversity and trauma. Schools should show respect for the deep resilience of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

#### *Eliminate racism and abuse*



Making Mount Martha Primary School culturally safe means taking the specific action needed to keep Aboriginal children and young people safe from abuse and harm. To address all forms of racism and consider attitudes and practices that are a barrier to providing a culturally safe environment and to address all forms of racism.

**Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safe Standard 1: Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued**

*Encourage and actively support a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights in the following ways:*

- equip staff, students, volunteers, and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students
- adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted, and not tolerated
- address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences
- actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal children, students, and their families
- ensure school policies, procedures, systems, and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, and their families

*Build a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion*

- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students.
- Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers, and families. Share information through school newsletters and school assemblies...
- Build schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills, and attitudes.

*Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children*

- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
- Ask for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about what the school does well, and what can be improved.
- Implement the Koorie Education Policy to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities
- Use Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) to provide advice about creating culturally inclusive learning environment.
- Use the [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026](#) to guide the school's support for Aboriginal self-determination.

*Actively address racism*



- Express zero tolerance of racism in statement of commitment to child safety, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and this policy.
- Address racism from students, staff, volunteers, or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the culture of the school focuses on preventing incidents from occurring.
- Encourage non-Aboriginal school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families, and communities.

#### *Guide and train staff and volunteers*

- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
- Arrange [Community Understanding Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) .

#### *Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum*

- Learn about the importance of acknowledging Traditional Owners.
- Include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.
- Develop resources that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.

#### *Partner with Aboriginal communities*

- Support local Aboriginal businesses through school procurement.
- Engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups,
- Visit an Aboriginal cultural learning centre, such as
  - [Koorie Heritage Trust](#) (Melbourne)
  - [Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre](#) (Melbourne)

#### *Review and assess how the school supports cultural inclusion*

- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Mount Martha Primary School we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, Protective Behaviours, our Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy and our school values.

We inform students of their rights through, our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns on the school website in the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures or contact a member of the Principal Class Team.





[PROTECT Child Safe Standard 3](#)

**Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safe Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**

*Inform students of their rights*

- Provide age appropriate and accessible information to students such as information about:
  - the school's Child Safety and Policy and Code of Conduct.
  - the Charter of Commitment under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
  - the work of the [Commission for Children and Young People](#)
  - how the adults in the school should behave.
- Inform students of their rights and special protections including the right to:
  - live and grow up healthy
  - have a say about decisions affecting them
  - get information that is important to them
  - be safe and not harmed by anyone.
  - When sharing information under the information sharing schemeswork to build trust by being open and transparent about information sharing and keep the child and family informed each time their information is shared if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so
  - seek and consider the views of the child (or the relevant family members) about sharing their confidential information if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so
- Provide information through the curriculum via relevant subject areas to promote:
  - [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships](#)
  - [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework](#)
  - [Bully Stoppers](#)
  - [Life Education Program](#)
  - [eSmart](#).
- Students access to sexual abuse prevention program Protective Behaviours and linking this with Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships Program Ensuring information in an age-appropriate way.
- Providing Body Education Program to students in Year Five and Six.

*Empower students to contribute to school life*

- Display visually engaging and easy-to-read posters promoting student voice and agency Such as SRC events.
- Conduct year-level meetings to discuss students' rights and safety issues.
- Invite students to provide feedback on school-wide decisions and take their views into account in school decision-making.
- Build knowledge of student participation in activities that contribute to the life of the school through discussions, newsletter articles, assemblies, parent forums, learning expos and Compass posts.



- Involve students in consultation processes and inform them of their impact on decision-making.
- Demonstrate that the school takes students seriously by acting on their concerns, noting that what might seem unimportant to an adult may be important to a young person.
- Facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. Through class meetings, Student Representative Committee, Year Six/Staff Buddies Program, responding to student suggestions and providing opportunities for students to provide feedback. Ensuring there is a response to what students say. Strengthening students' confidence and engagement
- Provide students who find it harder to speak up or be heard with multiple avenues for communicating, including writing, drawing, or physical forms of communication.

*Empower students to raise their concerns*

- Provide students with information about complaints processes.
- Give students a variety of ways to raise concerns. Ideas like provide an anonymous, year-level student suggestion box or distribute regular online surveys
- display information about the adults who students can talk to if they have a concern.
- Highlight student views in your school community, including quoting students where appropriate.
- Create opportunities for all student voices by being aware of discriminatory barriers and any overreliance on the input of student leaders.

*Strengthen peer support for safety and wellbeing*

- Carry out regular whole school [wellbeing assessment surveys](#).
- Use the [Bully Stoppers survey tool](#) to assess bullying in your school.
- Establish Student Action Teams to investigate issues of inclusion and exclusion.
- Discuss healthy boundaries for friendships. Point out that the risk of harm can occur in child-to-child interactions, as well as adult-to-child interactions.
- Use school transition programs, like [Transition: A Positive Start to School \(DOCX, 4.3MB\)](#) or [Transition – Year 6 to 7](#), to provide support for students entering the school.
- Provide buddying or mentoring programs for new students transitioning to the school mid-year or outside of the regular transition timeline.

*Establish protective factors*

- Teach students practical protective strategies, including:
  - what to do when they feel unsafe
  - phrases they can use to raise an objection
  - pathways for raising safety concerns, and
  - online safety behaviours.
  - Explicitly taught through Protective Behaviours Program. Resilience. Rights and Respectful Relationships and Cyber Safety Programs.
- Parents/Students Years One-Six invited to attend Body Education sessions as a family
- Provide contact information for independent children's advocacy services or helplines.
- Provide a range of age-appropriate picture books, fiction and non-fiction that include:
  - children's rights and empowerment themes
  - cultural and linguistic diversity



- neurodiverse characters and people with disability
- diversity in sexual orientation and gender.
- Support all students to identify trusted adults and friends they can talk to about a concern at school, at home or in the community.
- Deliver age-appropriate curriculum content about respectful relationships, sexuality, consent and sexual abuse prevention through the [Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials](#).
- Use the [School's Mental Health Menu](#) to support students in your school.
- Empower students with the knowledge that adults are accountable and that students have a right to safety.

*Communicate in a respectful and age-appropriate way*

- Educate staff to uphold Aboriginal cultural safety and be respectful of identity and culture.
- Train staff and volunteers to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Educate staff and volunteers about children's rights, including the 4 guiding principles in the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

*Use sensitivity and build trust*

- Provide training to staff and volunteers to be attuned to [signs of harm](#) and risk factors in students.
- Remind staff and volunteers to recognise that students might communicate in different ways, including through verbal and non-verbal cues, play, body language, facial expressions, drawings or behaviours.
- Follow through on your commitments – show students that the leadership team and staff are trustworthy and take their worries or concerns seriously.

## Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Mount Martha Primary School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

Involving families and communities in decisions relating to their children's safety and wellbeing:

- recognises the important role they play in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns
- creates an open and transparent culture
- promotes a greater understanding of child safety
- encourages them to raise concerns or ideas for improvement.

Providing accessible and inclusive child safe information encourages families to engage in child safety and wellbeing discussions.

[PROTECT Child Safe Standard 4](#)



**Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.**

*Create a welcoming environment*

- Office Staff provide school transition packs to new enrolments.
- Provide new enrolments with school information that include information about child safety, and complaints policy.
- Conduct community events, such as a school fair, welcome picnic to families and the broader community.
- Create a welcoming environment at school reception so community members and families feel respected, included, and safe to come onto school grounds.

*Engage families and communities in building a child safe organisation*

- Our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents on the school website.
- Newsletters and Compass posts will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- Ask parents and carers about their children in meet the teacher, transition information, parent information sessions, open nights, parent/teacher interviews, or during chance meetings at pick-up and drop-off.
- We will seek input from families and the community –by Compass posts, newsletters articles school council, education subcommittees of school council, student, staff, and parent meetings
- Provide parents and carers with information about children's rights via newsletters, or parent information sessions.
- Regularly engage with parents, carers and students and discuss the needs of students through parent/teacher interviews and student support group meetings.
- Discuss Mount Martha Primary School approaches child safety topics at Social Events Committee meetings. Seek community views where appropriate to do so.
- Ask families and carers about their preferred methods of communication, including email, Blogs, Compass, newsletters, meetings, and workshops and use their responses to inform your communications approach.
- Provide families with information in the newsletter to help them to talk to their children about safety and wellbeing at home.
- Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern is raised or complaint is made.

*Reflect the diversity of the school community*

- Make newsletters and communications inclusive. Normalise a diversity of family profiles and reflect the characteristics of your school community.
- Select meeting venues that are physically accessible, welcoming, and culturally safe.
- Encourage volunteer positions from families from diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



#### *Provide inclusive and accessible information*

- Display the PROTECT posters in shared areas that are accessible to parents and the community..
- Provide links to the school's child safety policies in the school's Compass posts, newsletters and staff emails.
- Ensure students, school staff, and members of the school community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety.
- Use images and other accessibility aids to help child safety information be understood by families that have low literacy or vision.

#### *Build family and community involvement in child safety*

- Make child safety a standing item at school council meetings.
- Encourage families and carers to advocate for their children and champion their safety while at school and in other environments, including extra-curricular activities such as sports, tutoring, music and other after school activities.
- Promote Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships education to families.
- Acknowledge the important role that families and communities play in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns.
- Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern or complaint is raised.

## Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths, and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Inclusion and Diversity Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity. [MMPS Website Policy Page.](#)

### [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 5](#)

Equity is a state of fairness in which all children and young people can participate freely and equally in areas of life, regardless of their background, characteristics, or beliefs. This means their safety is not dependent on their socio-economic, family, or personal circumstances.

#### Mount Martha Primary School

- recognises and responds to students' diverse circumstances
- understands that some students are at higher risk of harm than others



- provides easy access to information
- adjusts procedures to respond to different needs
- makes sure complaints processes are child-friendly, culturally safe, and easy to understand.

#### *Benefits of respecting equity and diverse needs*

Children and young people have unique abilities, skills, and life experiences. Differences in backgrounds, personality and beliefs shape a child's experiences and needs. Their individual identity and sense of self can be fundamental to their wellbeing.

Children have better opportunities to fulfil their potential when diversity is valued. Negative experiences like exclusion and discrimination can be harmful. They increase the risk of harm and abuse to a child and decrease the likelihood of them telling someone and receiving an effective response.

#### **Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safe Standard 5: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.**

- Developed an Inclusion and Diversity Policy with strategies and actions to uphold diversity and equity,
- Ensure school staff and volunteers understand the diverse circumstances of students, provides support, and responds to vulnerable students
- Provide the school community access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand
- Focus attention on the needs of:
  - students with disability
  - students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - students who are unable to live at home
  - international students
  - lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
  - Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

#### *Recognise the diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances of students*

- Recognises the range of diverse student and family attributes.
- Focus on cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- the needs of students with disability and responses to disability
- the needs of students from diverse religious and cultural communities
- the impact of prior trauma
- gender differences
- the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- challenges for students who are in foster care or out of home care
- socio-economic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment, or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, or low educational attainment, remote
- Diverse student cohorts and individuals in your community, recognising that they may have higher risk of harm.
- Normalise asking for and using people's preferred pronouns and names for students.



- Use contemporary, culturally sensitive, and inclusive examples when discussing families, relationships or professions and vocations.

*Identify and address challenges that students experience due to their diverse attributes*

- Communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, address the incident in line with Bullying Policy.
- Let students know they can raise concerns or report incidents that occurred at school and outside the school.
- Check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. at pick-up or drop-off, at parent teacher interviews or through informal discussions.
- Engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and do not know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe.
- Validate students' feelings. Students may feel that they have not been listened to or believed in the past.
- Buddying and mentoring for students.
- Discuss how students feel about discussing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Noting that where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety, or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the wishes of the student that their information remain confidential.
- Take a holistic approach when responding to family violence.
- Respond to family violence in a way that is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centred, inclusive, and non-discriminatory.

*Put in place policies and strategies to help meet the diverse needs of students*

- Ensure school environments are welcoming and inclusive. young people.
- Provide child safety information in accessible, child-friendly language and formats.
- Anticipate the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances. Do not expect all students to be equally empowered to ask for what they need.
- Provide staff and volunteers with information to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination.
- Create opportunities to remind staff and volunteers about student diversity and accommodating student's needs.
- Seek out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist, speech pathologist

*Support diversity through school planning and resources*

- Compile a range of age-appropriate instructional materials for exploring differences and similarities in class including:
  - Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships resources
  - Books, and resources that reflect diverse views and perspectives
  - Speech and drama scripts that explore themes around diversity.

## Suitable staff and volunteers

At Mount Martha Primary School, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.



### Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management.](#)

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of working with children
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

### Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures [MMPS Website Policy Page.](#)
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

### Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by performance reviews and yearly VIT registration.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Mount Martha Primary School's people management processes are in line with *Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 10. PROTECT Child Safe Standard 6*

Good recruitment practices:

- create a safer workplace
- reduce the opportunity for harm to occur
- prevent, screen out or deter people who are unsuitable to work or volunteer with children
- recruit staff who uphold the school values.

**Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safe Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.**

- Ensure job advertisements have clear statements about: the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing





- Advise successful job applicants about the child safety practices of the school, including the Code of Conduct
- Make volunteers aware of the school's Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance if they person is required to have one or any equivalent background checks such as Victorian Institute of Teaching registration
- Collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references
- For volunteers: sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance if they person is required to have one of any equivalent background check
- Consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer's role and, if reasonable and appropriate collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references
- Provide an induction to staff, volunteers and contractors engaged in child-related work, regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of the role
- Ensure that induction addresses the school's:
  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - the Child Safety Policy
  - procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse
- Ensure staff, school council members, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities for:
  - children and students
  - information sharing and reporting obligations
  - recordkeeping obligations
- Provide supervision and people management of staff and volunteers that focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

### *Recruitment*

- Include selection criteria relevant to the role, such as:
  - experience working with children, or groups of children, including children with a disability or Aboriginal children
  - engaging with families
  - child safety experience
  - cultural safety in their work.

### *Interviews*

- Interview panel will have the right skills, experience, and information to perform their role.
- Develop questions about child safety in job interviews.
- Seek referees for both staff and volunteers as appropriate, including their last employer,
- Ask referees about the person's character and experience in working directly with children.

### *Supervision and people management focused on child safety and wellbeing*

- Undertake a risk assessment (refer to Standard 9) to determine what level of ongoing supervision and management is necessary to ensure staff and volunteers perform their role in a way that promotes child safety and wellbeing.
- Communicate regularly with staff and volunteers about the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct at staff meetings, in newsletters and staff updates.



- Provide refresher child safe training for staff and volunteers.
- Include child safety and wellbeing as a regular agenda item for staff meetings

#### *Training and support to uphold child safety*

- Refer to Standard 8 for further guidance on building child safety knowledge, skills, and awareness.
- Provide induction that covers:
  - the Child Safety Policy
  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - how to contribute to identifying, removing, or reducing risks
  - recordkeeping and information sharing requirements
  - school values and philosophy
  - procedures for managing complaints
  - privacy and reporting protocols.
- Train all staff and volunteers as appropriate to their roles, on topics such as:
  - child safety (including family violence)
  - mandatory reporting
  - responding to student sexual offending
  - human rights and the rights of children
  - diversity and inclusion
  - harassment and bullying
  - cultural safety
  - privacy and information sharing.
- Cover important topics in your child safety training, including:
  - risk factors and signs of harm, including intentional and unintentional harm, physical or emotional harm, bullying or cyberbullying, abuse and neglect
  - how to identify and respond to child safety risks, especially for vulnerable students
  - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns
  - how to engage with families to support student's safety and wellbeing
  - how to appropriately handle or share sensitive information relating to a child's wellbeing health or safety.
- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, through staff meetings and emails.
- Inform staff and volunteers, as appropriate, of their responsibilities under the information sharing and family violence reforms.

#### *Make child safety a key part of recruitment processes*

- Make sure all staff, particularly those with mandatory reporting responsibilities, are aware of the up-to-date processes for making a report.
- School Office process in place to check staff and volunteers' working with children clearance status or equivalent background check on at least an annual basis.
- Align complaints processes with best practice, including the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Reportable Conduct requirements.
- Declare and manage any potential conflicts of interest, such as family or business relationships or close friendships.
- Provide clear avenues for staff to report concerns.



- Involve staff in after-action reviews when a child safety incident has occurred.

### Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy [MMPS Website Policy Page](#), which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

### Child safety knowledge, skills, and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

By delivering tailored training to all staff and volunteers, everyone will share an understanding of:

- what child safety means
- the importance of child safety
- what to look for, and what to do.

This provides staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills they need to create a schoolwide culture of child safety. Appropriate training and supervision help keep staff and students safe and helps schools meet their child safety and occupational health and safety legal requirements.

### [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 8](#)

**Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safe Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.**

- Provide child safety training to staff engaged in child-connected work every year. This training includes:
  - the Child Safety Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - the procedures for responding to complaints and concerns about child abuse
  - guidance on recognising indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children and students



- guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- Providing training and information to volunteers engaged in child-connected work that is appropriate to their role that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.
- Support staff and volunteers to implement the Child Safety Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct where these policies apply to their role and responsibilities.
- Provide appropriate training and guidance to the members of the school council every year. This training should include:
  - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
  - child safety and wellbeing risks in the school
  - the child safety policies, procedures, and practices of the school.

*Induct new staff and volunteers to child safety requirements.*

- Provide an induction for new staff, volunteers, and new school council members on child safety, appropriate to the person's role that covers:
  - the Child Safety Policy
  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (incl. mandatory Reporting) policy and procedures
  - signs of harm and risk factors caused by peers or adults (including grooming and family violence) and the different ways young people express concerns or disclose harm
  - building culturally safe environments
  - privacy, information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
  - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns

*Provide ongoing education and training*

- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, through staff meetings, and emails.
- Require all staff with Mandatory Reporting obligations to refresh their Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations (Mandatory Reporting) training at least once a year. **Week One of Term Four**
- Maintain records of annual child safety programs including presentation materials, agenda, minutes, and list of attendees.
- Identify staff to attend information sharing and family violence reforms training, available as online webinars or eLearning modules.
- Offer further training appropriate to staff and volunteers' level of involvement in the school community, on topics such as:
  - child safety (including family violence)
  - mandatory reporting
  - responding to student sexual offending
  - human rights and the rights of children
  - diversity and inclusion
  - harassment and bullying
  - cultural safety



- privacy and information sharing.
- Remind staff regularly that they need to be alert for signs of harm and risk factors and aware of physical and online risks to child safety.
- Provide staff and relevant volunteers with up-to-date contact details for local support services for students and families.
- Staff to use [Recording your Actions: responding to suspected child abuse \( template\)](#) when recording incidents.
- Staff to read [Responding to other concerns about the wellbeing of a child](#) and [Identifying Child Abuse](#)
- Consider staff needs when designing training, such as:
  - Cultural safety for the needs of staff and volunteers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
  - Cultural sensitivity for staff and volunteers who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - Inclusivity of gender diversity and sexuality
  - Accessibility for those with a disability, including individuals' mobility, visual or hearing impaired.

#### *Plan to resource and prioritise child safety training*

- Develop and communicate your Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety Policy, and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy.
- Include child safety improvement and training in school planning.
- Provide time-release for teachers, and Educational Support staff to undertake child safety and related training.
- Direct staff to PROTECT for guidance on:
  - information to assist them to recognise indicators and risk factor of child harm, including harm caused by other children and young people
  - the processes to follow if a concern is raised.
- Keep a record of all staff and volunteers who complete child safety training to ensure all are appropriately trained and training is refreshed as required.

#### **School council training and education**

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Mount Martha Primary School Child Safety policies, procedures, codes, and practices

#### **Complaints and reporting processes**

Mount Martha Primary School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct, or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found at [MMPS Website Policy Page](#).

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures [MMPS Website Policy Page](#).

Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy [MMPS Website Policy Page](#) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## Communications

Mount Martha Primary School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in our school newsletter and on COMPASS
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## Privacy and information sharing

Mount Martha Primary School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

## Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

## Review of child safety practices

At Mount Martha Primary School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

Child safe organisations have an open and transparent culture, learn from their mistakes, and put the interests of children first. Taking time to review policies, procedures and practices puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of the school's activities.



Mount Martha Primary School processes are in line with Ministerial 1358, Clause 13

[PROTECT Child Safe Standard 10](#)

**Mount Martha Primary School does the following to adhere to Child Safe Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.**

*Create and update child-safe policies*

- Develop a register of existing child safe standard policies, noting the date the policy was approved, and schedule a review date every 2 years. Review and evaluate their child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices after any significant child safety incident
- When required, develop a work plan and establish a working group led by the child safety champion, to review and update policies and procedures. Report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff, volunteers, the community, families, and students
- Monitor and manage child safety risks using a risk register.
- Determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures.
- Use complaints and incidents as a learning opportunity to inform continuous improvement.
- Identify ways to involve staff, volunteers, students, families and community members in review processes.
- Implement current child safe policies and procedures
- Keep records of documentation, such as school council minutes outlining recommendations on how child safe practices can be improved and implemented.
- Develop an audit log appropriately secured of complaints and concerns, demonstrating responses
- Review complaints received and incidents reported for gaps, weaknesses, or failures in policies.
- Include findings from child safety reviews in child safety training for staff and volunteers.
- Communicate review outcomes to students in age-appropriate ways.
- Inform the school community of any child safety policy changes
- Review level of awareness of child-safe policies and procedures by students, families, staff, and volunteers.

## Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. [MMPS Website Policy Page.](#)

These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Related Department of Education and Training policies

- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)



- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

**Other related documents**

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

## Approval

<b>Created date</b>	August 2022
<b>Consultation</b>	Staff, School Council Education Sub Committee, School Council
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Karen Walker
<b>Endorsed on</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2002
<b>Next review date</b>	September 2024