



Child Safe Policy

Child Safe Standard 2: Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

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

Child Safe Officer/Leader – Anita Osavkovska (Assistant Principal)

Purpose:

Epping Views 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.

Particular attention will be 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.

Every person involved in Epping Views 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.

Children at Epping Views Primary School will be encouraged to be empowered, vital and active participants. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say and encourage positive school values through the School Wide Positive Behaviours Support.

Guidelines:

Planning, decision making and operations at Epping Views Primary School will:

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

IMPLEMENTATION:

Our Staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Training and supervision:

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Epping Views Primary School understands that children's safety is everyone's responsibility. Our culture aims for all staff, students and wider members of our community to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

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

We ensure all staff and volunteers understand Epping View's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

*Please refer to our Child Safety Code of Conduct

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment:

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

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

All people engaged by Epping Views Primary School, including volunteers and trades people, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

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

Fair procedures for personnel:

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised where appropriate we provide updates to children and families on the progress and any actions, we as an organisation take.

Privacy:

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

Legislative responsibilities:

Epping Views Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

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

Risk management:

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock) and online environments.

Allegations, concerns and complaints:

Epping Views Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed every **two** years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute to the policy guidelines. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability in gaining guidance/ feedback and advice.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

March 2019

APPENDIX A

Standard 1 - Good leadership & governance in child safe school: - strategies to embed a school culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

- **Good Leadership & Governance in a Child Safe School**
- **Child Safety Officer/s**
- **A Guide to Creating a Child Safe Organisation**

Standard 2 - Commitment to Child Safety:

- **Child Safe Policy** - a child safe statement of commitment to child safety
- **Child Wellbeing & Safety Framework** – a framework to promote children’s Safety, wellbeing and development through school policy and systemic practice

Standard 3 – Code of Conduct:

- **Child Safety Code of Conduct** - that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4 – Human Resources Practices:

- **Human Resources Practices** - Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5 – Reporting Child Abuse: - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

- Principal Child Safe Checklist
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or CHILD FIRST
- Betrayal of Trust factsheet - Failure to Disclose information
- Betrayal of Trust factsheet - Failure to Protect information
- Procedures when an allegation of child abuse is made
- Four critical actions for school to take in responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse
- Flow Chart for the four critical actions for school to take in responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse
- Spotting the warning signs of Child Abuse: for School Staff
- Responding to suspected child abuse: Template for Vic Schools
- Protecting children from abuse: for parents and carers

Standard 6 – Identifying and Reducing Risks: - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

- Duty of Care Policy
- Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the Risk of Child Abuse
- PROTECT- Identifying & Responding to Child Abuse in Vic Schools
- What is Child Abuse?
- Risk Assessment template for Standard 6

Standard 7 – Empowering Children: strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

- Strategies to promote the participation & empowerment of children
- Feeling Safe – Primary School Students
- Tip Sheet – Empowerment & participation of children

Standard 1, 2, 3 & 5 –Informing school community:

- Informing school community about school Child Safe practices and processes through regular newsletter items