



**CLIFTON HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILD SAFE POLICY
MARCH 2017**

PURPOSE

Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act and Ministerial Order 870 to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to create child safe environments and protect children from harm.

The Child Safe Policy sets out Clifton Hill Primary School's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the Child Safe Standards apply must have:

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.
2. A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

SCOPE AND AUDIENCE

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they are in direct contact with children. The policy applies across all school settings including camps, excursions, sport and sporting events and in the use of digital technology and social media.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Clifton Hill 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.

Clifton Hill Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Clifton Hill 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, and the safety of children with a disability.

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Every person involved in Clifton Hill 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 is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

VALUING DIVERSITY

At Clifton Hill Primary School we value diversity and do not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability and their families.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children who identify as LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Gender Diverse and Intersex) or who are gender fluid.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with diverse family backgrounds (eg same sex parents, single parents, LGBTI parents).

DEFINITIONS

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.

PROCEDURES

This section outlines the following procedures:

- Recruitment
- Supporting staff
- Reporting a child safety concern or complaint
- Risk management
- Empowering children
- Confidentiality and privacy

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RECRUITMENT

Clifton Hill Primary School applies best practice in recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. Advertised positions include our commitment to Child Safety. All applicants for positions at Clifton Hill Primary School are informed of the school's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

SUPPORTING STAFF

A Code of Conduct has been developed to provide guidance to staff and volunteers. New staff undertake a comprehensive induction program, including an introduction to Clifton Hill Primary School's Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy. Ongoing induction and training is provided for staff in child safety including how to recognise and respond to child abuse. Every year school staff are allocated time within the meeting schedule to complete the Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module.

At Clifton Hill Primary School, Professional Development is provided to empower staff to assist children in identifying situations where they might feel unsafe, identifying situations and feelings of risk, and how to seek assistance from trusted adults. Staff are assisted to locate, develop and deliver appropriate curriculum to educate students in the following areas:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- Resilience
- Child abuse awareness and prevention

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

All school staff members have a moral and legal obligation and a Duty of Care to protect any child under their care from foreseeable harm. Clifton Hill Primary 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. All school staff members must respond to any reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. This includes abuse that has, or is suspected to have taken place within or outside school grounds or hours.

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.

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Any reasonable suspicion must be reported following the *Four Critical Actions for Schools*, outlined in the attached document *Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse* (Appendix 1).

At Clifton Hill Primary School, any instances of suspected child abuse must be taken to the Principal.

RISK MANAGEMENT

In order to assess, identify and document risks to child safety in school environments, Clifton Hill Primary School has developed a Child Safety Risk Management Plan outlining strategies for managing risk (Appendix 2). Risk management strategies are reviewed annually by the School Leadership Team.

EMPOWERING CHILDREN

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. 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. As part of our curriculum, we address personal safety, healthy and respectful relationships, building safety networks and how students can tell someone they are being harmed.

The rights and responsibilities of students at Clifton Hill Primary School are outlined in our Student Engagement Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Clifton Hill Primary School collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they are 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.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1 – *Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse*

Appendix 2 – Child Safety Risk Management Plan

Student Engagement Policy

Clifton Hill Primary School Code of Conduct

POLICY REVIEW

This policy was ratified by the Clifton Hill Primary School Council on 08/03/2017 and is due to be reviewed in 2018.