

Coolaroo South Primary School

Child Safe

POLICY

Introduction

Coolaroo South Primary is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and takes active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safety Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations and responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all children under their care.

In accordance with requirements of the [Victorian Government's Ministerial Order No 870](#), Coolaroo South Primary maintains a culture of 'no tolerance' to child abuse and to support this has established minimum Child Safe Standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Coolaroo South Primary's commitment to ensuring Child Safety and to illustrate the measures implemented by the school to maintain a safe education environment, as well as processes for responding to suspected abuse.

Scope

This policy and associated procedures apply to all staff members (teaching and non-teaching), casual relief staff, visitors, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

Commitment to Child Safety

All students and young people attending Coolaroo South have the right to feel safe. The school affirms its commitment to child safety by adopting a 'zero tolerance' to child abuse and by actively implementing and managing strategies to help protect children from harm.

Initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety of students and young people at Coolaroo South Primary include the following:

- An annual assessment of the effectiveness of its Child Safe Management Strategies to identify areas for improvement.
- A Code of Conduct defining workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.
- Processes for the recruitment, support, training and supervision of staff members, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors who participate in 'Child Connected Work'.
- Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected Child Abuse.
- Inclusion and empowerment of all students and young people in the establishment of Child Safe strategies.
- A commitment that promotes safety of Indigenous children, children with disabilities and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Coolaroo South maintains policies, procedures and strategies to create a child safe environment in the following areas.

Risk Management

Coolaroo South recognises the importance of minimising the potential of Child Abuse or harm and uses this process to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general Occupational Health and Safety risks the school proactively manages risk via a formal assessment process.

Code of Conduct

Coolaroo South enforces a Code of Conduct for all staff members, casual relief teachers, volunteers, and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance and support to individuals so that they feel valued, respected and fairly treated. It is provided to any person engaged in 'Child Connected Work'.

Recruitment, Support, Training and Supervision

Coolaroo South Primary adopts Administrative and Human Resource practices to ensure its screening, recruitment and performance management processes identify and engage the most suitable candidates for positions available at the school. Recruitment and screening processes, as well as Police and Working With Children's Checks are minimum requirements for those engaged in 'Child Connected Work'.

Staff Members are provided with regular development opportunities, support, supervision and training to assist with addressing child safety matters.

Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Concerns or Abuse

Coolaroo South has appointed a Student Wellbeing Officer (Julie Coco) and along with the Assistant Principal (Jan Ferguson) have responsibility for responding to reports or complaints made by any member of the school community relating to child safety concerns or abuse. The school's Student Wellbeing officers work alongside the leadership team, staff members, casual relief teachers, volunteers, contractors, students and the parent community to ensure the Child Safe Standards are maintained and all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct are immediately addressed.

Where staff members have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a student or young person they are mandated by law to report their concerns immediately to Child Protection. Staff members will be supported through all aspects of the reporting process by the leadership team.

Inclusion and empowerment of all students and young people

Coolaroo South works with students to ensure that they are empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and encourage them to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or afraid. Staff members actively encourage students and young people to express their views on matters that directly affect them. The school educates students and young people on strategies they can adopt if they feel unsafe.

Valuing Diversity

Coolaroo South values diversity and does not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this the school:

- Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous children and their families.
- Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from cultural and/or linguistically different backgrounds.
- Welcome children with disabilities and their families and actively promotes their participation.
- Seek to employ staff members from a culturally diverse background.

Review of this Policy

Coolaroo South Primary reviews its Child Safe Policy every three years or more frequently in the event of a complaint or when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children.