



Coolaroo South  
*Primary School  
and Kindergarten*

# Child Safe Standards

# COOLAROO SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

## OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

*Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten 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.*

*Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten has zero tolerance for child abuse.*

*Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten 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 Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten 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.*

*In its planning, decision-making and operations, Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten will:*

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

# Child Safe Standards - Overview

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## Introduction

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and will take active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safe Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations & 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 School and Kindergarten maintains a culture of 'no tolerance' to child abuse. To achieve this it has established a holistic Child Safe Strategy incorporating the processes, policies & procedures listed below.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten Child Safe Strategy includes, but is not limited to the:

1. Establishment of strategies for embedding a culture of child safety at the school;
2. Maintenance & communication of a policy affirming the school's commitment to child safety and the promotion of an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential;
3. Maintenance & implementation of a Child Safe Code of Conduct;
4. Established processes for screening, supervision, training, and other human resource practices to reduce the risk of child abuse & promote a child safe learning environment;
5. Maintenance & Communication of procedures for responding to and reporting child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
6. Risk Management strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. Maintenance of strategies to promote student participation & empowerment in creating an environment where they feel respected, valued and are capable of reaching their full potential.

## Scope

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten Child Safe Standards apply to any individual employed by the school, employed under contract, volunteers or contracted service providers. Failure to comply with any aspect of the school's Child Safe Standards may result in criminal proceedings in accordance with the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*, the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)* and the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust Report 2013*.

## Definitions

Child: Any child or young person enrolled as a student at the school.

Child Connected Work: Work authorised by the school's Principal, members of the Leadership Team or Board performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or are reasonably expected to be present.

Child Abuse: Includes:

- a. Any Act committed against a child involving:
  - i. A sexual offence
  - ii. An offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- b. The infliction, on a child of:
  - i. Physical violence
  - ii. Serious emotional or psychological harm
- c. Serious Neglect of a child.

Child Neglect: The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child, where they are in a position to do so, with conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

Child Physical Abuse: Generally child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour.

Child Protection: Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

Child Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse can also be:

- » Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g. a teacher, education support officer); the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated.
- » Any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion.
- » Sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion.
- » Non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14-year-old and an 11-year-old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse.

Child Safety: Encompasses matters relating to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**Mandatory Reporting:** The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners.

**Reasonable Belief:** When a staff member is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

**School Environment:** Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use by a child during or outside of school hours including:

- a. A campus of the school
- b. Online school environments, including email & intranet systems
- c. Other locations provided by the school for a child's use including school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, school community and other events.

**School Staff:** Any individual working in the school environment who is:

- a. Directly engaged or employed by the school Principal or School Council
- b. A volunteer or contracted service provider

### **Our School's Commitment to Ensuring Child Safety:**

All students enrolled at Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten have the right to feel safe. The wellbeing of students will always be our school's first priority. The school aims to create a child safe environment where children feel valued & respected by committing to the following arrangements for students, parents, carers, staff members, volunteers and contractors.

### **Our Commitment to our Students**

- » We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all students & young people enrolled in our school.
- » We commit to providing students & young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- » We commit to listening to students & young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- » We commit to taking action to ensure that students & young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- » We commit to teaching students & young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- » We commit to seeking input and feedback from students & young people regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

### **Our Commitment to Parents and Carers**

- » We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- » We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures.
- » We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- » We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- » We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

### **Our Commitment to our School Employees, CRTs, Volunteers & Contractors**

1. We commit to providing all staff members, casual relief teachers (CRTs), volunteers & contractors with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
2. We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and the protection of students and young people. This will

include regular briefings & annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.

3. We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by staff members, students, care giver's, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
4. We commit to providing adequate resources to support staff members, CRTs, volunteers & contractors meet and exceed their Child Safe obligations.
5. We commit to appointing a 'Student Wellbeing Officer' and a Learning Specialist in Wellbeing to further promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand, meet and exceed their Child Safe obligations.
6. We commit to providing support to any member of the school community who reports a child safety complaint, suspected abuse, disclosure or breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
7. We commit to providing opportunities for staff members, CRTs, volunteers & contractors to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

# Standard One - Organisational Culture of Child Safety

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Coolaroo South maintains a 'culture of child safety' through effective leadership arrangements. Protecting children from abuse is everybody's responsibility, and Coolaroo South's Leadership Team takes the main role in embedding a child safe culture across all aspects of the School Community.

All members of staff, casual relief teachers (CRTs), volunteers & contractors have a responsibility to act to protect students & young people from abuse and to build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. The school maintains a 'culture of child safety' through proactive leadership which demonstrates, and insists of others, appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours to ensure the safety of all who attend the school. Coolaroo South fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness, where children and adults know how to respond if they suspect or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff members, CRTs, volunteers & contract service providers must also acknowledge the importance of cultural safety for Indigenous children and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including that of children with a disability.

**Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten maintains a 'culture of child safety' by actively implementing the strategies listed below in accordance with its moral & legal obligations and *Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870*.**

## **Leadership Responsibilities**

All members of the School's Leadership Team take their responsibility to protect students very seriously. Members of the School's Leadership Team take the lead in promoting an environment where students and young people feel safe, respected, valued and are capable and confident of reaching their full potential.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten's Leadership Team is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety and does so by ensuring the following:

1. Identifying and assessing potential risk of abuse to students and young people via established risk management strategies.
2. Creating an environment for students and young people to be safe and to feel safe.
3. Upholding high principles and standards for all staff members, CRTs, volunteers, and contractors.
4. Promoting models of behaviour between adults, students and young people based on mutual respect and consideration.

5. Developing & communicating child safe policies & procedures outlining the School's commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.
6. Developing & communicating codes of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children.
7. Appointing a Student Wellbeing Officer and a Learning Specialist in Wellbeing to promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand, meet and exceed their Child Safe obligations.
8. Ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment & screening of all staff, CRTs, volunteers & contractors.
9. Ensuring that staff & other members of the school community have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safe matters.
10. Promoting inclusion of all children & families from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities.
11. Empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety and then incorporate this feedback to improve policies and practices.
12. Immediately respond to any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct or suspected abuse in accordance with its reporting requirements.
13. Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policies and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing.
14. Ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

**Responsibilities of Staff Members, CRTs, Volunteers & Contractors:**

Staff members, CRTs, volunteers & contractors engaged by Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten have an obligation to foster a culture of safety for all students and young people by:

1. Treating students and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care.
2. Understanding and complying with legislative requirements and internal school processes in the course of their work.
3. Demonstrating a commitment to displaying appropriate behaviours in accordance with the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct.
4. Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured.
5. Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of students and young people.

6. Immediately report any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct or suspected abuse to the school's Student Wellbeing Officer or a member of the school Leadership Team.
7. Assist the Leadership Team in empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety.
8. Assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse.
9. Following the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

### **Maintaining & Communicating the School's Commitment to Child Safe Standards**

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten maintains Child Safe policies outlining key elements of its approach to creating and sustaining a Child Safe environment. The policies have been developed by the Leadership Team in consultation with staff members and affirm the school's commitment to a 'zero tolerance' towards child abuse and its commitment to upholding the best interest of children. The policies also demonstrate a commitment to keeping students and young people safe and how as a school community it actively works to listen to and empower students at Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten.

The school's Child Safe policy is available at the front office and in the staffroom. Relevant policies are also made publicly available to all members of the community via the School's website and as hard copies located and available from the school office. This policy along with accompanying Codes of Conduct are communicated to staff members, CRTs, volunteers & contractors prior to commencing work and at least annually and they are also embedded into core documents such as the annual Staff Information Manual.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten reviews policies every three years or more frequently as required when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children.

### **Maintaining & Communicating the School's Code of Conduct to Ensure Child Safety**

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten maintains a Code of Conduct for all staff members, volunteers, CRTs and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours, as well as acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten believes that by defining the expectation for all staff members, CRTs, volunteers and contractors relating to 'Child Connected Work' they are more likely to act appropriately. The Code of Conduct enables the school to take immediate action when an individual acts in an unacceptable manner, which may result in disciplinary action including dismissal. This process is supported by the school's complaints procedure.

The school's Child Safe Code of Conduct is made publicly available to all members of the community via the School's website. The Code of Conduct is communicated to new staff members, CRTs, volunteers & contractors prior to commencing work and at least annually and they are also embedded into core documents such as the Staff Manual and CRT induction booklet.

Members of the Leadership Team vigilantly monitor professional behaviour & regularly remind staff members, CRTs, volunteers and contractors of their responsibilities.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten reviews its Child Safe Code of Conduct 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.

# Standard Two - Child Safe Policy

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## **Introduction**

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten 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 Safe Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations & 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 School and Kindergarten 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 School and Kindergarten'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 & non-teaching), casual relief staff, visitors, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

## **Commitment to Child Safety:**

All students & 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 School and Kindergarten 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 & unacceptable relationships.
- » Processes for the recruitment, support, training & 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 & empowerment of all students & 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 & Safety risks the school proactively manages risk.

### **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 & 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 & Supervision**

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten adopts Administrative & Human Resource practices to ensure its screening, recruitment & 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 & 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 (Jan Ferguson) and along with the Learning Specialist in Wellbeing (Julie Coco) 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 within the Wellbeing team and alongside the leadership team, staff members, casual relief teachers, volunteers, contractors, students and the parent community to ensure Child Safety 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 & empowerment of all students & 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 & 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.
- » Welcomes children with disabilities and their families and actively promotes their participation.
- » Seeks to employ staff members from a culturally diverse background.

### **Review of this Policy**

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten reviews its Codes of Conduct 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.

# Standard Three - Child Safe Code of Conduct

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## **Introduction**

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes & legislation.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour by adults towards children & young people. It aims to protect children and reduce any opportunity of abuse or harm to children. This Code of Conduct also provides anyone engaged by Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten with guidance on how best to support students and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

## **Scope**

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff members (teaching & non-teaching), casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

## **Acceptable behaviours**

All staff members (teaching & non-teaching), casual relief staff, volunteers, contractors and board/school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by complying with the following 'acceptable behaviours':

- » Adhering to the School's Child Safe Policy and associated procedures at all times.
- » Taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse.
- » Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions.
- » Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another student or young person has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child.
- » Taking account of the diversity of all students, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities and students and young people who are vulnerable.
- » Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, including those from diverse backgrounds.
- » Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a student or young person.
- » Reporting all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct immediately to the Principal and/or the School's Child Student Wellbeing team immediately.

- » Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958.
- » If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring the safety of the students or young person/s as soon as possible.

### **Unacceptable Behaviours**

All staff members (teaching & non-teaching), casual relief staff, volunteers, contractors and school council members must not:

- » Ignore or disregard any child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- » Develop any 'special' relationships with students or young people that could be seen as favouritism (such as the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students.)
- » Exhibit behaviours with students or young people, which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (such as inappropriate sitting on laps).
- » Do things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves (such as toileting or changing clothes).
- » Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students.
- » Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses with students or young people.
- » Have unauthorised contact with students or young people 'online' via email, social networking sites, by text message or other means.
- » Display any behaviour, in person or 'on-line', which could be construed as inappropriate or disrespectful to those who may view it, in particular students, young people and those from Aboriginal and diverse cultural backgrounds.
- » Maintain relationships with a student or young person and their families outside of school without the knowledge of the Principal, a member of the Leadership Team or Student Wellbeing Officer.
- » Use inappropriate language in the presence of students.
- » Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language in the presence of or with children.
- » Express personal views on cultures, race, ethnicity, sexuality or disabilities in the presence of students.
- » Discriminate against any student because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- » Attend work under the influence or effects of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- » Consume alcohol without the consent of the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team at school, at a school event or in the presence of students or young people.
- » Photograph or video a student or young person without the consent of their parents or guardian.

**Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct**

Where a staff member (teaching & non-teaching), casual relief staff, volunteers, contractors and school council is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, Coolaroo South will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches - dismissal.

# Standard Four - Human Resource Practices to Ensure Child Safety

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Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten adopts Administrative & Human Resource practices to ensure its recruitment & performance management processes not only identify the most suitable candidates to undertake 'Child Connected Work', but fosters continual improvement in child safe practices.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten will only employ staff members, casual relief teachers, contractors, and engage volunteers, who share the school's commitment to maintaining a Child Safe environment.

## **Position Descriptions**

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten maintains detailed position descriptions for all teaching and non-teaching staff members that define the roles and responsibilities for the maintenance of Child Safety and reporting requirements. The school has also developed simple 'duty statements' for volunteers who wish to engage in 'Child Connected Work'.

Position descriptions are relevant to individual roles and clearly define:

- » The school's mission & vision.
- » Tasks and duties associated with the position.
- » Qualifications, experience and attributes required.
- » The level of responsibility and authority associated with the role.
- » Requirements relating to applicable assessment to be completed;
  - Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration
  - Police / Criminal Record Checks
  - Working with Children Checks
- » Responsibility to maintain current assessments and the requirements to report any breach immediately to the Principal.
- » Responsibility for complying with the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- » Responsibilities for participating in all identified training.
- » Child safety complaint, disclosure, breach or suspected abuse reporting requirements.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten recognises that well developed 'position descriptions' & 'duty statements' are more likely to attract suitably qualified and experienced personnel & volunteers, who share its commitment to Child Safety.

## **Position Advertisements**

When seeking to engage staff members, contract service providers or volunteers, Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten clearly communicates its commitment to Child Safety in all job advertisements and duty statements. Statements encouraging only applicants who share the school's commitment to Child Safety will be incorporated as will those encouraging applications from Aboriginals, Torres Strait Islanders and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### **Assessing Potential Staff Members or Volunteers**

Coolaroo Primary will conduct a thorough assessment of potential candidates and volunteers prior to engaging them or authorising them to conduct 'Child Connected Work'.

When assessing potential candidates and volunteers, members of the school Leadership Team, the school's Student Wellbeing Officer and others on the assessment panel will consider the following:

- » What motivates the individual to work with children (personal and/or professional).
- » Relevant & verifiable experience.
- » Understanding of children's physical & emotional needs.
- » Understanding of professional boundaries
- » Attitudes towards children's rights and how these can be upheld.
- » Values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness and non-discrimination).
- » Responses from referees

Responses to these indicators will determine a candidate's or volunteer's suitability to undertake 'Child Connected Work' and will be given sufficient 'weight' as part of the selection process.

### **Screening Processes**

Coolaroo South acknowledges the importance of assessing potential candidates and volunteers prior to engagement and is committed to undertaking a thorough & rigorous screening process.

The process of interviewing and screening potential candidates and volunteers remains confidential at all times. The school ensures that at least one member of the interview panel is responsible for and experienced in conducting reference checks.

### **Reference Checks**

When conducting reference checks the identified member of the interview panel will ask the following questions of the referee:

- » Would you employ the applicant again?
- » Do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?
- » Are you comfortable knowing that the applicant may at times work alone with children?
- » Did the applicant have any disciplinary matters relating to them directly or about their adherence to the School's Code of Conduct?
- » Can you provide an example of a time when you observed the applicant managing the behaviour of a child?

Any negative response or reluctance on behalf of the referee to any of the above mentioned questions will be viewed unfavourably and may result in the candidate being ineligible for the position.

### **Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration**

All teaching staff will be required to maintain current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Registration prior to being considered for employment. A copy of the teacher's current VIT registration will be taken and kept on their employee file.

Criminal Record Checks are a requirement of VIT Registration every five years and it is the staff member's responsibility, at their expense, to ensure that this is undertaken. A member of the leadership or Business Manager will regularly monitor the currency of VIT Registrations via the School Portal on the VIT Website.

Coolaroo South ensures the currency of all VIT Registrations via maintenance of a VIT tab located within the School's Compliance Register. The currency of registration is regularly monitored.

### **Working With Children's Checks**

Working with Children's Checks (WWCC) will be required by all non-teaching staff, volunteers, members of the community and contractors engaged by the school. WWCC screen an individual's criminal record and professional conduct, acting as a mechanism for identifying those individuals who pose a risk to child safety.

A current WWCC (within 5 years) is required for all non-teaching staff, volunteers, members of the community and contractors and a copy must be provided to the school Business Manager prior to being authorised by the Principal to undertake 'Child Connected Works'. A member of the Leadership Team will regularly monitor the currency of WWCC with annual reviews made.

Any member of the school community who wishes to participate in 'Child Connected Work' must provide the school with a copy of their current WWCC prior to being authorised to do so and must also be approved to participate by the Principal.

### **Police Checks**

Coolaroo South may request a Police Check for Administrative Staff, Cleaning Staff and others who may at times be permitted to work alone at the school.

The school acknowledges that Police Checks differ from WWCC and provide a list of offences that are disclosed from a person's national criminal record. It may look beyond those of a WWCC into areas of fraud & road offences. Police Checks may be requested by the school in addition to **WWCC**.

### **Screening of Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs).**

Prior to being approved to undertake Casual Relief Teaching all CRTs must attend an interview with a member of the Leadership Team. Reference checks will be conducted by a member of the school's Leadership team prior to any CRT being authorised to conduct work at the school. Where a CRT is engaged via an agency, the agency must be able to demonstrate that it maintains robust processes to support Child Safety. The agency must demonstrate sufficient screening and induction procedures. The school's Code of Conduct and a CSPA Induction booklet will also be provided to the agency to be embedded into their own induction documentation.

All CRTs must maintain current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Registration and provide this to the school prior to commencing work.

CRTs will be provided with a copy of the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct as part of their school induction process, acknowledge their understanding of its content, as well as their commitment to complying with it, prior to being authorised to commence work.

### **Screening of Volunteers**

Any volunteer including parents, guardians, care givers, grandparents, pre service teachers, work experience students (over the age of 18) who make a request or are approached by the school to participate in 'Child Connected Work' must provide a copy of a current Working With Children Checks (WWCC). This includes volunteers who anticipate assisting the school in any capacity, not limiting school camps, excursions, sporting events, classroom helpers, etc.

All Volunteers are to be provided with a copy of the School's Child Safe Code of Conduct and asked to sign an induction checklist prior to being permitted to conduct work on its behalf.

Where the volunteer is a work experience student the participating school must provide assurance to the Principal and /or the Wellbeing Officer that the attending student has no prior convictions of any kind. Failure to disclose convictions will result in a request for the student to be removed from the program.

### **Screening of Contract Service Providers**

Coolaroo South ensures that any contract service provider it engages is suitably qualified has assessed all risks associated with the works they are engaged to complete and holds all relevant licences and insurances.

Contractors will also be screened to ensure they do not pose a risk to students or other members of the school community prior to being authorised to commence work. Copies of Working with Children Checks (WWCC) are obtained for all Contractors. Where a WWCC has not been provided the Contractor or their workers are not permitted to conduct work in the presence of any student. A member of Staff must be present at all times.

All Contractors and their workers are to be provided with a copy of the School's Child Safe Code of Conduct and asked to sign an induction checklist prior to being permitted to conduct work on its behalf.

WWCC, as well as, Police Checks are required for all cleaning staff, and others. These must be obtained prior to them being authorised to conduct work on its behalf.

All Contractors and their employees must also undergo a formal induction into the school's OHS requirements. This induction makes specific reference to Child Safety requirements and responsibilities for both the school and the Contractors.

To ensure the identification of all contractors and their workers, they will be required to wear

visitor identification at all times when on the school site.

### **Child Safety Code of Conduct**

All staff members, casual relief teachers, volunteers & contractors required to undertake work on behalf of Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten or who participate in 'Child Connected Work' are required to read and sign an induction checklist.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct provides clear expectations for appropriate behaviour by adults towards children & young people. It aims to protect children and reduce any opportunity of abuse or harm to children. This Code of Conduct also provides anyone engaged by Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten with guidance on how best to support students and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

All staff members, casual relief teachers, volunteers & contractors are required to read and acknowledge their understanding of appropriate child safety behaviours at least annually.

### **Support, Training & Supervision of Employees & Volunteers to Ensure Child Safety**

Once Staff Members & Volunteers have commenced work Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten provides them with regular development opportunities, support, supervision & training to assist with addressing child safety matters.

Members of the School Leadership Team and the school's Wellbeing Team are responsible for providing mentoring and support to staff members on all aspects relating to Child Safety & Reporting. These school leaders are also governed with the responsibility of raising performance issues and required improvements with individual staff members, where required. They commit to meeting regularly to discuss observations and the effectiveness of the school's Child Safety Strategies.

All new staff members are mentored throughout the early phase of their employment. Their assigned mentor in conjunction with the School's Student Wellbeing team will provide guidance and support to new employees to assist them identify and address Child Safety matters.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are established and discussed with staff on an annual basis. The school has incorporated KPIs into staff Performance Management Plans that have a specific Child Safety Indicator. This indicator includes, but is not limited to the following:

- » Staff Members are required to read and sign the School's Induction Checklist annually.
- » Maintain current VIT Registration or WWCC and provide copies to the school.
- » Staff Members are required to participate in identified Child Safety & Mandatory Reporting training and provide a certificate of completion for their file.
- » Staff Members must be able to demonstrate sufficient awareness of signs of child abuse and reporting requirements.
- » Staff Members must demonstrate how they provide a physical & psychologically safe environment, where the wellbeing of students & young people is nurtured.
- » Staff Members must demonstrate how they develop a positive, responsible and caring teaching and learning environment, which recognises the rights of all people to be safe

and free from abuse.

- » Staff members must demonstrate how they foster an inclusive teaching and learning environment that values diversity and promotes a culture of empowerment of Aboriginal students including those with disabilities and from diverse cultural or linguistically different backgrounds.

### **Training & Improvement Opportunities**

To further support staff members meet and exceed their KPIs for Child Safety the school identifies professional learning & training opportunities annually.

Learning & training opportunities supported by the school include, but are not limited to:

- » Child Safety/Student Wellbeing remains a regular meeting agenda item to facilitate communication and consultation on all matters relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- » Annual induction into the School's Child Safety requirements.
- » Annual refresher on professional & legal obligations & responsibilities relating to Child Safety.
- » Annual refresher and acknowledgment of the School's Code of Conduct requirements.
- » Annual completion of the Victorian Department of Education's eLearning Mandatory Reporting Modules.

# Standard Five - Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

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Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten maintains a formal process for reporting and responding to child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct. This process is embedded within the School's Child Safe Management System (Xuno) and is regularly communicated to all Staff Members, Casual Relief Teachers, Volunteers & Contractors.

The school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse in accordance with the Victorian Children, Youth & Families Act 2005, the Victorian Crimes Act 1958 and recommendation from the Betrayal of Trust Report 2014.

## **Reporting Requirements**

Section 182 of the Victorian Children, Youth & Families Act 2005 requires mandatory reporters, (teachers, principals, doctors, nurses and police officers) who 'form a belief on reasonable grounds' that a student or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, to report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection.

All Coolaroo South staff members who 'form a belief on reasonable grounds' that a student or young person:

- » Is in need of protection, should report their concerns immediately to the Principal or Assistant Principal before contacting the DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.
- » Is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment should report their concerns immediately to the Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Student Wellbeing Team before contacting DHHS Child Protection.

If staff members have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a student or young person they should report their concerns immediately to the Principal, Assistant Principal or a member of the Student Wellbeing Team before contacting DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.

In any case where the staff member, CRT, volunteer, or contractor has concerns about a student or young person's general well-being, they should also discuss their concerns with the Principal, Assistant Principal or a Student Wellbeing Team member.

The Principal, Assistant Principal or a member of the Student Wellbeing Team will immediately investigate all suspected Child Abuse claims and will ensure:

- » They contact 000 if a child is in immediate danger.
- » Support of the child, parent and person who report the suspected abuse.
- » Provide support to any accused staff member or volunteer.
- » Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child.
- » Clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary processes if required.
- » Decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care whether the matter should/must be reported to the Police or Child Protection Services.

# Child Protection Reporting Procedure

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## Introduction

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten staff members have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action.

The school's Child Protection Reporting Procedure assists staff members, CRT's, volunteers, contractors, parents and care givers to:

- » Identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- » Understand how a 'reasonable belief is formed
- » Make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- » Comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection laws as well as their legal obligations, relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

## Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting is a legal requirement under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) (Act) to protect children from harm relating to physical injury and sexual abuse. A child, student or young person for the purpose of the relevant parts of the Act, is any person 17 years of age or younger.

Staff Members mandated under this Act (teaching staff & principals) who form a 'reasonable belief that a child, student or young person is in need of protection from physical, emotional, psychological, developmental harm or sexual abuse, and that the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child, must report that belief to DHHS Child Protection 1300 664 977 as soon as possible after forming the belief. A subsequent report must be made on each occasion in which the Mandatory Reporter becomes aware of further reasonable grounds for the belief.

## Forming a Reasonable Belief

When a Staff Member is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief might be formed if:

- » A student or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- » A student or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)

- » Someone who knows a child states that the student or young person has been physically or sexually abused
- » A student or young person exhibits sexually-abusive or age-inappropriate behaviours
- » Professional observations of the student or young person's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the student has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused
- » Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the student or young person has been physically or sexually abused.

### **Types of Abuse and Indicators of Harm**

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing. The younger a child the more vulnerable he/she is and the more serious the consequences are likely to be.

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert staff members to the possibility of child abuse and neglect. While any indicators of possible child abuse or neglect are concerning, it is important to know which indicators must be reported.

It is mandatory to report concerns relating to:

- » Physical abuse
- » Sexual abuse

While not mandated, making a report to DHHS Child Protection may also be needed for:

- » Emotional abuse
- » Neglect
- » Medical neglect
- » Family violence
- » Human trafficking (including forced marriage)
- » Sexual exploitation (including pornography and prostitution)
- » Risk-taking behaviour
- » Female genital mutilation
- » Risk to an unborn child
- » A student or young person exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours.

## Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Any staff member who 'believes on reasonable grounds' that a student or young person is in need of:

- » Protection from physical harm or sexual abuse - must report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection
- » Protection from harm that is not believed to involve physical harm or sexual abuse - are encouraged to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection
- » Therapeutic treatment - are encouraged to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.

All Staff Members are encouraged to report any Child Protection concerns to the Principal, the School's Child Safety Officer or a Member of the Leadership Team prior to reporting to the DHHS or Child FIRST. This aims to support the Staff Members making the report.

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NOTE# Child Protection is the Victorian Government Agency, provided by the DHHS, that protects children at risk of significant harm. Child Protection has statutory powers and can use these to protect children.

Child FIRST is the Family Information Referral Support Team run by a registered community service in a local area that can receive confidential referrals about a child of concern. It does not have any statutory powers to protect a child, but can refer matters to family services.

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Mandatory reporters must report their concern to DHHS Child Protection if there is a reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. It is essential to document the concerns and observations which contributed to the suspicion that a child is in need of protection. This information may be gathered over a period of time and should be treated confidentially and held securely.

It is recommended - not, however, a requirement - that concerns and observations regarding suspected physical injury or sexual abuse of a child are discussed with the principal or a senior school staff member and to ensure support is provided to all involved in matters of this nature. The confidentiality of these discussions must be maintained.

If more than one mandated reporter has formed a belief about the same student or young person on the same occasion, it is sufficient for one professional to make a report. The other is obliged to ensure the report has been made and that all grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member Section 182 (4) of the Victorian Children, Youth & Families Act 2005

If one mandated reporter directs another mandated reporter not to make a report, and the one professional continues to hold the belief that a student or young person is in need of protection, then that professional is legally obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

The mandatory reporter may continue to suspect that a student or young person is at risk and in need of protection. Any further observations should continue to be recorded and a report made on each separate occasion where a belief has been formed, on reasonable grounds, that a student or young person is likely to be at risk and in need of protection. If there is any suspicion

that this relates to a sexual offence involving an adult and a child under 16 then it must be reported to the police. Refer to Department of Justice and Regulations - Failure to disclose offence and the Betrayal of Trust: Fact Sheet 2014.

### When To Report

The following table sets out when to report a concern that a child or a young person has been abused, or is in need of protection.

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p><b>Mandatory Reporting - DHHS Child Protection</b></p> <p>Mandatory reporters must make a report as soon as practicable if, in the course of practicing their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p>	<p><b>Mandatory Reporters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach pursuant to the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic.)</li> <li>» Principals of government and non-government schools</li> <li>» Registered medical practitioners</li> <li>» Nurses</li> <li>» All members of the police force.</li> </ul>	<p>Contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» DHHS Child Protection</li> <li>1300 664 977</li> </ul>

### A Child In Need Of Protection

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.</li> <li>» The child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child.</li> <li>» The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</li> <li>» The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and their parents are unable or</li> </ul>	<p>Any Person</p>	<p>Contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» DHHS Child Protection</li> <li>» Victoria Police 000 if a Crime has been committed.</li> </ul>

<p>unwilling to protect the child.</p> <p>» The child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p> <p>The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care.</p>		
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#### Child In Need Of Therapeutic Treatment

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
Any person may make a report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child who is 10 years of age or over, but under 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually-abusive behaviours.	Any Person	Contact: »DHHS Child Protection

#### Significant Concerns About Wellbeing of a Child

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
Any person may make a report if they have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child	Any Person	Contact: »DHHS Child Protection

#### Reasonable Belief That A Sexual Offence Has Been Committed By An Adult Against a Child Under 16.

Type of Reporting	By Whom	To Whom
<p>Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police.</p> <p>It is a criminal offence not to make a report, except in the following circumstances:</p> <p>»The victim is 16 years of age or older and does not have an</p>	Any Person	Contact: »Victoria Police 000

<p>intellectual disability that limits his/her capacity to make an informed decision; and he/she does not want the information reported to the police</p> <p>» The victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with you as a registered medical practitioner or counsellor.</p> <p>» The victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014.</p>		
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**Reasonable Excuses For Failing To Comply With The Requirement Include:**

- » A reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to police or DHHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information.
- » A reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm.

**Reporting Suspected Sexual Offences To Victoria Police:**

Three new criminal offences have been introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic):

- » **Failure to disclose offence** which requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.
- » **Failure to protect offence**, which applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk but failed to do so.
- » **Grooming offence**, which targets communication with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

**Failure to Disclose**

Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence under section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958 (Victoria) and applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. The obligation is to disclose that information to the police as soon as it is practicable to do so, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

### **Failure to Protect**

Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer, sport coach or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under 16 who is in the care or supervision of the school must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child in the school from the risk of sexual abuse from an adult associated with the school is a criminal offence contained in section 49C (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.). In a school context this will include the principal and the business manager and may also extend to School Counsellors, heads of departments and heads of school.

### **Grooming Offences**

The offence of grooming prohibits predatory conduct designed to prepare or 'groom' a child for future sexual activity and is contained in section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.). The offence applies to communication with children under 16 years. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

## Making A Report

This table describes how to make a mandatory report, to report child abuse or child protection concerns.

Step	Description
1	<p><b>In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger</b> contact Triple Zero (000) or the local police station.</p> <p>Alternatively, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection 1300 664 977 or call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hours 7 days, toll free)</p>
2	<p><b>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated</b> and include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Information that has led to concerns about the child's safety (e.g. physical injuries, student behaviour)</li> <li>» The source of this information (e.g. observation of behaviour, report from child or another person)</li> <li>» The actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with principal, report to DHHS Child Protection etc.).</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal or a member of the school leadership team or Student Wellbeing Team.</b> The individual staff member should then make their own assessment about whether they should make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.</p>
4	<p><b>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report.</b></p> <p>This should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person</li> <li>» The details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns</li> <li>» The individual staff member's involvement with the child and young person details of any other agencies who may be involved with the child or young person if known.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Make a report to the relevant Agency</b></p> <p>To report concerns that are life threatening phone 000 or the local police station. To find the nearest Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child_ Abuse Investigation Team contact your local police station or <a href="#">Click Here</a>.</p> <p>To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hrs 7 days, toll free)</p> <p>To report concerns to DHHS Child Protection, contact your local child protection office.</p>
6	<p><b>Make a written record of the report which includes the following information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported</li> <li>» The name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report.</li> <li>» Add this report to the "Confidential Notes" section of XUNO.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Notify relevant school staff and/or Department staff of a report to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.</b></p> <p>Allegations must be reported to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The Principal or member of the School Leadership Team</li> <li>» Department's Security Services Unit on (03) 9589 6266 (Govt Department Schools)</li> <li>» Catholic Education Office (Catholic Schools)</li> <li>» Relevant Regional Office</li> <li>» Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit on (03) 9637 2934 or (03) 9637 2487.</li> </ul> <p>In the case of Koorie students, the principal must notify the Regional Office to ensure that the regional Koorie support officer can arrange appropriate support for the student.</p>

## Potential Consequences of Making A Report

This table describes the potential consequences of making a report.

Potential Consequence	Description
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<p>The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or parent of the report.</li> <li>» The reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed.</li> <li>» A Court or Tribunal decides that it necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.</li> <li>» A Court or Tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to provide evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Protection</b>	<p>If a report is made in good faith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» It does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter.</li> <li>» The reporter cannot be held le ally liable in respect of the report.</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews</b>	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without the parent's knowledge or consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Interviewing children and young people at school should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner.</li> <li>» DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the principal or a member of the leadership team of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises.</li> <li>» When officers from DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police come to the school premises, the principal or a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person.</li> <li>» When a child or young person is being interviewed by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, school staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the child or young person.</li> </ul> <p>For more information on these requests and school responsibilities, see: Police and DHHS Interviews</p>
<b>Support for the Child or Young Person</b>	<p>The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting students &amp; young people who are involved with DHHS Child Protection may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Acting as a support person for the child or young person</li> <li>» Attending DHHS Child Protection case planning meetings</li> <li>» Observing and monitoring the child's behaviour</li> <li>» Liaising with professionals.</li> </ul>
<b>Requests for Information</b>	<p>DHHS Child Protection and/or Child FIRST and/or Victoria Police may request information about the student or young person or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.</p>

	In certain circumstances, DHHS Child Protection can also direct school staff and Department staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised persons within DHHS Child Protection. for more information see: Requests for Information About Students
<b>Witness Summons</b>	If DHHS Child Protection makes a Protection Application in the Children's Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a Witness Summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings, see: Subpoenas and Witness Summonses

### Department of Education and Training Resources

- » [Duty of care](#)
- » [Police and DHHS Interviews](#)
- » [Responding to Student Sexual Assault](#)
- » [Requests for Information about Students](#)
- » [Subpoenas and Witness Summonses](#)
- » [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module.](#)

# Standard Six - Child Safe Risk Management Strategies

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Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten takes all reasonable steps to identify & respond to all potential risks associated with child abuse. The school recognises that child abuse manifests itself in many forms including; physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological harm & serious neglect.

To assist members of the School Community to identify & respond to these the following strategies are adopted:

1. The school conducts an annual assessment of the effectiveness of its Child Safety Management Strategies by completing a Child Safe Risk Management Checklist.
2. The school, in consultation with members of Staff, the School Council and Student leaders have conducted a formal Child Safety Risk Assessment to identify potential child safety hazards and control measures to be implemented to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of these eventuating and causing harm.  
The school reviews the Child Safe Risk Assessment annually in consultation with staff members or when there has been a physical change to the school environment, school or parent association activities.
3. Some of the risks to Child Safety that the school has identified include but are not limited to the following:
  - » Lack of an organisational culture of child safety
  - » Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues
  - » Natural trust of long term employees (who may have developed issues over time)
  - » School activities ie sporting events, camps & excursions, school bus trips
  - » Before, during & afterschool care including yard-duty
  - » Engagement of Volunteers
  - » Engagement of Casual Relief Teachers
  - » Engagement of Contract Service Providers
  - » Special events including assembly
  - » Information Communication & Technology
4. Control Measures identified within the Child Safety Risk Assessment have been incorporated into the School's overall management system for ensuring child safety at Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten.

# Standard Seven - Participation & Empowerment of Children

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Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten acknowledges that a significant power imbalance exists between children and adults and actively engages students in conversations relating to child safety to ensure their voice is heard.

The school seeks student engagement in conversations relating to Child Safety and development of effective strategies by:

- » Consulting directly with students and young people about what they think makes their school safe.
- » Giving students information about the standards of care that they are entitled to.
- » Giving children information regarding their rights.
- » Teaching students how to raise concerns and, make complaints or let someone know if they feel unsafe.
- » Regularly checking with students & parents that they are aware of relevant Child Safe Policies & Procedures and that the Child Safe culture is visible.

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.

Some strategies adopted by the school to engage student and young people in conversation regarding Child Safety include:

<b>Consulting &amp; Talking with Students</b>	<b>Child Safe Strategies</b>
Establishing what safety means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ensuring that the physical environment is safe, warm &amp; friendly towards students and young people.</li> <li>» Discussing with student and young people what makes them feel safe and when do they feel unsafe.</li> </ul>
Educating students & young people about their rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Running informal educational sessions on the 'Convention of the Rights of a Child'.</li> <li>» Teaching students and young people that for every right that they enjoy they need to meet its corresponding responsibility.</li> <li>» Undertaking activities on rights versus wants.</li> </ul>
Including students and young people in policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Seek input from students and young people on all aspects of Child Safety.</li> <li>» Incorporate their opinions and suggestions into key policy documents and, when applicable the school's Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>
Encouraging students and young people to develop their own Code of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Asking students and young people to consider what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. This includes behaviours of adults toward students, of students towards adults and of students towards other students.</li> <li>» Establish and maintain a child 'friendly' Code of Conduct written by children for children.</li> </ul>

**Promoting Inclusion of all students and their families from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities.**

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten respects cultural differences and variance in parenting practices due to personal, cultural or religious beliefs. The school does not; however, accept that these differences reduce a child's right to be safe or the school's responsibility to protect them from harm.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten promotes safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

- » Demonstrating a 'zero tolerance' to discrimination.
- » Being respectful, inclusive & welcoming of families from a wide range of backgrounds.
- » Recognising times of importance to different cultures.
- » Ensuring the school's physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures in terms of decoration & artwork.
- » Employing staff members that represent diversity within the local community.
- » Actively seeking out and talking to families about how they can be involved in child safety.

Coolaroo South Primary School and Kindergarten promotes the safety of children with disabilities by:

- » Acknowledging that children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and ensures that its risk management process considers their needs.
- » Demonstrating a 'zero tolerance' to discrimination.
- » Ensuring that the physical environment does not pose access difficulties.
- » Being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of children with disabilities.
- » Supporting staff members, other children & their families to understand and be inclusive of people with disabilities.
- » Considering how children with a disability and their families can be encouraged to participate in ensure a safe environment.