



# CHILD SAFETY POLICY

## 1. Purpose:

This Child Safety Policy sets out Goornong 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.

## 2. Scope:

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, regardless of whether or not they work in direct contact with children at Goornong PS. This policy applies across all activities of our school community including in school hours, out of school hours, camps, excursions and special events.

## 3. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:

- Goornong Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.
- Goornong Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Goornong Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.
- Every person involved in Goornong Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

## 4. Principles of a Child-Safe Environment:

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

## **5. Policy and Procedures:**

### **a) A Child Safe Culture**

- The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.
- All information relating to the school's approach to creating a child-safe culture can be found in the *Child Safe Standards* folder at the reception desk.

### **b) Responsibilities**

- School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.
- The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expectations and differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and can be found in the *Child Safe Standards* folder at the reception desk.

### **c) Human Resources**

- Goornong Primary School will ensure it takes reasonable steps to employ suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a key element of our school's commitment to protecting children from abuse and neglect.
- All staff are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check or VIT registration card. The school will maintain an up-to-date and accurate register of staff WWCCs and VIT registration. This can be found in the VRQA Policies Folder at the reception desk. The school will review its Working with Children Check Policy every three years.
- The school's approach to human resources practices can be found in the *Child Safe Standards* folder at the reception desk.

### **d) Making a Report**

- Goornong Primary School has clear expectations and procedures for staff and volunteers to make a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- Immediate action includes following the *Step by Step Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child First* (see Appendix B) and notifying the school principal or member of the school's leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for their concerns.
- The school will take appropriate action to respond to all complaints.
- The school maintains a *Mandatory Reporting Policy* that will be reviewed every three years.
- All staff complete Mandatory Reporting Training on an annual basis.
- The school's approach to making a report can be found in the *Child Safe Standards* folder at the reception desk.

### **e) Risk Reduction and Management**

- Goornong Primary School believes the wellbeing of children is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes.
- The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people.
- The school will follow a risk management process to identify, assess and manage risk to prevent child abuse.
- The school's approach to risk reduction and management with regards to child safety can be found in the *Child Safe Standards* folder at the reception desk.

### **f) Listening to Children**

- Goornong Primary School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for students.
- We encourage student and parent engagement in safe school operations and build the capacity of students and parents to understand their rights and responsibilities.

- When gathering information about alleged misconduct or abuse, the school will listen to the complainants account, checking for understanding and taking detailed notes.

**g) Confidentiality and Privacy**

- Goornong Primary School collects, uses and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law.

**6. Evaluation:**

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	24.10.2016
<b>Approved By</b>	School Council
<b>Approval Authority (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	
<b>Communication Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parents –Via school office.</li> <li>▪ Staff – Via Induction pack.</li> </ul>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	October 2019, or as necessary.

## APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

**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-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**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.

**School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or a minister of religion.

The following definitions also apply:

**Child** means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

**Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

**Child abuse** means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

**Child sexual assault** is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

**Reasonable grounds for belief** is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

- A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
  - (a) The child is in need of protection,
  - (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury”,
  - (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 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) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
  - b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
  - c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
  - d) Professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
  - e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

# A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

## Protective concerns

- You are concerned about a child because you have:
- received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect
  - observed indicators of abuse or neglect
  - been made aware of possible harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role.

## At all times remember to:

- record your observations
- follow appropriate protocols
- consult notes and records
- consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
- consult with other support agencies if necessary

STEP 1	RESPONDING TO CONCERNS	STEP 2	FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS	STEP 3	MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST	STEP 4	MAKE A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your concerns relate to a child in need of immediate protection; or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm*. <b>Go to Step 4</b></li> <li>If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. <b>Go to Step 3</b></li> <li>In all other situations <b>Go to Step 2</b></li> </ol> <p>* Refer to Appendix 2. Definitions of child abuse and indicators of harm in the Protocol – <i>Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people</i></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the level of immediate danger to the child. Ask yourself:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have I formed a belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm? <b>YES / NO</b></li> <li>Am I in doubt about the child's safety and the parent's ability to protect the child? <b>YES / NO</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>If you answered yes to a) or b) <b>Go to Step 4</b></li> <li>If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. <b>Go to Step 3</b></li> </ol>		<p><b>Child Wellbeing Referral</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your local Child FIRST provider.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See over for contact list for local Child FIRST phone numbers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details.</li> </ol>		<p><b>Mandatory/Protective Report*</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See over for contact list for local Child Protection phone numbers.</li> <li>For <b>After Hours Child Protection</b> Emergency Services, call <b>131 278</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details.</li> </ol> <p>* Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are able to report their concerns to Child Protection</p>

For further information refer to *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools*

## Contact Numbers

### Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9488 9488
Western	(03) 9291 6500
Southern	(03) 9794 3555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

### Office for Children and Licensed Children's Services:

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Eastern	(03) 9265 2400
Northern	(03) 9412 5333
Western	(03) 9275 7000
Southern	(03) 9096 9555
RURAL REGIONS	
Barwon South Western	5225 1000
Gippsland	5127 0400
Grampians	5337 8444
Hume	5761 2100
Loddon Mallee	5440 3111

### Important information for government schools

Principals of Victorian Government schools must report all incidents to the Emergency and Security Management Unit on **03 9589 6266**.

Victorian Government schools should contact the Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit (SCIAU), Student Wellbeing Division, for advice and support when responding to allegations of student sexual assault or inappropriate sexual behaviours.

The SCIAU can be contacted on **03 9637 2934** or **03 9637 2487**.

Victorian Government School Principals should refer to the flowchart – *Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault Compulsory Actions for Principals* at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/healthwellbeing/safety/childprotection/childprotection.htm>

### Department of Human Services Child Protection

METROPOLITAN REGIONS		METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Eastern	1300 360 391	Box Hill	(03) 9843 6000
North and West	1300 664 977	Preston Footscray	1300 664 977 1300 360 462
Southern	1300 655 795	Dandenong	(03) 9213 2111

RURAL REGIONS			
Intake Unit		Regional Office	
Barwon South Western			
	1800 075 599	Geelong	(03) 5226 4540
Gippsland	1800 020 202	Traralgon	(03) 5177 2500
Grampians	1800 000 551	Ballarat	(03) 5333 6530
Hume	1800 650 227	Wangaratta Woodonga	(03) 5722 0555 (02) 6055 7777
Loddon Mallee	1800 675 598	Bendigo	(03) 5434 5555

After hours Child Protection Emergency Services (AHCPEs)	
Statewide number for all emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours (24 hours, 7 days a week)	<b>131 278</b>

Victoria Police **000**

Catholic Education Offices	
Catholic Education Office, Melbourne	(03) 9267 0228
Catholic Education Office, Ballarat Diocese	5337 7135
Catholic Education Office, Sale Diocese	5622 6600
Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst Diocese	5443 2377

Independent Schools Victoria (03) 9825 7200

Other	
Victorian Aboriginal Education Association, Inc.	(03) 9481 0800
Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit	(03) 9247 6666
Centre Against Sexual Assault	1800 806 292
Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children's Hospital (for specialist counselling and medical assistance)	(03) 9345 6391
Child Safety Commissioner	(03) 8601 5884
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	(03) 8388 1855

### CHILD FIRST

Local Catchment Area	Contact
Barwon South Western	Greater Geelong, Queenscliff, Surf Coast 1300 551 948
Western	Colac – Otway, Corangamite 5232 5500
	Warrambool, Moyne, Glenelg, Southern Grampians 1300 889 713
Gippsland	East Gippsland 5152 0052
	Wellington 5144 7777
	La Trobe, Baw Baw 1800 339 100
	South Gippsland, Bass Coast 5662 5150
Grampians	Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Hindmarsh, Yarrambat, Horsham 1800 195 114
	Ararat, Pyrenees, Hepburn, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Moorabool 1300 783 341
Hume	Wodonga, Towong, Indigo 1800 705 211
	Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield, Wangaratta 1800 705 211
	Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira 1300 854 944
	Mitchell, Murrindindi 1800 663 107
Loddon Mallee	Greater Bendigo, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander 1800 260 338
	Buloke, Goonawarra, Swan Hill, Mildura 1800 625 533 1800 MALLEE
Eastern Metropolitan	Yarra Ranges, Knox, Maroondah 1300 369 146
	Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham, Boroondarra 1300 762 125
North and West Metropolitan	Nilumbik, Whittlesea, Banyule, Yarra and Darebin (03) 9450 0955
	Brimbank, Mellon 1300 138 180
	Hume, Moreland 1300 786 433
	Hobson's Bay, Manbyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley and Wyndham 1300 775 160
Southern Metropolitan	Casey, Cardinia, Greater Dandenong (03) 9705 3939
	Aboriginal children and families (Casey, Cardinia and Great Dandenong) (03) 9794 5973
	Frankston, Mornington Peninsula 1300 721 383
	Kingston, Bayside, Glen Eira, Stonington, Port Phillip 1300 367 441