

# Child Safety Policy

## Child Safety Standards

Albert Street Primary School is committed to the safety of every child enrolled as a student at our school. Children have the right to a safe environment at school. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

### PURPOSE

This policy provides an overview of the key elements of our approach to child safety at Albert Street Primary School (ASPS).

Albert Street Primary and its School Council:

- has zero tolerance for child abuse
- is committed to providing a safe environment for all children
- has systems to protect from abuse and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with our school's policies and procedures
- actively works to listen and empower children
- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of aboriginal children
- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally/linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Ensures all children with a disability are safe and can participate accordingly

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students and the wider school community who are engaged in child-connected work.

School staff are all individuals working in our school environment who are directly engaged or employed by ASPS, such as our teachers, administrative staff and non-teaching staff, our volunteers and contracted service providers.

### RESPONSIBILITY

The Leadership Team are responsible for developing strategies that embed an organisational culture of child safety at ASPS. These strategies will give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing.

The School Council will monitor the school's adherence to this policy through its council meetings and regular reports from the Child Safety Officer.

The school staff are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

Albert Street Primary School has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. Our policies and procedures will provide the name and conduct details of staff who have specific responsibilities in relation to child safety and who may receive reports of suspicion of child abuse.

The school staff has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when they are concerned about a child's safety, which are followed rigorously.

## **Child Safety Policy**

The school staff are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

ASPS has human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

ASPS is committed to regularly training and educating our staff on child abuse risks.

The school staff support and respect all children, as well as colleagues and volunteers. We are committed to the emotional, physical and cultural safety of all children and to providing a safe environment for their learning.

There are specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### **OUR CHILDREN**

Our strategies will empower children who are vital and active participants in our community and provide them with opportunities to give us feedback and ensure that they feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse.

### **OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school community.

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

### **TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at ASPS understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Our staff is trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

New employees and volunteers are briefed on commencement and provided with information to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

### **RECRUITMENT**

The Leadership takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. Selection criteria and advertisements are developed to clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people aged 18 and over engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check for our record keeping.

Thorough reference checks and pre-employment screening are carried out to ensure that we are recruiting with child safety in mind.

## **Child Safety Policy**

All public advertisements for job applications with ASPS emphasise our commitment to child safety.

### **FAIR PROCEDURES**

The safety and wellbeing of children is the school's primary concern. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

All allegations of abuse and safety concerns are recorded.

### **PRIVACY**

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

### **LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

At ASPS we take our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

### **ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

ASPS takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and with urgency. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations and our volunteers are informed on how to report an allegation.

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

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

There are risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

ASPS will also ensure that timely appropriate assistance and support is provided to any child who discloses child abuse or is linked in any way to suspected child abuse.

## Child Safety Policy

### DEFINITIONS

**Child:** An individual who is under the age of 18 years and who is enrolled as a student at ASPS.

**Child abuse:** Child abuse includes-

- (a) any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or the offence of grooming
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm
- (c) serious neglect of a child.

**Child-connected work:** This is work that is authorised by ASPS that is performed by an adult in the ASPS school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**Child safety:** 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.

### Child Safety Team:

The ASPS Child Safety Team comprises the persons holding the following positions:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal or delegated staff member
- Primary Welfare Officer
- 1 x Learning Assistant

### School environment:

The ASPS school environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by ASPS for use by a child during or outside school hours, and includes:

- online school environments including email and intranet systems
- other locations provided by ASPS for a child's use, including locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The School community is informed about this policy. It is publicly available on the ASPS website and communicated in the School's newsletters.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur, and it will ensure that there is community consultation during the review cycle.

Ratified on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2017

