

Cultural Safety Charter

Child Safety Standards

This Charter requires that governments, local councils and other public authorities not act inconsistently with the Charter and through the VRQA has introduced seven **Child Safe Standards**.

Standard 1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety

Standard 2. A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3. A child safety code of conduct

Standard 4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse

Standard 5. Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7. Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment

To comply with the compulsory **Child Safe Standards**, an organisation must include the following principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability

The **Child Safe Standards** require organisations that provide services for children, to have strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety. Protecting children from abuse is everybody's business, and an organisation's leadership is essential to instilling a child safety culture.

The organisation may already use good leadership strategies, whilst working with children can be very rewarding, it also brings additional responsibilities.

Children's safety and wellbeing should be the highest priority for all these organisations.

ASPS recognises that developing a child safe environment is an ongoing process and can not be achieved in the short term.

Purpose

To identify those aspects of school leadership that will help to embed an organisational culture of child safety.

To ensure Albert Street Primary School demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe environment.

To raise awareness within the school community of the importance of child safety.

To ensure the promotion of:

- the cultural safety of **Aboriginal** children if applicable
- the cultural safety of children from **culturally** and/or **linguistically** diverse backgrounds
- the safety of children with a **disability**

Cultural Safety Charter

Implementation

The Leadership Team at Albert Street Primary School will take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of our school population is our highest priority and our first consideration.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

The Leadership Team must have a clear understanding of the development of the school's child safety approaches.

Implementing the Child Safe Policy is a complex process and requires an ongoing commitment:

- regular staff briefings and discussions
- by taking every opportunity to provide information to the parent community e.g. through Newsletter articles, assemblies
- regular updates to School Council (a regular agenda item)

To begin the process of assessing how child safe our organisation is, the Leadership Team will consistently review existing policies and practices, and systematically complete the Child Safety Review to determine the level of compliance.

When the next School Strategic Plan is developed, it is expected that school goals will relate to the development of a child safe culture.

Leadership and Staff Responsibilities

The School Improvement Team is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety in the school.

The School Improvement Team will take the lead in protecting children from abuse.

However, staff have the responsibility to make school leadership aware of child abuse allegations and risks so that appropriate action can be taken.

All allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by this school. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable.

ASPS have strongly embedded the procedure that if any staff member believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse, they must immediately contact leadership.

It is the staff's responsibilities to adhere to the procedures outlined in the mandatory reporting documentation. It is the principal's and the primary welfare officer's responsibility to ensure that all staff are up to date with these procedures.

Identification and Analysis of Risk of Abuse

The school will utilise an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how the school identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

Cultural Safety Charter

Development of a Child Safe Policy

The school has developed a child safe policy which outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. Please refer to the school's policy documents.

Development of a Positive Behaviour Code

The school has developed a positive behaviour code for the following:

- All teaching staff
- Students
- Visitors including contractors and students' family members
- Volunteers

which specifies the standards of behaviour and care required when working and interacting with children. The Positive Behaviour Code references the Child Safe Policy and explicitly prohibits any staff member from communicating with a student on social media. It also informs staff of the need for a current Working with Children Check which is recorded on CASES21.

Choosing Suitable Employees and Volunteers

The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager. Each position is advertised with information about ASPS being a Child Safe School.

Visitors to the School

The school has made clear decisions about what category of visitor is welcome in the school and the steps the school will take to ensure safety of children. Refer to the school's Positive Behaviour Code.

Support, Training, Supervision and Enhancement of Performance

The school will ensure that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training/induction when necessary so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse.

The school has enhanced the role of the Primary Welfare Officer (PWO) to include Child Safe Responsibilities. The PWO already is a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse. The PWO will receive additional training in Child Safety issues and will promote child safety within the school and the community.

Promoting Inclusion

The school values diversity and will be inclusive to all children and families. In particular, the school will establish a culture that supports:

- Cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations if applicable.

Cultural Safety Charter

- Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using the Koori Engagement Support Officer (KESO) as a resource, and English as an Alternative Language (EAL) resources.
- The safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring our school is accessible to everyone by making the appropriate adjustments and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

The school understands that for Aboriginal people, culture is about family networks, Elders and ancestors. It is about relationships, languages, dance, ceremony and heritage. Culture is about spiritual connection to lands and waters. It is the way stories are passed on and knowledge given to babies and children. It is how people are greeted. It is looking for connection. It is about all the parts that bind us together.

The school recognises that creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture is an important first step. Symbols and images that surround a place send an important message about respect. By acknowledging the Country in which the school is located, we are demonstrating our willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures. As part of the policy review process, the school will endeavour to seek appropriate personnel to embed the 'Acknowledgement of Country' ceremonial practices.

The school recognises that cultural safety is living in an environment that is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need.

It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

The school recognises that promotion of cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds involves:

- ensuring the school clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance of discrimination
- being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds
- recognising times of importance to different cultures
- ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of decoration and artwork
- employing staff that are representative of the local community
- actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved
- asking about the best way to provide information to children and families

The school recognises that promotion of the safety of children with a disability involves:

- acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure risk assessment processes considers their needs
- ensuring the school clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children
- making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties
- being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability
- supporting staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability
- thinking about how the school can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families

Cultural Safety Charter

The school's definition of 'disability' extends to children with a medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy, anaphylaxis or blood-borne viruses and has developed policies to support these children.

The school recognises that respecting diversity means:

- valuing and respecting people's beliefs
- building responsive relationships
- communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs
- examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs and
- respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another
- acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance

The Department's Anti-Discrimination Policy describes the school's commitment to providing teaching and learning environments that are free from discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion.

For further information:

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/Pages/default_eeo.aspx

Anti-discrimination extends to the school's dress code so that children are treated equally with the rights of individual children balanced against the best interests of the school community as a whole when developing and implementing their dress codes.

Empowering and Promoting the Participation of Children in Decision-Making

The school promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining a child safe environment through student voice forums.

Ideas from children are sought formally by completion of the annual Student Attitude to School Survey which specifically addresses feelings of safety.

The school provides opportunities for children to express their views through forums such as the Junior School Council and School Captains.

We listen to children and take them seriously if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.

Professional Learning

The school has a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning for all staff.

There is an online professional development for mandatory reporting protocols which is a component of induction for new staff.

Regular volunteers and external providers will be given relevant information on mandatory reporting requirements.

Staff are given information about a number of school policies with an emphasis now placed on the child safe related policies.

Evaluation

This Standard will be reviewed after the completion of the child safe review process and then as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change.

This document was ratified by School Council on 1st September 2017