

## **CHILD SAFETY POLICY**

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, our school will abide by the seven Child Safety Standards as listed below.

**Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**

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

**Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**

**Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**

**Standard 5: Processes 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 the participation and empowerment of children.**

### **Purpose**

Canadian Lead Primary School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining 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.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to School Council members where indicated.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

### **Definitions**

#### ***Child abuse***

This includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

#### ***Child-connected work***

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, School Council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a 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.

### ***School environment***

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

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

### ***School staff***

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

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a School Councilor
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

## **Implementation**

### **Our Commitment to Child Safety**

Canadian Lead Primary School is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We involve children in our school when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to the views and respect what they have to say. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. Canadian Lead Primary School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and to the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all children, including those with a disability and to those who are vulnerable for other reasons, including poverty, trauma and disadvantage.

**Child Safety Principles** In its planning, decision-making and operations Canadian Lead Primary School 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 concerns;
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

## Strategies to embed a child safe culture

Canadian Lead Primary School's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available on the school's website and in hard copy from the school office and staff room for all staff and students to read at any time.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
  - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
  - Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
  - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
  - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
  - Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
  - Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
  - For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of Canadian Lead's child safe culture, the school leadership team (including the Principal and Assistant Principal) will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

As part of Canadian Lead Primary School's child safe culture, all teaching staff (mandatory reporting staff) are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.

As part of Canadian Lead Primary School's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, School Councils and School Council members will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at School Council meetings. While there is no requirement to discuss child safety at every meeting, it is best practice to have child safety on the agenda at some meetings to show that the school is embedding a culture of child safety and School Council members are informed and understand the priority of child safety.
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to School Council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its School Council meeting minutes
- When hiring employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe (unless delegated to the Principal).

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

School leadership will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every two years or following any significant incident. All policies are reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee before being ratified by School Council.
- The Principal, as Child Safety Officer, is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Canadian Lead Primary School's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register.

### **Recruitment**

Canadian Lead Primary School follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the [Department's website](#).

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy, including in relation to assessing the suitability of prospective volunteers and obtaining checks required under this policy. All prospective volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

### **Training and supervision**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school 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 coming forward with any allegations or suspicions of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from linguistically

and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safety Policy (this document), the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on the school website. They will also be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by school staff to the Principal or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with Canadian Lead Primary School's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures where required.

### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including School Council employees) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Canadian Lead Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Canadian Lead Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found on the schools website, and in hard copy at the school office and in the school staff room.

### **Risk reduction and management**

Canadian Lead Primary School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the school's risk assessment register. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Canadian Lead Primary School monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in the school's risk assessment register.

### **Listening to, communicating with and empowering children**

Canadian Lead Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse at the school office, via the school's Welfare Officer, the Principal, and their classroom teachers.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at Canadian Lead Primary School via the school website and hard copies available at the school office.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school.
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety.
- Through classroom programs there will be age-appropriate discussion of child safety with students.
- The Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff.
- The whole school is encouraged to contribute to risk assessment and mitigation.
- The Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained through parent information material.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships program;
- E-smart education programs;
- Age appropriate child abuse awareness and prevention.

### **Communications**

Canadian Lead Primary School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures are available on the school website and visible at the school office.
- At least once per term reminders in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety.
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion.
- Including child safety as a part of all induction processes.
- Displaying Child Safe posters throughout the school.

### **Confidentiality and privacy**

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

### **Related policies and documents**

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#).

## **Our staff and volunteers**

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

The Principal or a designated senior staff member will fulfil the role of the Child Safety Officer. The Child Safety Officer is to ensure that all staff are given regular professional development around the child safe standards throughout the year. Staff document folders are to contain the Child Safe Policy and attachments and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the review of the code of conduct.

## **Training and supervision**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school community 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. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability and to those who are vulnerable for other reasons, including poverty, trauma and disadvantage.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Canadian Lead Primary School'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 (please refer to our Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). 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.

All staff will complete the DEECD eLearning module 'Protecting Children' annually. This module covers information related to identifying and responding to child abuse.

## **Legislative responsibilities**

### **1. Duty of care**

**School staff** 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. In some circumstances, a school's duty of care will extend beyond school hours and outside of school grounds. For example, at bus stops, in school grounds before and after school, at outside of school hours events, connected to the school.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and keeping written records of this;
- notifying the Principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns and again keeping written records.

### **2. Failure to disclose**

**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 immediately. This is the law.

### 3. Failure to protect

Any **staff member in a position of authority**, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence. The offence applies only to **adults in a position of authority** within an organisation, including Principals, senior school staff, regional directors and other senior managers.

### 4. Mandatory reporters, who form a 'reasonable belief' that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, MUST report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection (see Mandatory Reporting Policy). This is the law.

**Mandatory reporters:** teachers, Principals, Doctors, Nurses, Police Officers

While they are not mandatory reporters, all other non-teaching staff members who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection can report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection. If they have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person they should report their concerns to Child FIRST. In cases where non-teaching staff have general concerns about a child or young person, they should discuss their concerns with the Principal, the Child Safety Officer or a member of the school leadership team.

	Duty of Care	Mandatory Reporter	Failure to Disclose	Failure to Protect
Parents	No	No	Yes	No
ES, volunteers, canteen, office staff	Yes	No	Yes	No
Teachers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Principals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### 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 child states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child 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 child has been physically or sexually abused
- 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
- signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

## Types of child abuse and indicators of harm

Child abuse can have a significant effect on a child's physical or emotional health, development and wellbeing.

Types of child abuse include:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- medical neglect
- family violence
- human trafficking (including forced marriage)
- sexual exploitation (including pornography and prostitution).

A report should also be made to DHHS Child Protection in circumstances where, for example:

- the child is engaging in risk-taking behaviour
- female genital mutilation has occurred, or there is a risk of it occurring
- there is a risk to an unborn child
- a child or young person is exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours
- there are indications that a child is being groomed. For information see: Department of Justice and Regulation – Grooming offence.

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 occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert teachers to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

## Risk management

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

We have 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).

Each year the school will undertake a risk management assessment and record the results in the Child Safe folder.

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed following any significant incident and every two years as part of Canadian Lead Primary School's policy review cycle.

Signed:

Principal

Susan Knight

Date: March 2020



Signed:

School Council President

Sophie Akers

Date: March 2020



This policy was reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee in:	N/A
This policy was ratified by School Council in:	March 17 <sup>th</sup> 2020