

	<b>Policy Name:</b>	Child Safe Policy	<b>Approved by School Council</b>	17.6.19
	<b>Responsible:</b>	Leadership Team	<b>Review Date:</b>	June 2021

## CHILD SAFE POLICY

### PURPOSE

This child safety policy sets out Tyabb Primary School's commitment to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe. Tyabb Primary School will implement the Child Safe Standards to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school and promote an organisational culture that manages the risk of child abuse and neglect.

### SCOPE

The policy covers all staff, volunteers, contractors (that come into contact with children) and applies to all school related activities including those beyond the school environment i.e. camps, excursions, outside hours care, holiday programs and online.

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

**Tyabb 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.

**Tyabb Primary School** has zero tolerance for child abuse.

**Tyabb 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 **Tyabb 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.

In its planning, decision-making and operations **Tyabb 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 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.

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures outlining the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below. The school's Child Safety Officer may be contacted for further information.

### **The Child Safe Standards**

**To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:**

**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. (See Appendix 2)

**Standard 4:** Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel. (See VIT and Working with Children Policies)

**Standard 5:** Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotectobligation.aspx>

**Standard 6:** Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse. (Appendix 3)

**Standard 7:** Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children. (See Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy)

Ministerial Order No. 870, which operationalises the Child Safe Standards in all Victorian schools, came into operation on 1 August 2016. See:  [Ministerial Order 870](#)

### A Child Safe Culture

The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinize concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

- Tyabb Primary School is committed to child safety.
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- 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.
- Our 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 support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, young children and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

## Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that the safety of particularly young children is considered
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

## Our staff and volunteers

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school. 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. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

The Code will be discussed and a shared/collective staff understanding of the Code's content will form part of the first curriculum day of each school year, to tune staff into their child safe responsibilities. New staff will have the Code of Conduct provided to them as part of their induction, so that they too will have the same understanding as all other staff, and in turn, apply it accordingly. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and can be found on the school's website and in other written documentation available from the school.

## Recruitment

The school applies best practice and standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working With Children Check. We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

## Training and supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in our 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 discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff 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.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our 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 this school's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviours 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. The school's approach and practices to ensure child safety can be found on the school's website along with other related school policies.

### [Allegations, reporting a child safety concern or complaint](#)

Our school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection 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.

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the school's website at [www.tyabbps.vic.edu.au](http://www.tyabbps.vic.edu.au) along with other school policies.

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and promptly. We work 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. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Our school takes our **legal responsibilities** seriously, including:

- All Victorian Teachers have a legal responsibility to report incidents where children's safety is at risk. Victorian Government School employees are expected to follow the DET (Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy (Mandatory Reporting policy) which can be found at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotectobligation.aspx>
- **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 school 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.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (Child Protection) as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form reasonable belief 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 from that abuse. A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with these obligations may be committing a criminal offence.

The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on our website at [www.tyabpps.vic.edu.au](http://www.tyabpps.vic.edu.au) under child safety.

### Risk Reduction and Management

The school believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical and online environments (for example, no staff is to have contact with a child via social media). A formal risk assessment is conducted prior to activities and events to identify potential risks to child safety and plan and implement strategies to eliminate or minimise these risks.

### Child safety can be improved by removing or reducing the risk of harm.

Tyabb Primary School has the following in place to reduce the risk of harm to children:

- A child safety policy that outlines a commitment to child safety and provides guidance on how to create a child safe environment.
- A code of conduct is enforced and sets out clear expectations about appropriate behaviour towards children and obligations for reporting a breach of the code.
- All new staff and volunteers are appropriately screened, including reference checks, before commencing employment with the organisation (in addition to Working with Children Checks or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration).
- Training is provided to staff in prevention, identification and response to child safety risks, including reporting requirements and procedures
- Risk assessments are conducted prior to school events such as camps, excursions, sporting activities and school concerts to assess risks and put controls and measures in place to eliminate risks and ensure child safety.

If staff /other school personnel are unsure whether to take action, or what action they should take, they are to discuss this with the Principal and/or Child Safety Officer and make contact with authorities for further advice.

### Communicating Child Safe Expectations with Volunteers and Contractors

Volunteers and contractors may be engaged in work at a school regularly or occasionally, for long or short periods of time. Volunteers and contractors need to understand their responsibilities for child safety and the school's arrangements under standard one and standard two. These approaches include:

- providing induction for all volunteers and contractors and requiring them to acknowledge their adherence to our Child Safety Code of Conduct on signing in.
- advice on the website about what to expect if working in or volunteering at the school e.g. that volunteers are required to adhere to the child safety code of conduct
- provision of relevant child safety information in tendering and contracting information packages and volunteer induction kits / sessions.

### Communicating Child Safe Expectations to Visitors

Visitors to Tyabb Primary form part of the school's community. All visitors agree to adhere to the child safety standards and code of conduct when signing in through the Ipad Flexibuzz System. This information is also communicated to visitors through out school website.

### Communication with Families

Tyabb Primary School has a number of measures in place to communicate with families of children enrolled at the school.

Communications strategies to inform families of the school's arrangements include:

- providing information through school's website, Flexibuzz System, newsletters, assemblies and information evenings to share information.
- Informing the school community of the Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and related policies.
- inclusion of information about Child Safe standards in parent information evenings i.e. Prep transition parent evenings and orientation events for new students and families.
- adapting the examples provided in the VRQA Child Safety Code of Conduct – Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviour information sheet to show the standards in day-to-day application within the school community.

### Confidentiality and Privacy

The school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws. 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. We have 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.

### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was updated and approved by School Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and is scheduled for review in June 2021.

### APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - School Child Safe Definitions

Appendix 2 - Child Safety Code of Conduct

Appendix 3 – Child Safety Risk Management Program

### REFERENCES

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotectobligation.aspx>

## APPENDIX ONE: CHILD SAFE DEFINITIONS

### Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe).

**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.

### Mandatory Reporter

Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach pursuant to the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic). Principals of government and non government schools. Registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force. Registered psychologists.

**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** means:

in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or,
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or,
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

in a non-government school, 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),
- a minister of religion.

**School governing authority** means:

The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; OR The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or The principal, *as authorised* by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

Tyabb Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to promote child safety in the school environment, protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel. Our code of conduct has been developed in consultation with the school community and takes into consideration the interests of school staff and the needs of all children at Tyabb Primary School.

The Principal and school leaders of Tyabb Primary School will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Tyabb Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other members of the school community involved in child connected work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps, excursions and in the use of digital technology and social media.

**All personnel of Tyabb Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:**

- adhering to our school's child safe policy and upholding our commitment to child safety at all times,
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse,
- treating everyone with respect,
- ensuring relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism,
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child,
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification),
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination),
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities),
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child,
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal or Child Safety Officer/s and ensure any allegation be reported to the police or child protection,
- ensuring that the student(s) are protected from harm quickly if child abuse is suspected,
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations ( including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.

### Staff, contractors and volunteers must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse,
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate,
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or amount to grooming behaviour,
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic or service delivery context,
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children, this includes the use of inappropriate language,
- use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children,
- express personal views on cultures, race, religion or sexuality in the presence of children,
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, religion, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability,
- have one to one contact with a child/student outside of school without parent consent. In the case of professional or voluntary services with a child/student, all **staff must** seek parental consent and the approval of school's leadership. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate,
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where the communication is related to school work eg. Edmodo,
- store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment,
- photograph or video a child in a school environment without the consent of the parent or guardian, unless in accordance with the Tyabb Primary School Photographing, Filming and Recording policy. This policy allows parents/carers to take photos and record their own children during school activities. If other children are in the photo or recording, we request that parents/carers only do so for their own personal use and do not publish/distribute the images in any form, including via text/email or social media, without the prior consent of persons whose children also appear in the images.
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs,
- consume alcohol or illicit drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

**TYABB PRIMARY SCHOOL  
CHILD SAFETY  
CODE OF CONDUCT  
SIGNED STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Tyabb Primary School's Child Safety Officer (Assistant Principal) or Principal.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

**TYABB PRIMARY SCHOOL  
CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

At Tyabb Primary School our child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. Our school Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct clearly outlines our commitment to implementing the 7 standards for child safety as outlined in the Ministerial Order No. 870.

Ministerial Order No. 870, which operationalises the Child Safe Standards in all Victorian schools, comes into operation on 1 August 2016. See: [Ministerial Order 870](#)

At Tyabb Primary School our process includes a risk assessment (see matrix below), implementation of controls and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

**RISK RATING MATRIX**

RISK RATING		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

**Child Safety Risks and Risk Management Strategies**

The list below comprises an inventory of potential child safety risk and risk management strategies.

Risks	Risk Management Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of an organisational culture of child safety</li> <li>Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues</li> <li>Natural trust of long term employees</li> <li>Children alone with one other person unsupervised</li> <li>Recruitment of an inappropriate person</li> <li>Inappropriate behaviour not reported</li> <li>Harassment via email, SMS or other media</li> <li>Unsupervised recreational or other activities</li> <li>Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)</li> <li>Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues</li> <li>Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps</li> <li>False allegations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy</li> <li>Child safety code of conduct</li> <li>Child safety reporting procedures</li> <li>Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors</li> <li>Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour</li> <li>Counselling and other resources</li> <li>Non-lockable doors in hot spots</li> <li>Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks</li> <li>Supervision or monitoring of activities</li> <li>Online searches (Google, Facebook etc.) to be monitored</li> <li>Performance management procedures</li> <li>Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety</li> <li>Criminal history checks</li> <li>All contactors and visitors to wear Tyabb PS lanyards to show that they have signed in to the school at the office</li> </ul>