	Policy Name:	**Child Safe Policy**	**Date of approval:**	2016
	Responsible:	Leadership Team	**Review date:**	2018

1. *Rationale:*

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.

2. *Aims:*

Our commitment to child safety

- Tyabb Primary School is committed to child safety.
- We want our children to be safe, happy and empowered.
- We support, listen to 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. 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, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

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

3. *Background:*

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards commenced on 1 January 2016 for most organisations working with children, with the aim of promoting cultural change in the way organisations manage the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The child safe standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in

organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

The child safe standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations that provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

4. Implementation:

4.1 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.

(DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.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, comes into operation on 1 August 2016. See: Ministerial Order 870

4.2 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 children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

4.3 Our staff and volunteers

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.

4.4 Training and supervision

Training and education is 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 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.

4.5 Recruitment

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.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check. Please see the Working with Children Check website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information

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.

4.6 Fair procedures for personnel

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 using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

4.7   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. 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.

4.8   Legislative responsibilities

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 Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.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 comply with their duties.

4.9   Risk management

In Victoria, schools 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.

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 school via social media).

4.10   Allegations, concerns and complaints

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

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.

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.

5. *Evaluation:*

A review of the Child Safe Policy will be undertaken as a part of the school's review cycle every two years and reviewed following any significant incidents at the school.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - School Child Safe Definitions
Appendix 2 - Child Safety Code of Conduct
Appendx 3 – Child Safety Risk Management Program

References
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx
http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/resources.html

This policy was approved by School Council on the 12/9/16

Tyabb Primary School

Appendix One: **School Child Safe Definitions**

Definitions
A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at 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.

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[1].

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
Child Safety Code of Conduct

Appendix Two:

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child connected work at Tyabb Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

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
- 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
- ensuring actions taken are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably
- maintaining appropriate professional boundaries, be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy
- always being prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- 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 a member of Leadership and ensure any allegation be reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal or Leadership Team
- ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe, if an allegation of child abuse is made
- always encouraging children, where possible to undertake self-care tasks independently
- following our school's guidance on the use of IT equipment, the storage of photos and ensuring that any material shown to children is age appropriate
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual office by a registered teacher or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher

Staff 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 (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)

- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment
- use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- express personal views on cultures, race 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 any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically
- 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 prior to their involvement (for example, after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). 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
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account to communicate with a student
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a student
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or illegal 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 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**
- Lack of an organisational culture of child safety - Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues - Natural trust of long term employees - Children alone with one other person unsupervised - Recruitment of an inappropriate person - Inappropriate behaviour not reported - Harassment via email, SMS or other media - Unsupervised recreational or other activities - Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance) - Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues - Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps - False allegations	- Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy - Child safety code of conduct - Child safety reporting procedures - Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors - Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour - Counselling and other resources - Non-lockable doors in hot spots - Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks - Supervision or monitoring of activities - Online searches (Google, Facebook etc.) to be monitored - Performance management procedures - Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety - Criminal history checks