TYABB PRIMARY SCHOOL	**Policy Name:**	Child Safe Policy	**Approved**	25.3.24
	Responsible:	Leadership Team	**Review Date:**	March 2026

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

PURPOSE

The Tyabb Primary School Child Safety Policy as per PROTECT Child Safe Standard 2 demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments. It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

SCOPE

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms in this policy have specific definitions:

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student
- volunteer.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Tyabb Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School leadership team

Our school leadership team (comprising the principal and assistant principals) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principals and assistant principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered

- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct available on our School Website
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures - School Website, including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings (It is not necessary to discuss child safety at every school council meeting, but child safety should be discussed at some meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and school council members are informed and understand the issues)
- undertake annual training on child safety (school councils can use the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on the PROTECT website.
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Tyabb Primary School has nominated a child safety officer to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training. The responsibilities of the child safety officer are outlined at Guidance for child safety champions.

Our principal and child safety officer (Assistant Principal Welfare) are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents. They are responsible for:

- monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the principal or child safety officer if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available

Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in 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 Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has a Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team (SWET) who meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. Our School Captains and Junior School Council will provide an opportunity for students to have input into school strategies.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school. The Child Safety Code of Conduct available on our School Website also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

MANAGING RISKS TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks as per PROTECT Child Safe Standard 9. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

ESTABLISHING A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

At Tyabb Primary School we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected. We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have implemented and will continue to implement many of the strategies referred to in PROTECT Child Safe Standard 1 to promote cultural safety in our school community including:

- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Build schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.
- Include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
- Express zero tolerance of racism in our statement of commitment to child safety and address racism from students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly.
- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students
- Recognise key events and anniversaries such as Harmony Day, Sorry Day, NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children and students.

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

To support child safety and wellbeing at Tyabb Primary School we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through the implementation of a whole school approach to the teaching of our school values, high expectations of positive social behaviours and the teaching of the Respectful Relationships Program.

We inform students of their rights each year through our 'start up program' and through our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns from our office and on our School Website.

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

We have implemented and will continue to implement many of the strategies referred to in PROTECT Child Safe Standard 3. At Tyabb Primary School we:

- Display visually engaging and easy-to-read posters promoting student voice and agency.
- Conduct year-level meetings and form groups to discuss students' rights and safety issues.
- Invite students to provide feedback on school-wide decisions and take their views into account in school decision-making.

- Demonstrate that the school takes students seriously by acting on their concerns, noting that what might seem unimportant to an adult may be important to a young person.

- Provide students who find it harder to speak up or be heard with multiple avenues for communicating, including writing, drawing, or physical forms of communication.
- Provide buddying or mentoring programs for new students transitioning to the school mid-year or outside of the regular transition timeline.
- Teach students practical protective strategies, including:
    - what to do when they feel unsafe
    - phrases they can use to raise an objection
    - pathways for raising safety concerns, and
    - online safety behaviours.
- Provide a range of age-appropriate picture books, fiction and non-fiction that include themes such as children's rights and empowerment, cultural and linguistic diversity, neurodiverse characters and people with disability, diversity in sexual orientation and gender.
- Support all students to identify trusted adults and friends they can talk to about a concern at school, at home or in the community.
- Deliver age-appropriate curriculum content about respectful relationships, sexuality, consent and sexual abuse prevention through the Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials.
- Follow through on our commitments – show students that the leadership team and staff are trustworthy and take their worries or concerns seriously.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Tyabb Primary School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing. We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this through our parent portal - Sentral, school website, newsletters, other communications, school council, subcommittees of school council, student, staff, and parent meetings etc. All of our child safety policies and procedures are available for students and parents on our School Website and from the school office. Newsletters or Sentral posts will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.

We have implemented and will continue to implement strategies to engage families and communities in our approach to child safety as per PROTECT Child Safe Standard 4. At Tyabb Primary School we:

- Display PROTECT Child Safety posters across the school.
- Provide new enrolments with family welcome packs that include information about child safety, the school's complaints processes and how to raise concerns.
- Conduct school open days or host community events, such as a school fete or fair, to welcome families and the broader community.
- Create a welcoming environment at school reception so community members and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto school grounds.

- Regularly engage with parents, carers and students and discuss the needs of students through parent/teacher interviews.

- Remind the school community about the shared roles of parents, carers and school staff in creating a positive environment for learning.
- Promote Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships education to families.
- Make newsletters and communications inclusive. Normalise a diversity of family profiles and reflect the characteristics of your school community.
- Encourage volunteer positions from families from diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Check that the students, school staff, and members of the school community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety. Keep this information up to date and accessible and review it regularly.
- Make child safety a standing item at school governing authority meetings.
- Acknowledge the important role that families and communities play in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns.

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all. We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children from diverse religious and cultural communities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- children who may have experience trauma
- children impacted by socio economic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, remote or regional isolation).
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (available on School Website) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity. We have implemented and will continue to implement strategies to support diversity and equity as per PROTECT Child Safe Standard 5. At Tyabb Primary School we:

- Pay attention to diverse student cohorts and individuals in our community, recognising that they may have higher risk of harm.
- Ensure school environments are welcoming and inclusive e.g., display flags representing different cultures within the school community
- Normalise asking for and using people's preferred pronouns and names for students.
- Check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. This can occur at pick-up or drop-off, at parent teacher interviews or through informal discussions.
- Offer buddying and mentoring for students who are at risk of social isolation.
- Provide staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination.

- Create opportunities to remind staff and volunteers about student diversity and accommodating students and young people's needs.
- Seek out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, provision planning.
- Recognise dates that connect with our school community, for example, Harmony Day, Cultural Diversity Week (March), National Reconciliation Week (27 May–3 June), Crazy Hair Day (Cystic Fibrosis Awareness, 26 July)

SUITABLE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

At Tyabb Primary School we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children. Our school's people management processes are in line with Ministerial Order 1359 and PROTECT Child Safe Standard 6

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- Recruitment in Schools
- Suitability for Employment Checks
- School Council Employment
- Contractor OHS Management.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
    - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
    - the person's history of working with children
    - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
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Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done though observations, feedback and regular performance reviews.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy (available on our School Website) which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

CHILD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND AWARENESS

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters. In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment as per PROTECT Child Safe Standard 8.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing - supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

School council training and education

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Tyabb Primary School child safety policies, procedures, codes and practices

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING PROCESSES

Tyabb Primary School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns as per PROTECT Child Safe Standard 7 and for responding to these and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found on our School Website. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees and homestay providers) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures also found on our School Website Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy School Website cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in our school newsletter or via Sentral our communication platform
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Tyabb Primary School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: Schools' Privacy Policy.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: Records Management – School Records

REVIEW OF CHILD SAFETY PRACTICES

At Tyabb Primary School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices. We have followed the suggestions in PROTECT Child Safe Standard 10 and implement the following:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.
- a register of existing child safe standard policies, noting the date the policy was approved, and schedule a review date every 2 years.
- When required, develop a work plan and establish a working group led by the child safety officer, to review and update policies and procedures.
- Monitor and manage child safety risks using our risk register.
- Determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures. Use complaints and incidents as a learning opportunity to inform continuous improvement.
- Keep records of documentation, such as meeting minutes, outlining recommendations on how child safe practices can be improved and implemented.

- Include findings from child safety reviews in child safety training for staff and volunteers.
- Communicate review outcomes to students in age-appropriate ways.
- Inform the school community of any child safety policy changes were relevant or applicable.
- Use surveys, focus groups and discussions to review the accessibility and level of awareness of child-safe policies and procedures by students, families, staff and volunteers.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes that are all available on our School Website. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Related Department of Education and Training policies

- Bullying Prevention and Response Policy
- Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes
- Complaints Policy
- Contractor OHS Management Policy
- Digital Learning in Schools Policy
- Family Violence Support
- Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy
- Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Supervision of Students Policy
- Visitors in Schools Policy
- Volunteers in Schools Policy
- Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors

Other related documents

- Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools
- Four Critical Actions for Schools
- Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending
- Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending
- Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools

POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW

The principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the Tyabb Primary School Council on behalf of the community.

Approval

Created date	**20.02.24**
Consultation	Consultation on this policy is mandatory. This policy has been discussed by Tyabb Primary School Council 25.3.24
Endorsed by	Principal
Endorsed on	**25.3.24**
Next review date	March 2026