



# MONTMORENCY PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Child Safe Standards Policy and Statement of Commitment



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the office on 9434 5944 or email [montmorency.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:montmorency.ps@education.vic.gov.au).

### PURPOSE

The Child Safe policy sets out the school's approach to creating an organisation where children are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Ministerial order 870 - Child Safe Standards.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors across a range of school activities both on and off site.

### DEFINITIONS

**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 abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**Child Abuse** includes –

- (a) any act committed against a child involving-
  - (i) a sexual offence; or
  - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of-
  - (i) physical violence; or
  - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) serious neglect of a child.

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Montmorency Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Montmorency Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Montmorency 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 Montmorency 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.

## AIMS

In its planning, decision-making and operations Montmorency 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;
6. 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;
7. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
8. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
9. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies;

- Duty of Care
- Working with Children Checks
- Volunteers
- Visitors
- Child Protection Reporting
- Yard Duty and Supervision
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement
- Camp
- Excursion
- Privacy

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Standard 1: Culture

1. Montmorency Primary School will develop and implement a range of policies to ensure child safety.
2. The principal will appoint a staff member with the responsibility for managing child safety issues across the school. This person will be known as the Child Safety Officer.
3. Duties of the Child Safety Officer may include;
  - a) conduct a risk assessment each year and employ a prevent, detect and respond approach
  - b) act as a source of support, advice and expertise on matters of child safety
  - c) liaise with the leadership team to maintain the visibility of child safety
  - d) lead the development of the school's child safety culture
  - e) raise awareness of child safety within the school and community

- f) ensure policies and programs are communicated
  - g) be alert to the needs of specific children
  - h) encourage a culture amongst the staff of listening to children
  - i) keep detailed, accurate and secure records of concerns and referrals.
4. Student welfare will be a standing item on the agenda for all Professional Learning Team meetings.
  5. The principal will promote a confidential reporting culture across the school.
  6. The principal will ensure that adequate records of child safety issues are kept.
  7. Our school will develop and implement a Code of Conduct for both staff and volunteers.
  8. The Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct for staff will be included in the Induction program for new staff.
  9. The Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct for volunteers will be published on the school's website

## **Standard 2: Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment**

1. The school will develop a policy and statement of commitment to child safety.
2. The school will ensure adults and children are made aware of their rights and responsibilities.
3. The Child Safety policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's three year policy review cycle or immediately upon changes to the Education Department's policy or procedures.

## **Standard 3: Code of Conduct**

1. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by a Code of Conduct and Statement of Commitment which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
2. All staff will be given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Staff Statement of Commitment. (Appendix A)
3. In addition to the Montmorency Primary School Code of Conduct all teaching staff are bound by the VIT Code of Conduct for Professionals. <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/media/documents/imported-files/spl/Code-of-Conduct-2015.pdf>
4. Volunteers and parent helpers will be provided with a copy of the Volunteer policy, a Memorandum of Understanding, and Statement of Commitment prior to commencing any work in our school.
5. The Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy outlines an agreed Code of Conduct and school values for our students.

## **Standard 4: Human Resources**

### **Training and supervision**

1. Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
2. Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
3. The Child Safety policy will be discussed annually by staff to build skills and awareness of staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
4. We also support our staff through ongoing discussions 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.
5. Through our Induction program all staff are made aware of what constitutes appropriate behaviour, sign code of conduct and conduct mandatory reporting training. Mentors are assigned to new staff to assist with ongoing support, supervision and training.
6. All volunteers in the school work directly under the supervision of a teacher and are made aware of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

7. New employees will be observed regularly to ensure they understand our organisation'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.
8. 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.

## **Recruitment**

1. 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.
2. All position description for new positions advertised will include the 'Child Safe Environments' clause as provided in the Recruitment in Schools Guide.
3. Face to face interviews and thorough reference checks will be conducted for all prospective employees. During the interview process questions will be asked to gain an understanding of the applicants past experiences and motivations for working with children.
4. The school principal will ensure that reasonable efforts are made to gather, verify and record the following information prior to employment;
  - a) proof of personal identity
  - b) VIT Registration (for teaching staff)
  - c) Working with Children Check and any professional qualifications (non-teaching staff)
  - d) the persons history of work involving children
  - e) referee checks that address the persons suitability for the job and working with children.
5. All new staff are made aware of the Child Safe policy, procedures and Code of Conduct through the Induction process.
6. All volunteers required to hold a Working with Children Check must provide evidence of this Check. This information is recorded in the Working with Children Check Register. (A parent volunteering in relation to an activity in which his or her child ordinarily participates does not require a Working with Children Check. (refer to policy)

## **Fair procedures for personnel**

1. 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.
2. The principal will record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns. All records are securely stored.
3. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, the principal will provide updates to children and families on the progress of the allegation and any actions the school takes when appropriate.

## **Standard 5: Reporting and Responding**

1. Teachers are mandated reporters and as such they must follow the procedures outlined in our Child Protection Reporting Policy.
2. A copy of the document Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse will be provided to all teachers through the Induction process. When responding to an incident the principal will use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template.
3. All staff are required to complete the Child Protection online training modules mandated by the Education Department.
4. Our staff are provided with resources and support to deal 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.

5. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved. Refer to the school's Privacy policy.

## **Standard 6: Detect and Prevent**

1. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.
2. 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 and online environments.
3. All staff are provided with information to support them to identify children at risk of abuse and organisational child abuse risks.  
[http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5\\_SchoolsGuide.pdf](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf)
4. The Child Safety Officer is responsible for the risk management approach. The Child Safety Officer will raise awareness of potential risks to the leadership team to develop risk mitigation and internal controls.
5. The risk assessment template will be reviewed annually, concurrently with the OHS risk assessment schedule.

## **Standard 7: Empowering Children**

1. Our school has developed strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
  - Standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
  - Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
  - Resilience; and
  - Child abuse awareness and prevention
2. All students in the school will be involved in units of work to develop their understanding about the areas listed above. The content will be documented and delivered through programs such as our Start Up, Cyber Safety, and Health Education programs. These units of work will be tailored for the appropriate age group and presented with child friendly content.
3. We empower children to be active participants in the school decision making processes. We foster student voice and ensure that children feel that their views will be listened to by adults in a respectful way.
4. Students will be provided with opportunities to give feedback on how safe they feel at school to raise concerns through the student survey conducted each year.
5. The Student Engagement Policy provides the basis for the development of a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment. The Student Engagement Policy outlines the aspirations of our school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

This 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 Procedure are available on the school website.
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law and other relevant laws. 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 RESOURCES

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](#)
- [Policy and Advisory Library – Duty of Care](#)
- [Policy and Advisory Library – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Policy last reviewed	March 2022
Consultation	Internal
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	March 2025

## **MONTMORENCY PRIMARY SCHOOL STAFF STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

Montmorency 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 enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

- this Staff Statement of Commitment aims to 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.
- the Principal and school leaders of Montmorency Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Staff Statement of Commitment, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school environment. They will also provide information and support to enable the Staff Statement of Commitment to operate effectively.
- all staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the appropriate Montmorency Primary School Staff Statement of Commitment.
- this Staff Statement of Commitment applies to all staff, in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

### **Acceptable behaviours**

As staff involved in child-related work we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

## Unacceptable behaviours

As staff involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in physical activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes

This Staff Statement of Commitment was endorsed by the Montmorency Primary School Council in OCTOBER 2018.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the school's leadership or Child Safety Officer.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_