

POLICY TITLE: ENPS Child Safety Policy

DATE RATIFIED: 21/10/2019

REVIEW DATE: Term 4 2021

ENPS MISSION: We maximise the potential of all; empowering independence, excellence, innovation and engagement with the world.

Critical Engagement
with the World

Academic Excellence

Inclusive Learning
Environment

Personal and Social
Wellbeing

Purpose

Essendon North Primary School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope

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

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

Definitions

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

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

Child-connected work

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment

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

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

School staff

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

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

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Essendon North Primary School (ENPS) 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.

The school's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is informed by our guiding statements. At ENPS our vision is '*Global learners and leaders, exceeding expectations.*' We know children can struggle to exceed expectations if they are not safe from abuse.

At ENPS our guiding principles inform the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community including in relation to child safety.

- *Critical engagement with the world* - respectfully engaging with others, understanding, accepting and appreciating ourselves and others.
- *Academic Excellence* - accountability to ourselves and others as learners, maximising potential.
- *Inclusive learning environment* - positive, orderly environment that promotes safety and a sense of belonging, promote independence, interdependence and self-motivation.
- *Personal and Social Wellbeing* - promote student empowerment, resilience, developing the whole person, a community that demonstrates values of respect and social responsibility.

ENPS has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We are 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. Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, students in out of home care and children who are vulnerable.

Every person involved in ENPS has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play 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.

Child safety principles

In its planning, decision-making and operations, ENPS will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;

7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such concerns;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

POLICY

Strategies to embed a child safe culture

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

All child safety documents, including:

- this policy,
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct <https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>,
- the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures <https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>,
- [*Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools*](#)
- [*Four Critical Actions for Schools*](#)

are readily available online and in hard copy, at the school's reception for all staff and students to read at any time.

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

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

- For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of ENPS's child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the principal and assistant principals) will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.
- Ensure that Child Safety is embedded within the transdisciplinary theme, 'Who we are' Units of Inquiry and other relevant units of inquiry, across all year levels of the ENPS Programme of Inquiry.

As part of ENPS's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

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

As part of ENPS's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **school councils and school council members** will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).

- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes
- When hiring employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe (unless delegated to the principal).

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

Roles and responsibilities

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

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- The Principal/Child Safety Officer or nominee is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every two years.
- The Principal/Child Safety Officer or nominee is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach Principal/Child Safety Officer if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Principal/Child Safety Officer or nominee is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in ENPS' other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register.

Recruitment

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

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

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations or suspicions of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

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

<https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

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

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

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found at <https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>.

Risk reduction and management

ENPS believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the school's risk assessment register. The school

recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

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

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

Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

ENPS has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse by asking a staff member, at school reception, and at <https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>.

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

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

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at ENPS to read at school reception, and at <https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety and the Child Safe Standards will be addressed at parent information sessions, as appropriate.
- Embedding age-appropriate Child Safety discussions within "Who we are" and other relevant Units of Inquiry,

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

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;

- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention

At ENPS all Units of Inquiry under the transdisciplinary theme 'Who We Are' embed different aspects of child safety, wellbeing and protective behaviours. This includes identifying safe adults, the responsibility of partners when leaving the classroom, protective behaviours and areas from the health curriculum. Each team across the school commences the year with this transdisciplinary theme to set up the ongoing welfare sessions that are conducted each week. This is inclusive of class meetings, explicit teaching using UR Strong resources and Social and Emotional Learning resources.

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.
- Regular reminders in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion
- Discussing them at school tours with prospective parents, at parent information sessions or in class,
- Ensure volunteer induction processes, include Child Safety information
- Placing posters throughout the school

Confidentiality and privacy

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

Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- ENPS Child Safety Code of Conduct <https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>
- ENPS Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures <https://www.enps.vic.edu.au/child-safety>
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

Approval

School Principal: Kate Barletta (Acting)

Date of last review: October 2019

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template** to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must** also report **Internally** to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Employee Conduct Branch
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or school chairperson
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - Employee Conduct Branch
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- at risk of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must** also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must** also report **Internally** to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or chairperson.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

<p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p>AREA</p> <p>North Division 1300 664 977 South Division 1300 655 795 East Division 1300 360 391 West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599 West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977</p> <p>AFTER HOURS After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78</p> <p>CHILD FIRST https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams</p> <p>ORANGE DOOR https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html</p>	<p>VICTORIA POLICE 000 or your local police station</p> <p>DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE 1800 126 126</p> <p>INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT 1800 126 126</p> <p>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9637 2595</p> <p>DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne (03) 9267 0228 Ballarat (03) 5337 7135 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9825 7200</p> <p>THE LOOKOUT The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: http://www.lockout.org.au</p> <p>Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service: 1800 737 732.</p>
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DOCUMENT HISTORY

ENPS POLICIES/POLICIES REGISTER/ CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Version	Effective Date	Owner	Description of change
2	October 2019	Kate Barletta	Major update in line with DET recommendations and expectations for Child Safety Policy
1	February 2019	Scott Mullen	

* Information on revisions and new versions to be added to the top of the table, therefore the most recent is always on top.

Child Safe Standards

Victoria has introduced compulsory minimum **standards** that will apply to organisations that provide services for **children** to help protect **children** from all forms of abuse. The **child safe standards** form part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, organisations must have:

- *strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements*
- *a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety*
- *a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children*
- *screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel*
- *processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse*
- *strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse*
- *strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children*

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