



Standard Two – Child Safety Policy

Introduction

St Vincent de Paul Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and takes active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safety Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations & responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all children under their care.

In accordance with requirements of the [Victorian Government's Ministerial Order No 870](#), St Vincent de Paul Primary School maintains a culture of 'no tolerance' to child abuse and to support this has established minimum Child Safety Standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate St Vincent de Paul Primary School's commitment to ensuring Child Safety and to illustrate the measures implemented by the school to maintain a safe education environment, as well as processes for responding to suspected abuse.

Scope

This policy & associated procedures apply to all staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

Commitment to Child Safety

All students & young people attending St Vincent de Paul Primary School have the right to feel safe. The school affirms its commitment to child safety by adopting a 'zero tolerance' to child abuse and by actively implementing and managing strategies to help protect children from harm.

Initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety of students and young people at St Vincent de Paul Primary School include the following:

- » An annual assessment of the effectiveness of its Child Safety Management Strategies to identify areas for improvement.
- » A Code of Conduct defining workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.
- » Processes for the recruitment, support, training & supervision of staff members, clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors who participate in 'Child Connected Work'.
- » Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected Child Abuse.
- » Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people in the establishment of Child Safety strategies.

- » A commitment that promotes safety of Indigenous children, children with disabilities and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

St Vincent de Paul Primary School maintains policies, procedures and strategies to create a child safe environment in the following areas.

Risk Management

St Vincent de Paul Primary School recognises the importance of minimising the potential of Child Abuse or harm and uses this process to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general Occupational Health & Safety risks the school proactively manages risk via a formal assessment process.

Code of Conduct

St Vincent de Paul Primary School enforces a Code of Conduct for all staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance and support to individuals so that they feel valued, respected and fairly treated. It is provided to any person engaged in 'Child Connected Work' and is available on the school website & in the Staff/Contractors Handbook.

Recruitment, Support, Training & Supervision

St Vincent de Paul Primary School adopts Administrative & Human Resource practices to ensure its screening, recruitment & performance management processes identify and engage the most suitable candidates for positions available at the school. Recruitment and screening processes, as well as Police and Working With Children's Checks are minimum requirements for those engaged in 'Child Connected Work'.

Staff Members are provided with regular development opportunities, support, supervision & training to assist with addressing child safety matters.

Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Concerns or Abuse

St Vincent de Paul Primary School has appointed a Child Safety Officer with specific responsibilities for responding to reports or complaints made by any member of the school community relating to child safety concerns or abuse. The school's Child Safety Officer works closely with members of the School Improvement Team, staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, contractors, students and the parent community to ensure Child Safety Standards are maintained and all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct are immediately addressed.

Where staff members have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a student or young person they are mandated by law to report their concerns immediately to the Principal, Child Safety Officer or a Member of the School Improvement Team before contacting DHHS Child Protection. Staff members will be supported through all aspects of the reporting process.

The school's reporting & complaints procedure is located on the school website.

Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people

St Vincent de Paul Primary School works with students to ensure that they are empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and encourage them to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or afraid. Staff members actively encourage students & young people to express their views on matters that directly affect them. The school educates students and young people on strategies they can adopt if they feel unsafe.

Valuing Diversity

St Vincent de Paul Primary School values diversity and does not tolerate discriminatory practices.

To achieve this the school:

- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families.
- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from cultural and/or linguistically different backgrounds.
- » Welcomes children with disabilities and their families and actively promotes their participation.
- » Welcomes staff members from a culturally diverse background.
- » Does not discriminate based on sexuality or gender identification

Review of this Policy

St Vincent de Paul Primary School reviews its Child Safety Code of Conduct every three years more frequently in the event of a complaint or when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children



Standard Three – Child Safety Code of Conduct

Introduction

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at St Vincent de Paul Primary School against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes & legislation.

Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour by adults towards children & young people. It aims to protect children and reduce any opportunity of abuse or harm to children. This Code of Conduct also provides anyone engaged by St Vincent de Paul Primary School with guidance on how best to support students and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, & contractors responsible for supporting the safety of children by complying with the following 'acceptable behaviours':

- » Adhering to the School's Child Safety Policy and associated procedures at all times.
- » Taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse.
- » Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions.
- » Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another student or young person has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child.
- » Taking account of the diversity of all students, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities and students and young people who are vulnerable.

- » Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, including those from diverse backgrounds.
- » Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a student or young person unless this is consistent with their school role and responsibilities.
- » Reporting all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct immediately to the Principal and/or the School's Child Safety Officer.
- » Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958.
- » If an allegation of child abuse is made, following the relevant school procedures for reporting allegations, or mandatory reporting requirements.

Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, contractors and board/school council members must not:

- » Ignore or disregard any child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- » Develop any 'special' relationships with students or young people that could be seen as favouritism (such as the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- » Exhibit behaviours with students or young people, which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (such as inappropriate sitting on laps).
- » Do things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves (such as toileting or changing clothes).
- » Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students.
- » Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses with students or young people.
- » Have unauthorised contact with students or young people 'on line' via email, social networking sites, by text message or other means.
- » Display any behaviour, in person or 'on-line', which could be construed as inappropriate or disrespectful to those who may view it, in particular students, young people and those from Aboriginal and diverse cultural backgrounds .
- » Maintain relationships with a student or young person and their families outside of school without the knowledge of the Principal, a member of the School Improvement Team or Child Safety Officer.
- » Use inappropriate language in the presence of students.
- » Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language in the presence of or with children.
- » Express personal views on cultures, race, ethnicity, sexuality or disabilities in the presence of students.
- » Discriminate against any student because of culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality or disability.

- » Attend work under the influence or effects of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- » Consume alcohol without the consent of the Principal or a member of the School Improvement Team at school, at a school event in the presence of students or young people.
- » Photograph or video a student or young person, for personal use, without the consent of their parents or guardian.

Failure to Comply With This Code of Conduct

Where a staff member (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, contractors and Parish Education Board member is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, St Vincent de Paul Primary School will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.