

## CHILD SAFE POLICY

### PHILOSOPHY

Mount Waverley North Primary School is committed to child safety. We want children, staff and volunteers to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

### PURPOSE

This policy is intended to empower children, staff and volunteers who are vital and active participants at Mount Waverley North Primary School. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children at Mount Waverley North Primary School. Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Mount Waverley North Primary School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

Mount Waverley North Primary School has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. Our school has robust recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.
- We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. Staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.
- We promote diversity and tolerance at Mount Waverley North Primary School, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we: promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.
- We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of

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Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

- New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to Mount Waverley North Primary School's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.
- 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. Mount Waverley North Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- All teachers employed or volunteering are required to have VIT registration. A copy of their registration card is held at the office.
- All other people working on the school site, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website <[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)> for further information
- We carry out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.
- Mount Waverley North Primary School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- If we believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, we will contact 000.
- We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form (Appendix 1), including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.
- If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as a school take.
- All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.
- Mount Waverley North Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:
  - Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
  - Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
  - Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.
- In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

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- We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).
- We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.
- We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).
- If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:
  - a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
  - behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
  - someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
  - observing suspicious behaviour.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's Evaluation of Policies Timetable and following significant incidents if they occur.

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Appendix 1

# Child Safety Incident Report

All incident reports must be stored securely.

## 1 Incident details

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

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

## 2 Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No  Yes, Aboriginal  Yes, Torres Strait Islander

## 3 Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

## 4 Please describe the incident

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	
What did you see?	
Other information	

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**5 Parent/carer/child use** (to be used if a parent/carer/child is reporting a disclosure)

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

**6 Office use:**

Date incident report received:	
Staff member managing incident:	
Follow-up date:	
Incident ref. number:	

**7 Has the incident been reported?** (please provide date and contact name)

Child Protection	
Police	
Child First	
Another third party (please specify):	

**8 Does the child and/or their family speak English?**

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes  No

If not, which language is spoken at home? .....

**9 Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?**

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes  No

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