



# CHILD SAFETY POLICY

## **Rationale:**

All Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

- the principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- the actions the school proposes to take to:
  - i. demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy;
  - ii. support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
  - iii. support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

## **Aims:**

- To provide students with a safe learning environment where they feel physically and emotionally secure.
- To build a safe school environment enhanced by positive behaviours and values.
- To maximise student learning opportunities by fostering a healthy school culture.
- To encourage student engagement, regular attendance and positive learning and social behaviours.

## **Implementation:**

### ***A Child Safety Code of Conduct:***

To promote child safety in the school environment we acknowledge the following:

#### **All students have a right to:**

- Take part in learning programs that meet their individual needs.
- Feel secure and to be safe in a caring and supportive environment.
- Work and play without interference in an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation.
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness.
- Have learning continue without disruption in a supportive environment.
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity.
- Expect the school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.

#### **All students have a responsibility to:**

- Care and value themselves, others, teachers and the school community.
- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others.
- Treat others with respect and good manners.
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour, modelling and supporting school rules.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.
- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others.
- Explore their full potential in their learning.

#### **School staff adheres to the following standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children:**

- School staff provide opportunities for all students to learn
- School staff treat their students with courtesy and dignity
- School staff work within the limits of their professional expertise
- School staff maintain objectivity in their relationships with students
- School staff are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not

## **Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse**

### **Child Abuse includes:**

- Any act committed against a child involving a sexual or criminal offence (under the Crimes Act 1958); or
- the infliction on a child of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; or
- serious neglect of a child.

### **Forming a belief on reasonable grounds**

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

### **Reporting a belief**

Mandated staff members (Teachers and Principals) must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection.

Staff members, *whether or not mandated*, need to report to the principal or assistant principal their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report.

*Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy 2014 for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse.*

### **These procedures do not:**

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

## **Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse**

- Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies:
  - Mandatory Reporting Policy 2014
  - Duty of Care Policy 2014
  - Student Welfare, Engagement and Behaviour Policy 2015
- **Reference:**  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/safety.aspx>
- If the school identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).  
Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.
- As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
- At least annually, the school must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school staff about:
  - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
  - child abuse risks in the school environment; and
  - the school's current child safety standards.

## **Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation**

- The school authority must develop 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.
- The school must promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children. At the start of the school year as part of the start up program, teachers prioritise the teaching of safe behaviours and child abuse, with reference to,
  - The Bounce Back program, particularly chapters on resilience and keeping safe are referenced
  - PROTECT A Guide to Support Victorian Schools to Meet Child Safe Standard 7, [https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5\\_FeelingSafePrimarySchool.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_FeelingSafePrimarySchool.pdf)
- Teacher led information nights at the start of the school year explain the strategies in place at RPS to teach students during the start up program on child abuse, particularly how to keep safe and what to do if someone is hurting you or your friends or making you feel unsafe.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 3-year review cycle.

**This policy was last ratified by School Council in**

**July 2016.**