



# CHILD SAFE POLICY

## Purpose

Tulliallan Primary School is committed to child safety and will develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in the school environment.

## Background

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards will commence from 1 January 2016 for most organisations working with children, with the aim of promoting cultural change in the way organisations manage the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The child safe standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

The child safe standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations that provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

## The Child Safe Standards

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

**Standard 1:** Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements (See appendix 1)

**Standard 2:** A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety (See Appendix 2 Our Commitment to Child Safety)

**Standard 3:** A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children (see appendix 3)

**Standard 4:** Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel (See VIT and Working with Children Policies)

**Standard 5:** Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>)

**Standard 6:** Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse (Appendix 4)

**Standard 7:** Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children (See Student Wellbeing Policy)

Implementation

### Implementation

- Tulliallan Primary School will have zero tolerance of child abuse. Child abuse includes physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect.
- All people engaged or recruited for child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and/or VIT teacher registration to provide evidence for the school's records.
- Implement the Mandatory Reporting Policy and ensure new teachers are inducted and that the policy is distributed to all staff at the beginning of each year. The Mandatory Reporting policy articulates legislative requirements for staff and advice on when and how to make reports.
- Any allegations of abuse and/or safety concerns will be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services promptly.
- Key staff including the Principal, Assistant Principal, Student Wellbeing Coordinator and Leading Teachers are identified within the school as having the knowledge of child safety issues and will act as the key contact point for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse.
- If a child discloses child abuse or there is a suspicion of child abuse, counselling through either the Student Support Services or our school social worker will be provided as needed. If outside counselling in more suitable contact with other agencies to be forwarded to the family.
- The Parent's Obligation Agreement will include guidance for parents on how to respond if they have concerns about a child's safety.
- Ensure appropriate supervision of all classes, excursions, camps and school environment. This is consistent with the school's Excursion/In School visit, Camp and Onsite Supervision policies that articulate expectations and risk management strategies. These policies align with DET policies and procedures.
- Tulliallan Primary School is committed to cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability by making appropriate accommodations.

To be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review process.

### Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
<b>The Act</b>	<i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i>
<b>Aboriginal child</b>	A person under the age of 18 who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</li> <li>• identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and</li> <li>• is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
<b>Child abuse</b>	<p>For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical violence</li> <li>• sexual offences</li> <li>• serious emotional or psychological abuse</li> <li>• serious neglect</li> </ul> <p>Further explanation of these types of abuse is provided in the section ‘What is child abuse?’</p>
<b>Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	<p>A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents’ identification on a similar basis.</p>
<b>Child</b>	<p>A person who is under the age of 18 years.</p>
<b>Child safety</b>	<p>In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.</p>
<b>Child safe organisation</b>	<p>In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.</p>
<b>Cultural competency</b>	<p>A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.</p>
<b>Cultural abuse</b>	<p>Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.</p>
<b>Cultural safety for Aboriginal children</b>	<p>The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.</p> <p>A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity. Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning</li> <li>• have an education that strengthens their culture and identity</li> <li>• maintain connections to their land and country</li> <li>• maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations</li> <li>• be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders</li> <li>• receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner</li> <li>• be involved in services that are culturally respectful.</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
<b>Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages.
<b>Children with a disability</b>	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.
<b>Organisation</b>	<p>The <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i> (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an incorporated body or association</li> <li>• an unincorporated body or association (however structured)</li> <li>• an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities.</li> </ul>

## Evaluation

This policy was ratified by School Council on 23 October 2019. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change.