



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 1: GOOD LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN A CHILD SAFE SCHOOL

PURPOSE

This policy provides the framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards that comply with Ministerial Order 870, *Managing the risk of child abuse in schools*. Broadmeadows Valley Primary School's (BVPS) Child Safe Standard 1, Good Leadership and Governance; sets out the leadership approaches that will create and maintain a child safe school environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

All registered schools are responsible for keeping children safe. Schools are required to develop strategies to embed a child safe organisational culture. Embedding an organisational culture of child safety is critical to reducing the risk of child abuse in schools.

BVPS has a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse. This policy will be led by the principal, leadership team and the school's child safe/wellbeing officer. This commitment will be shared and communicated openly and transparently.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including, staff, volunteers, parents and families 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. This policy covers both school and outside of school hours.

DEFINITIONS

The Act: Child Safety and Well Being Act 2005

Child or young person: A person who is under the age of 18 years.

Aboriginal Child: A person under the age of 18 who: is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Community

Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds: 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

Child Safe Organisation: 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

Cultural Competency: 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

Cultural Abuse: Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community. 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. A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity

Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children: Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to:

- Identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning
- Have an education that strengthens their culture and identity maintain connections to their land and country maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders
- Receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner. Be involved in services that are culturally respectful

Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds: 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

Children with a Disability: A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury, 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

Organisation: The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005* (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as: an unincorporated body or association (however structured) an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities

Child Abuse: For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: physical violence, sexual offences, grooming, serious emotional or psychological abuse or serious neglect. For further information regarding child abuse refer: Ministerial Order 870-Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools 2016

Child physical abuse: Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour. (Safe Schools Hub)

Child sexual abuse: Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e., a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can also be:

- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g., a teacher); the age of consent laws does not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated
- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion
- sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion
- non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g., a 14-year-old and an 11-year-old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse. (Safe Schools Hub)

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

Child protection: Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm. (Safe Schools Hub)

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners. (Safe Schools Hub)

Reasonable Belief: When staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

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)

POLICY

Leadership in a Child Safe Environment

Working with children can be very rewarding, and school leadership carries additional responsibilities and accountability, particularly in connection to child safety. Broadmeadows Valley Primary School will act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This will be achieved by developing a culture of child safety embedded throughout our school so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Our child safe culture is represented through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of BVPS.

Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. At BVPS, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. All staff, volunteers and contractors must consider the

safety of all children. They recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Governance in a Child Safe Environment

Leadership at Broadmeadows Valley Primary School takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children at BVPS is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies, management and organisational practices.

Leadership Responsibilities

Leadership at BVPS is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety, including the use of the tools provided by the education department. The BVPS leadership team utilizes and translates DET mandates and supporting documents into accessible tools to support the implementation of child safe standards. Leadership ensure that every available step is taken in protecting children from abuse, are aware of child abuse risks or allegations, and takes responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Our school will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection. The BVPS-PROTECT action plan-checklist (attached) has been developed as a support document to ensure compliance and safety strategies are embedded in the school's organisational child safe framework.

Identifying and Analysing Risk of Abuse

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School has developed policies in response to Ministerial Order 870, Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools. Through these policies, approaches have been developed to prevent, identify and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how BVPS identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks. The Department of Health and Human Services provides risk management tools for school use.

In demonstrating and leading a strong commitment to child safety, Broadmeadows Valley Primary School has developed:

- **A Child Safe Policy**

This child safe policy outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. The BVPS Child Safe Standards 1-7 comply with Ministerial Order 870, *Managing the risk of child abuse in schools*.

- **A Code of Conduct**

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is a set of principles or standards for the behaviour and conduct of all teachers in the Victorian Government Teaching Service and the non-Government sector. The following principles form part of this code of conduct: -

Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.

Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities; their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School has also developed a specific Code of Conduct that encourages appropriate behaviour between children called the Student Code of Conduct. Refer to BVPS Standard 3: A Child's Code of Conduct.

- **A Student Engagement Policy**

At BVPS the Student Engagement Policy includes the rights and responsibilities for students, which encourages appropriate student conduct and behaviour consistent with the school's values.

Guidelines for Selecting Suitable Employees and Volunteers

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, the school will ensure our processes include:

- Child Safe selection criteria in job descriptions
- Police record and identity checks
- Working with Children Checks where required
- Face-to-face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager

- **Guidelines to Ensure all Staff and Volunteers are Appropriately Trained and Supervised**

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School ensures that staff, volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. In particular, the principal, leadership team and the child safety officer understand their responsibilities. The student wellbeing leader at BVPS is the person who has knowledge of child safety issues and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

- **A Culture that Promotes Inclusion**

BVPS is inclusive of all children and young people and their families/carers. In particular, BVPS has established a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations.
- cultural safety for children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and on communications such as the website and newsletters.
- the physical and emotional safety of LGBTI children and young people, for example by implementing the practices as recommended by the Safe Schools.
- the safety of children and young people with a disability, for example by ensuring that BVPS is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children and young people with a disability.

- **A Pathway for Empowering and promoting the Participation of Children in Decision Making**

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. BVPS provides opportunities for children to express their views on the student Code of Conduct, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through student forums, suggestion boxes and feedback sessions. BVPS listens to children and takes their ideas or concerns seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

*Schools should be aware of the following message posted on the **Commission for Children and Young People** website. *“New Child Safe Standards are being developed to better protect children and young people from abuse. The Victorian Government has announced that the new Standards will commence on 1 July 2022, giving organisations time to plan, prepare and comply. The eleven new Standards will replace Victoria’s current seven standards and principles.”* Please note that at the time of developing the BVPS Child Safe Policies, the revised standards were not as yet available.

PROTECT: Child Safe Standard 1, ACTION PLAN (attached)
The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Code of Conduct

An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards, includes information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms:

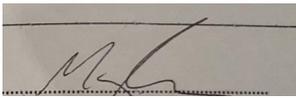
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>

child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/chilsafestandards.as>

POLICY EVALUATION AND RATIFICATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the three-year review cycle, or earlier as required. This will ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective. Proposed amendments to this policy will be informed by and include consultation with student representative groups, parent groups, school council and staff.

POLICY	CHILD SAFE STANDARD 1 GOOD LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN A CHILD SAFE SCHOOL
BVPS School Council President	Signed: 
BVPS Principal	Signed: C. Zianco
Ratified	14 / 09 /2021



Child Safe Standard 1: CHECKLIST-ACTION PLAN

Child Safe Standard	Does your school meet the Standard? YES/NO	What action(s) does the school need to take to better meet the Standards?	Responsibility (Who)	Responsibility (When)
1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the visibility of child safety Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff Regularly review and ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately 	Principal, Assistant Principal, Child Safe and Wellbeing Officer	Annually review and update
2. A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually review and update 	Principal, Assistant Principal, Child Safe and Wellbeing Officer	
3. A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually review and update 	Principal, Assistant Principal, Child Safe and Wellbeing Officer	
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ongoing screening of existing personnel as part of staff performance review to support a child safe school environment 	School leadership team	
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's Child Protection Reporting Obligations Policy, especially new and part time staff 	Assistant Principal	

