



## CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4: HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES

### PURPOSE

It is important for schools to have effective and focused human resources practices to keep children and young people safe from harm and abuse. Broadmeadows Valley Primary School (BVPS) is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making. Broadmeadows Valley Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

All registered schools are responsible for meeting the child safety requirements for staff selection, supervision and management (Clause 10, Ministerial Order 870).

The Broadmeadows Valley Primary School Child Safe Standard 4: Human Resources Practices Policy provides a framework for the school's approach to; recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that will support a child safe school. BVPS is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe school where children and young people are safe and feel safe within a supportive environment.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy will apply to the school environment (refer to Definitions section) and covers both school and outside of school hours. The policy will generally apply to all people who conduct work for the organisation in a paid or unpaid capacity. This may include, for example, school council members, leadership, staff, volunteers, interns, trainees, contractors and consultants.

### DEFINITIONS

**Human Resources Management:** may be defined as contributing to the maintenance of effective human resource management which includes staff recruitment, training, workplace health and safety, employment equity and diversity, workforce monitoring, planning and reporting

**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

**Child Abuse:** For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: physical violence, sexual offences, 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

**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 Safety:** In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse

**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:** Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence; or
- grooming; and the infliction, on a child, of physical violence.
- serious emotional or psychological harm; and/or serious neglect of a child

**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

**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:

- 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**

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in BVPS has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. Hence, the safety of children is paramount when making decisions in selecting, screening and appointing staff, volunteers and contractors to the school.

Employees and volunteers are supported through the designated child safety officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist us in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with Department of Education and Training (DET) legal requirements and policies and procedures.

## **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES**

### **Child Safety Officer**

The Broadmeadows Valley school principal is the designated child safety officer. The BVPS Principal will provide a single contact for children and young people, parents/carers and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children at Broadmeadows Valley Primary School.

The BVPS Principal will be responsible for leading the implementation of all Child Safe Human Resource Practices including staff and volunteer advertisements, screening, selection, supervision and management.

## **Promoting Child Safety in Staff and Volunteer Recruitment**

At BVPS job and volunteer recruitment processes will clearly state the school's commitment to child safety and will be included in all advertisements, duty statements and other documents.

Selecting suitable and appropriate people to work with children is vital. The Broadmeadows Valley Primary School approach to screening staff and volunteers is outlined in Child Safe Policy (Standard 2: Commitment to Child Safety). Everyone benefits when the best people, who share the organisation's values about keeping children safe from harm, are chosen. Good recruitment practices are aimed at reducing the opportunity for harm to occur by deterring the 'wrong' people from applying and allowing the school to screen out people who are unsuitable to work with children.

Well-developed job descriptions assist organisations in attracting suitably qualified and experienced staff and volunteers. In addition, employing staff and engaging volunteers who are not suitably qualified may add to a child feeling unsafe as well as place staff and volunteers under unnecessary stress which could be expressed through inappropriate behaviour.

## **Training and Induction**

Training and education are an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Broadmeadows Valley Primary School employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse. We provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures. We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that BVPS meets its duty of care when working with children.

All staff, volunteers and contractors have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and wellbeing of students including:

- Duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students
- Obligations under child protection legislation; and
- Obligations under work health and safety legislation

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training in child safety to enhance the skills and knowledge of our employees and volunteers and reduce exposure to risks. New and existing staff will be provided with information and support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

Our staff are committed to promoting the rights, safety and wellbeing of children by ensuring that child safety concerns are front and centre of the work that they carry out. Employees and volunteers working with children and young people will receive training in the following areas:

- Identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks including being familiar with the VIT Code of Conduct, BVPS policies and procedures
- Staff will be familiar with Legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- How to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including BVPS reporting guidelines, Mandatory

Reporting Ongoing professional development and information exchange opportunities relating to child safety and wellbeing.

- Strategies for ensuring that staff or volunteers who disclose harm or risk to children and young people are supported.
- Periodic training for staff and volunteers on children's rights, child development, the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, recognising signs of harm or abuse, responding to disclosures, understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child, record keeping, risk assessment, external reporting obligations, and creating culturally safe environments.

#### **Training can be formal such as:**

- Higher education training and accreditation
- Training offered by external organisations
- Training developed and delivered internally
- On-the-job training meeting key objectives
- Email updates on specific resources

#### **Training can also be informal such as:**

- Inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or forums
- Inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- Inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- Internal mentoring and coaching

#### **Supervision**

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance. In particular, children and young people with a disability may require additional supervision. As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including the BVPS internal reporting procedures (such as the Principal/Assistant Principal), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child or young person is believed to be at imminent risk.

#### **Performance and Development Review**

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve employees and volunteers' skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance is measured against Broadmeadows Valley Primary School's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the Victorian Institute of Teaching and the school Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

### **Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures**

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within Broadmeadows Valley Primary School. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Our Code of Conduct will be made publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person and can expect to be listened to and supported. Broadmeadows Valley Primary School's disciplinary procedures clearly outline what employees or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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

### **Recording your actions: responding to suspected child abuse -**

[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/PROTECT\\_Schoolstemplate.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/PROTECT_Schoolstemplate.pdf)

**Health and Human Services** – <https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards> **Commission for Children and Young People** - <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

**Further information about the failure to disclose offence** is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children and young people+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+youngpeople+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)>.

**Further information about the failure to protect offence** is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children and young people+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+young+people+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)>. A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed. For behaviour examples, please see **An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards**: [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)

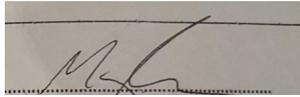
**Further information on child safe standards** can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations)>.

Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)>.

# EVALUATION AND RATIFICATION

The Broadmeadows Valley Child Safe Standard 4: Human Resources Practices will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or \*before in line with DET requirements or mandates. Amendments to this policy will be made in consultation with staff and School Council.

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School will monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy and revise the policy at least once every three years.

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Child Safe Standard 4: HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES</b>
<b>BVPS Council President</b>	Signed 
<b>BVPS Principal</b>	Signed <b>C. Zianco</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>August 2021</b>
<b>Ratified</b>	<b>14/ 09 /2021</b>

\*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.