

Boroondara Park Primary School

Child Safety Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the school office on 98575157.

Purpose

The Boroondara Park PS Child Safety Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student
- volunteer.

Statement of commitment to child safety

Boroondara Park PS is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard in relation to decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly, while strictly adhering to the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex or queer (LGBTIQA+), and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and responsibilities

School leadership team

Our school leadership team (comprising the principal and assistant principal) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principals and assistant principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures

- act in accordance with our [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#), including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard in relation to decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture within the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Boroondara Park PS has nominated child safety champions to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In addition to these roles, our child safety champions are also responsible for:

- Student Wellbeing, Voice and Agency in their work as Learning Specialists at Boroondara Park PS
 - overseeing Respectful Relationship implementation
 - eSafety licensing for the school
 - student surveys and student forums

Our principal and child safety champions are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The principal and assistant principal are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The principal, assistant principal and child safety champions are responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Reference Group on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meets regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is monitored by our School Council, at the beginning of each school year, mid year and end of year. It is also reviewed when there are any Child Safety incidents to identify any changes required.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will maintain, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Promoting child safety and managing risk in physical and online environments is undertaken through ([PROTECT Child Safe Standard 9](#) guidance):

- A focus on eSafety, including regular review of policies and procedures to ensure the school meets the requirements of an eSafety School.
- Keeping up to date with current online safety issues and expert information from specialist government and non-government bodies, including the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner, and eSmart Schools.
- Giving students a range of opportunities to learn, play, create, entertain, make new friends and stay connected.
- Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships as a core program integrated into the classroom learning programs.
- Informing students and their families about appropriate use of the school's technology, safety tools and how to seek help and report concerns, including cyberbullying and online grooming.
- Embedding the actions for protecting children in physical and online environments in the day-to-day life of the school.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Boroondara Park PS, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and we actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community ([PROTECT Child Safe Standard 1](#)):

- Contact Indigenous families for input into school processes.
- Acknowledgement of Country at all events, meetings and important school occasions.
- Make connection with a Wurundjeri person who has permission to share knowledge and give information. This will support us to learn more about culture.

- Acknowledge and/or celebrate cultural dates, including Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Days.
- Acknowledgement in the school foyer – plaque – snaicc.org.au and they have plaques. KMT (parent) to follow up – Wurundjeri plaque.
- Review units of study to embed indigenous perspectives in a meaningful way (Narragunnawali platform – search and use resources)
- Review Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy; Bullying Prevention Policy and Inclusion and Diversity Policy with this standard as a focus.

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Boroondara Park PS, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and to understand their rights and responsibilities.

We reinforce respectful relationships between students and encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging, through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our Rights and Responsibilities, our school values, Care, Learn and Share pastoral care groups and embedded child-inclusive practices.

We inform students of their rights through our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, and equip them with the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on safety concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns to the class teacher, the Principal or Child Safety Champions from the school office.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress. We will also:

- inform students about all their rights, including their rights to safety, information, and participation
- recognise the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help students feel safe and connected
- develop a culture that encourages student participation
- give students opportunities to participate, and respond to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- develop student-friendly documents, drafted in accessible, age-appropriate language eg Child Safe Code of Conduct, as well as other forms of effective communication with students.

Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Boroondara Park PS we are committed to providing families and the school community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- seeking input from families and the community, including through the parent portal, school website, newsletters, school council and its subcommittees, student, staff and parent meetings
- making all of our child safety policies and procedures available on the school website (www.bpark.vic.edu.au) and at the school reception
- informing families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters across the school
- nominating a child safety contact person for new enrolments and providing their details in induction materials and welcome packs, which also include information about child safety, the school's complaints processes and how to raise concerns.
- conducting school open days or hosting community events, such as a school fete or fair, to welcome families and the broader community.
- creating a welcoming environment at school reception, so community members and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto school grounds.
- organising interpreters and translations to engage families from non-English speaking backgrounds in conversations about the school's child safety strategies.
- asking families and carers about their preferred methods of communication, including email, social media, meetings and workshops, to inform the school's communications approach.
- incorporating child safety questions into parent and carer surveys to measure awareness and confidence in the school's child safety approach and to support ongoing improvement.
- hosting community workshops or parent forums on child safety and wellbeing topics, for example, Respectful Relationships or online safety.
- providing families with take-home information to help them to talk to their children about safety and wellbeing at home
- encouraging volunteer positions from families from diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

As a school we undertake the following to recognise the diversity of our students and community:

- Communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated. If incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, we address the incident in line with school policy.
- Inform students that they can raise any safety concerns or report incidents that occurred at school and outside the school.

- Engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe.
- Validate students' feelings. Students may feel that they have not been listened to or believed in the past.
- Discuss how students feel about sharing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Note that where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the wishes of the student that their information remain confidential.
- Respond to family violence in a way that is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- Provide staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying, discrimination and to develop trauma-informed practice.
- Compile a range of age-appropriate instructional materials for exploring differences and similarities in class including:
 - Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships resources
 - Books and resources that reflect diverse views and perspectives

Suitable staff and volunteers

At Boroondara Park PS, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#)

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done through annual performance review processes (Department of Education process and practices).

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our [Volunteers Policy](#), which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment
- other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

We will also offer further training appropriate to staff and volunteers' level of involvement in the school community, on topics such as:

- child safety (including family violence)
- mandatory reporting (annually through DE)
- responding to student sexual offending
- human rights and the rights of children
- diversity and inclusion
- harassment and bullying
- cultural safety
- privacy and information sharing.

We will direct staff to PROTECT for guidance on information to assist them to recognise indicators and risk factors of child harm, including harm caused by other children and young people; and the processes to follow if a concern is raised.

School council training and education

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Boroondara Park PS child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

Complaints and reporting processes

Boroondara Park PS fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding, which are documented in our school's [Complaints Policy](#) (draft).

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) must follow our [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#). Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) and [Bullying Prevention Policy](#) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Communications

Boroondara Park PS is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in our school newsletter and via parent portal
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- communication with students through Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships and child-friendly documents.

Privacy and information sharing

Boroondara Park PS collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

Review of child safety practices

At Boroondara Park PS, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community
- develop a register of existing child safe standard policies, noting the date the policy was approved, and schedule a review date every two years
- when required, develop a work plan and establish a working group led by the Principal and [child safety champion](#), to review and update policies and procedures
- monitor and manage child safety risks using a risk register
- determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures
- use complaints and incidents as a learning opportunity to inform continuous improvement.
- Identify ways to involve staff, volunteers, students, families and community members in review processes
- review complaints received and incidents reported for gaps, weaknesses or failures in policies
- make review findings and recommendations easy to access and understand
- include findings from child safety reviews in child safety training for staff and volunteers
- communicate review outcomes to students in accessible, age-appropriate ways
- inform the school community of any child safety policy changes
- use surveys, focus groups and discussions to review the accessibility and level of awareness of child-safe policies and procedures by students, families, staff and volunteers.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Related Department of Education policies

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)

- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

Policy status and review

Principal, Assistant Principal and Education Sub-committee are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy at least every 2 years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

Approval

Created date	June 10 th 2022
Consultation	Consultation on this policy is mandatory. Education Subcommittee Staff briefing/Team meeting Via parent portal for feedback/Newsletter School Council - June 21st
Endorsed by	Susanne Lowe Principal
Endorsed on	September 2024
Next review date	September 2025