

Park Orchards Primary School



**PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Volunteers Induction Pack

Dear Volunteer

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. Park Orchards Primary School values the many volunteers who assist in our classrooms/with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts/other events and programs. We value the volunteer work that parents, carers, guardians, aunts, uncles, grandparents etc contribute to our school. The purpose of this induction pack is to ensure all volunteers are familiar with our policies and procedures relating to child safety and understand the important role they play in maintaining and promoting the safety of our students.

Key Messages

- Park Orchards Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where diversity is supported, and students feel safe to bring their whole selves to school.
- Allegations and concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of our school community will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- It is **mandatory** for all parents and volunteers to follow the required processes whilst volunteering on school premises or off-site such as excursions and sports events.
- Everyone has a role in ensuring children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, speak up. If you have any concerns about any inappropriate behaviours in the school community you should speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal. If this is not appropriate, you can contact the Inner East Melbourne Office of the Department of Education and Training at 1800 338 663.

INDUCTION MATERIALS

This induction pack contains the following documents that all new volunteers must read and familiarise themselves with.

- Volunteer Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Induction
- P.O.P.S. Volunteers Policy
- P.O.P.S. Parent Code of Conduct
- P.O.P.S. Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Obligations
- PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

To volunteer at POPS everyone requires a valid [Working With Children Check](#) and to have also completed a Department of Education Volunteer OH&S Induction.

CONTACT

We value your feedback on ways we can continue to improve and strengthen our child safety approach and encourage you to contact the Principal or the Assistant Principal with any comments or questions.

Kind regards

Bronwyn Garrity

(Principal)



PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL Volunteer Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Induction

All POPS volunteers must:

1. Read the Volunteer Handbook and related policies
2. Give consent to the Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement through Compass
3. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, P.O.P.S. is required to undertake suitability checks which include a Working With Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.
4. As part of the volunteer OHS induction process prior to the commencement of any service, volunteers are to report to the office upon arrival at the school.

Volunteers must sign in through the Compass kiosk prior to starting their work and a visitor's pass is to be issued and worn by the volunteer at all times while remaining on school premises.

On completion of their work, volunteers must sign out at the office when leaving the school site.

Required conduct/behaviour

All volunteers are expected to abide by the workplaces code of conduct while on site.

This includes:

- No smoking on school grounds or within four metres of an entrance to all Department workplaces.
- No alcohol or drugs are to be consumed on any Department premises. Any volunteer under the influence will be dismissed.
- No offensive language is permitted on any Department premises.
- Noise must be kept to a minimum. If this is not practicable, then non-urgent work should be scheduled outside of school hours, where possible.
- Possessions, materials, and equipment should be secured and not left unattended.
- Abide by the workplace's traffic management procedures.
- Entrance to other areas of the Department workplace aside from the work area is prohibited, unless otherwise agreed to.
- Remove all litter and debris from the workplace.
- Report any problems, hazards, or incidents to the principal or their delegate.
- Dress appropriately and wear the correct personal protective equipment suitable.
- No pets are permitted on Department premises.

Traffic Management

Volunteers driving vehicles are to enter and exit the school grounds via the following locations:

- Bowmore Ave, Park Orchards

Vehicles entering school grounds must adhere to all traffic signage. Where there is no signage, vehicles are to move at a walking pace at all times. If a vehicle has limited visibility or mobility, a spotter should be used when the vehicle is in motion.

Volunteers are not to operate vehicles on, or around, school grounds during designated drop off/pick up times or during break times:

- Drop off: 8:45 am - 9:00 pm
- Recess: 10:40 am - 11:10 pm
- Lunch: 12:50 pm – 1:50 pm
- Pick up: 3:30 pm

Site-specific hazards

Asbestos

All schools are expected to have a Schools Asbestos Management Plan in the event of the discovery of suspected asbestos-containing material (ACM) or the accidental disturbance of existing ACM.

If ACM has been identified in the school, the following process must be followed prior to the commencement of work:

- The Asbestos Register MUST be checked at the time of sign-in when the proposed work involves drilling, scraping, sanding, sawing, or any other destructive process.
- If work is to be carried out in the vicinity of Asbestos Containing Material, the Asbestos Coordinator, Bronwyn Garrity 9876 1249 must be consulted prior to the commencement of work.
- Asbestos-containing material may only be removed by a licensed removalist.

Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods

If transporting hazardous substances or dangerous goods onto the site, the principal or their delegate must be informed. You must complete a Safe Work Method Statement or equivalent to outline the controls methods you will use to ensure that the risks of the hazardous substances and/or dangerous goods are managed.

Such controls may include, but are not limited to:

- the provision of Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
- correct labelling of containers
- correct storing and handling of containers
- correct disposal of any waste
- provision of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Animals/Wildlife

There is the potential to come into contact with domestic animals and wildlife while on this site. Should this occur, you must:

- not approach any domestic animals (e.g., dogs) or dangerous wildlife
- report the sighting of any domestic animals or dangerous wildlife to the principal or their delegate
- not reach into any holes or gaps in the buildings without first checking to see if it is safe.

Emergency Management

Emergency Procedures

On hearing the announcement and given instructions over the loud speaker:

- switch off all equipment
- proceed to the advised assembly area
- report to one of the wardens
- do not leave the assembly area until advised.

Leaving the Site in an Emergency

All volunteers are required to proceed to the evacuation point and remain there until given clearance to leave by the Incident Controller or principal or their delegate.

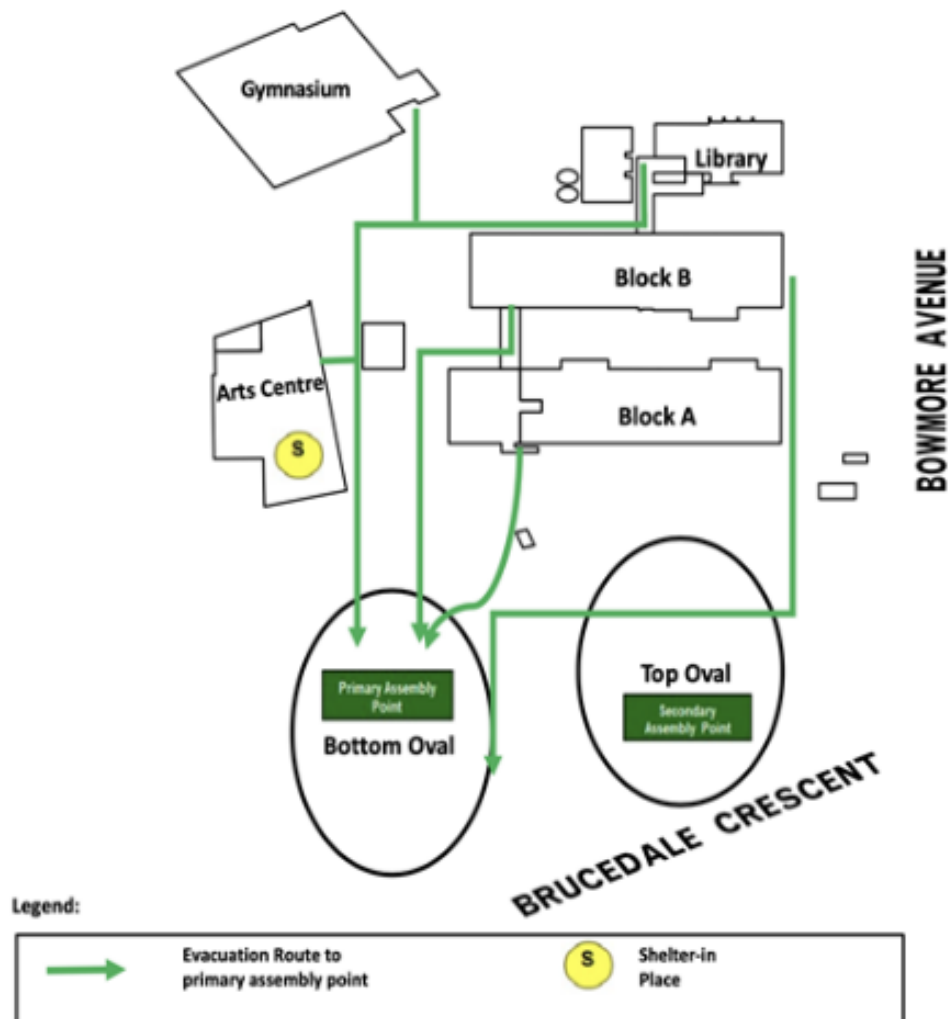
Evacuation Point

The onsite evacuation point is located at Oval; refer to the Evacuation Map

Bushfire At Risk School

P.O.P.S has been assessed to be at the highest risk of fire and has been placed on the department's Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR). On days when it has been deemed Catastrophic, the school will be closed.

Park Orchards Primary School Evacuation Diagram

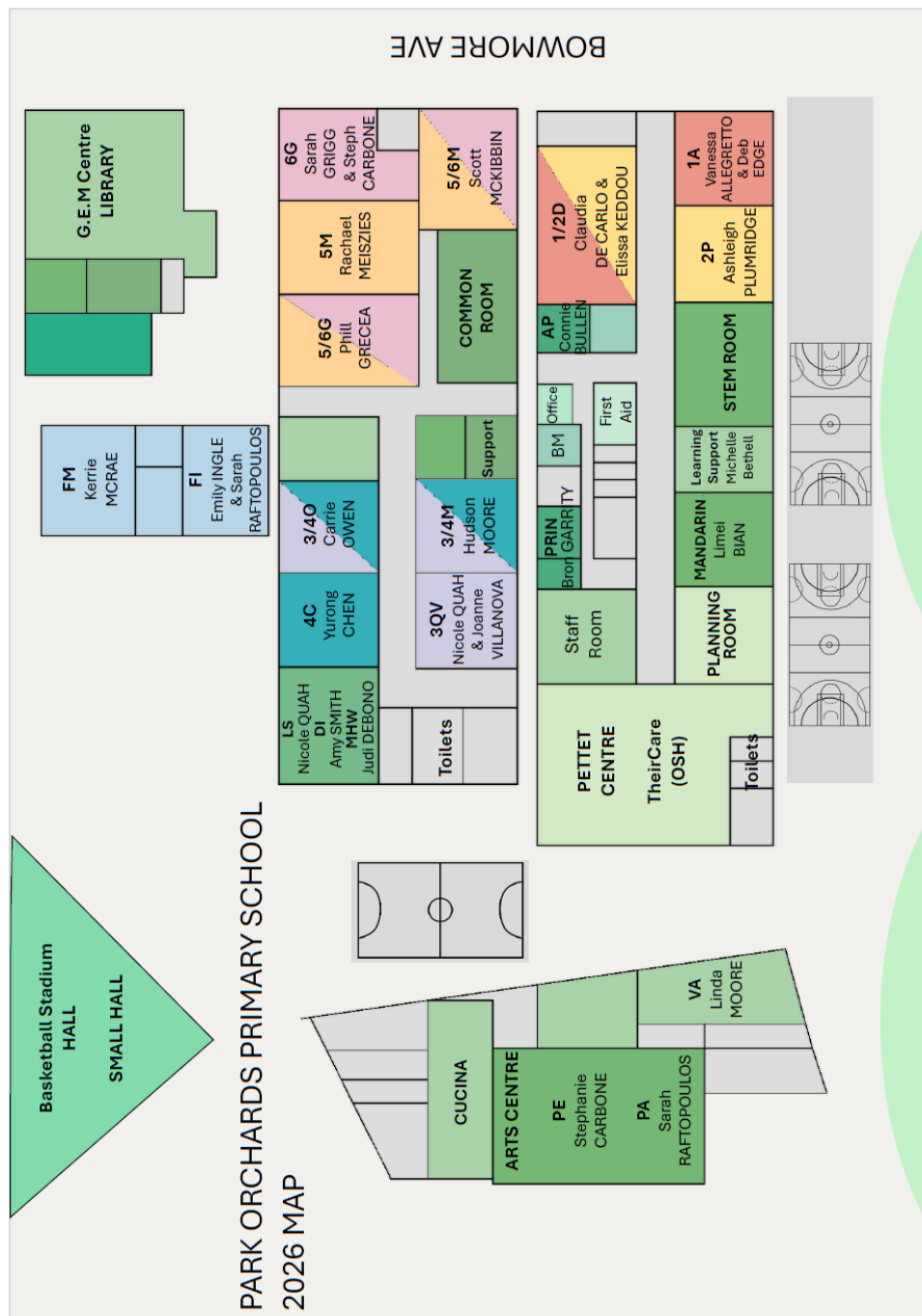


First Aid and Amenities

First Aid

In the event of an injury:

1. If the injury is not serious, report or escort the injured party to the administration office for assistance
2. If the injury is serious ring 000, do not wait for first aid officer
3. Stay with injured party. Send someone else to find the first aid officer or workplace manager
4. if no one else is available, ring the school number and inform the office that someone is injured at your location
5. If trained, apply first aid to the injured party
6. Once the incident is over, fill in an incident report at the office.





PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL Volunteers Policy

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Park Orchards Primary School (P.O.P.S) will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

DEFINITIONS:

Child-connected work: work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child-related work: As defined by the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), child-related work is work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Closely related family member: parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

Volunteer worker: A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in schoolwork or approved community work without payment or reward.

School work: School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer schoolwork in good faith.

POLICY

P.O.P.S is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. P.O.P.S also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that P.O.P. S's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to let their child's classroom teacher know if they would like to assist with the morning literacy program or excursions. They must ensure they have completed the parent helper literacy course and have their WWCC check registered with the Office. If they wish to assist with Parent Association events, they should let their class representative coordinator know and also need to ensure their WWCC check is registered with the Office.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

P.O.P.S values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms/with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, P.O.P.S is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity, and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that P.O.P.S is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card or Working with Children Check validation letter to the Office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps, cooking, gardening and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/community School Council members** sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our school may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

Non child-related work

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for looking after the chickens, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, other fundraising groups that meet in the evening during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At P.O.P.S, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Check.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the school council, we believe that it is important that our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Check.

Training and Induction

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonably likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Induction Pack and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, P.O.P.S may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

Management and Supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

The principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at P.O.P.S.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to P.O.P.S's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

Privacy and information-sharing

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the Schools' Privacy Policy and the Department's policy on Privacy and Information Sharing.

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school staff to:

- support the student's education, wellbeing and health;
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors;
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to: Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.

Records management

While it is unlikely volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the Assistant Principal to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: Records Management – Schools.

Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in schoolwork.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out schoolwork, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

Public liability insurance

The Department of Education and Training's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in schoolwork is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

P.O.P.S. policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- [Records Management – School Records](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

Policy last reviewed	February 2026
Consultation	Policy was reviewed and consulted on Feb 17, 2026 by the school council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2028



PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Parent Code of Conduct Policy

RATIONALE

Park Orchards Primary School welcomes community participation and values its input. Parents play a crucial role in the academic, social, emotional and physical development of their children. Our school is committed to ensuring that children feel happy, safe and secure, and have the maximum opportunity to learn. As members of the school community parents are expected to conduct themselves in a lawful, ethical, safe and responsible manner that recognises and respects the rights of others and the expertise, experience and qualifications of staff. The Parent Code of Conduct Policy provides statements which serve as a reminder to all members of the school community of their obligations as a member of the Park Orchards Primary School community. This policy applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, advocates and any others involved in activities or communication related to Park Orchards Primary School.

PURPOSE

The Parent Code of Conduct works along side the school values of Excellence, Respect, Integrity and Kindness. The health and welfare of all members of our school community is important. All children and school staff have the right to feel safe at school.

Parents/caregivers play a formative role in the development of a child's sense of justice, equity, and the dignity and worth of all members of our school community. They act as one of the most influential role-models within a child's life.

The responsibility for upholding the values of the school in this matter must fall on those with the greatest capacity to reason and control their actions. As such the adult community of our school is expected to model courteous behaviour and treat all members of the school community with respect and consideration.

GUIDELINES

As a minimum, all members of the school community are expected to behave with respect, civility and in the manner of a responsible citizen.

- There may be times when it is felt the actions of a member of the school community have infringed the rights of a child. Under no circumstances is a parent or guardian to approach another child, whilst they are in the care of our school, to discuss or chastise them because of their actions. Such an approach to the child may be seen to be an assault on the child and may have legal consequences. In addition to this, direct parent/parent contact should be avoided when there has been an incident at the school involving their child/children.
- It is appropriate to approach the class teacher in the first instance to seek their intervention in bringing about an equitable and peaceful solution to the situation. If the situation remains unresolved, an approach should be made to the Team Leader and then the school Principal.

- Bullying has no place within our community and as such will not be tolerated. This is as true for adult-to-adult interaction as it is for child-to-child. All interactions between members of our community must be in keeping with the values espoused by the school and school policies. Instances of bullying must quickly be brought to the attention of the Classroom Teacher, Team Leader or Principal in line with our policy.
- The Park Orchards Primary School community should ensure that everyone within the school community is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. Respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. Therefore, inappropriate use of social media regarding Park Orchards Primary School will not be tolerated.
- In order to help protect peoples' good name, problems, differences of opinion and personality clashes are not resolved by involving other people in a disagreement or by taking sides in the argument. We will attempt to resolve these issues through calm dialogue between the parties directly involved whilst respecting the dignity of each and every person.
- There is an expectation that people working within the school as "volunteers" avoid forming opinions on other students or sharing their opinions with the broader community.

IMPLEMENTATION

Conflict Resolution

- Respect and dignity will be accorded to all members of the school community, staff and all children at Park Orchards Primary School.
- Any conflict on school grounds will be dealt with in a mature and appropriate manner in accordance with existing school and DET procedures. Where students are concerned, an approach to the school will be made in the first instance.
- Every effort will be made to listen to the grievances of all parties in a calm and rational manner without recourse to involvement to outside parties who are not directly involved.
- Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or school matters. Parents should ensure that they raise their issues and concerns with the right person and follow the correct communication channels. Refer to the School Complaints Policy which is available on the Park Orchards Primary School Website.

Communication

In General

Parents will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications with students, staff and other parents and members of the school community. No profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language may be used.

- Parents will act in the best interests of students, their families and staff members. They will not engage in malicious or judgemental gossip, and should ensure that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.
- We value our diverse community and respect the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. We respect points of view that are different from our own and all members of our

community must refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment, discrimination or vilification.

With School Staff

All school staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of the students as well as staff themselves. Parents should therefore ensure that their interactions with staff do not create unnecessary stress and anxiety. To ensure this, the following practice is in place at Park Orchards Primary School:

- The priority for school staff is the welfare and education of all students in the school. School staff are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Responses are not expected outside normal working hours or during school holidays unless it is an emergency.
- The time available for parents to meet with staff is limited and must not disrupt the classroom. Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time, communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency.

With Students

As members of the school community parents can support the students in learning and encourage them to always try their best. This can be modelled by:

- Sharing our knowledge, learning and experiences with the students,
- Praising the students and encouraging them for all their efforts,
- Encouraging the development of 'enquiring minds',
- Recognising our own and encouraging the student's individuality,
- Ensuring that our children are 'equipped' to learn by:
 - Providing appropriate items that supports the learning opportunities & if unsure to see the student's teacher,
 - Ensuring that you support the school in its curriculum priorities and value-adding programs,
 - Encourage decision making and let the students make their own mistakes ('risk taking') and learn for themselves,
 - Encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle,
 - Setting realistic and achievable goals.
 - Being confident to show the students that we can have a go.
- Taking an interest in our children's school work,
 - Encouraging and supporting the students to complete their homework,
 - Asking the students about their day.
- Be happy, confident and positive. Show and encourage a passion for life.

With Other Parents

Parents will respect the privacy of other parents' email addresses and will not send unsolicited emails or "spam" to other parents nor forward other parents' email addresses without their permission. The school will not give out the email address of parents without permission. Class representatives or activity organisers will not pass on parent email addresses without permission.

On School Grounds

Where possible parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the school community and support school-based events. Whilst on school grounds parents are asked to adhere to the following:

- Treat all school property with care,
- Respect school policies that support the safe and effective operations of the school and its community,
- Follow the parking rules,
- All visitors to the school during school hours must sign a visitors' register located at the school office and parents will comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at Park Orchards Primary School,
- When attending any kind of school assembly or public meeting, parents will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff and will refrain from creating any noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors,
- A parent may not interrupt or distract a teacher while classroom instruction or learning activities are underway,
- When visiting a classroom, parents accept the authority of the teacher and that they are in attendance on the teacher's terms. Teachers value parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave for any reason, such as:
 - Parental assistance not being required,
 - Parental presence in the classroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to a student or teacher,
 - The parent is not in control of their emotions.

Physical Safety

In particular, all school parents and carers must not:

- Use any object (whether as a weapon or otherwise) to threaten or intimidate an other person,
- Cause injury to any person by the use of any such object.
- Be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol or illegal drugs.

Any parent or school community member who invites a relative, friend, support, carer or other person to be present at any official school activity held by or for the benefit of the school and its students must at all times be responsible for that person and ensure they act at all times in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct.

Consequences of a Breach of the Parent Code of Conduct

Any parent, member of school staff or student may notify the Principal or Assistant Principal of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. The Principal or Assistant Principal will investigate the complaint and if satisfied that a breach has occurred:

- (a) provide a first and/or final warning that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated;

(b) determine whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstances, to an individual or group of individuals;

(c) where the breach concerned unacceptable behaviour on a visit to the school, issue a trespass warning to the parent, which, if the behaviour continues, may accelerate to a trespass notice requiring the parent to stay away from the school.

Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of the language an expression used or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.

Correspondence which is defined as “vexatious” according to the Complaints Policy will not be responded to.

Nothing in this Policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.

Right of Appeal

This policy will apply to any decisions made by the School Council and Principal under this Code of Conduct and decisions may be appealed using the school’s procedures for complaints and resolutions.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Department of Education Guidelines on a 4 yearly cycle.

This Policy works in conjunction with:

1. POPS Child Safety Policy
2. POPS Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. POPS Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
4. eSmart Policy
5. POPS Complaints and Raising Concerns Policy
6. POPS Duty of Care Policy



PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safety and Wellbeing

APPENDIX A

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS RELATING TO REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The following information outlines the various legal obligations relating to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

It is important to note that the procedures outlined in the above policy ensure compliance with the below reporting obligations, and also include additional steps to ensure compliance with Department policy and our school's duty of care obligations.

Mandatory reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection

The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic):

- registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including principals and school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT)
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare coordinators, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff
- nurses
- registered psychologists
- police officers
- registered medical practitioners
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- people in religious ministry
- midwives

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents or carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at P.O.P.S. to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal or any other mandatory reporter does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

If charged with not making a mandatory report, it may be a defence for the person charged to prove that they honestly and reasonably believed that all of the reasonable grounds for their belief had been the subject of a report to child protection made by another person.

The identity of a person who reports any protective concerns to DFFH Child Protection is protected by law. It is an offence for a person, other than the person who made the report, to disclose the name of the person who made a report or any information that is likely to lead to their identification.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually. We also require/encourage all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to discuss their concerns with the school leadership team and to report their concerns to DFFH and in some circumstances to Victoria Police, or to ensure that all the information relevant to the report has been made by another school staff member.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection even if they are not a mandatory reporter listed above.

Reporting student wellbeing concerns to Child FIRST/Orange Door

At P.O.P.S. we also encourage staff to make a referral to Child FIRST/Orange Door when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST/Orange Door see the Policy and Advisory Library: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

Reportable Conduct

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focussed on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children.

There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*:

- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of, a child
- sexual misconduct (which includes grooming) against, with or in the presence of, a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of, a child
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child.

A reportable conduct allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that **may** involve reportable conduct.

If school staff or volunteers become aware of reportable conduct by any current or former employee, contractor or volunteer, they must notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they must notify the Regional Director.

The principal or regional director must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former employees of the school (including Department, allied health, casual and school council employees), contractors and volunteers (including parent volunteers).

- Employee Conduct Branch: 03 7022 0005 or employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au

The Department's Secretary, through the Manager, Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

For more information about reportable conduct see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library*: [Reportable Conduct](#) and the Commission for Children and Young People's [website](#).

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000, local police station or the Police Assistance Line 131 444) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

"Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes:

- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- where the information has already been disclosed to Victoria Police and you have no further information to add (for example, through a mandatory report to DFFH Child Protection or a report to Victoria Police from another member of school staff).

Failure to protect offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

Further information

For more information about the offences and reporting obligations outlined in this fact sheet refer to: [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

APPENDIX B: MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE

Important information for staff

When managing a disclosure relating to child abuse you should:

- listen to the student and allow them to speak
- stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals, and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you")
- Take prompt action in relation to following the procedures outlined below.

When managing a disclosure you should AVOID:

- displaying expressions of panic or shock
- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
- going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault
- making any promises you will keep the information the student provided confidential
- making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).



PARK ORCHARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Park Orchards Primary School (P.O.P.S) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of P.O.P.S will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of P.O.P.S will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

PURPOSE

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Park Orchards Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As Park Orchards Primary School, staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to **Ms Garrity and Mrs Bullen**.
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.

- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As Park Orchards Primary School, staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work **we must not:**

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts)
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

BREACHES TO THE CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

All Park Orchards Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education and Training Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Park Orchards Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal and [insert name, position, contact details – as relevant].

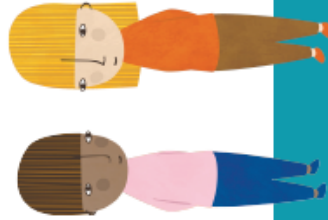
If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, **Ms Garrity**.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Created date	September 30, 2024
Consultation	Policy was reviewed and consulted on September 30, 2024 by the school council
Endorsed by	Principal
Endorsed on	October 1, 2024
Next review date	September 2026

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse



YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.

- You must act, by following the 4 critical actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You must act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- You must use the *Responding to Suspected Child Abuse* template to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

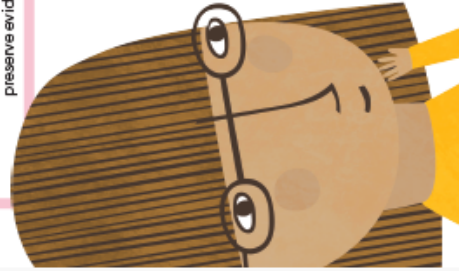
* A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:
- separating alleged victims and others involved
 - administering first aid
 - calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
 - identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.



2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE

You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police.

You must also report internally to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School Principal and/or leadership team
 - Employee Conduct Branch
 - DET Security Services Unit
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School Principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School Principal and/or school chairperson

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- In need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE

You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You must also report internally to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

You must also report to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- DET Security Services Unit

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

You must also report to:

- School Principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

You must also report to:

- School Principal and/or chairperson

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you must still act.

This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a *Student Support Plan* in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include:

development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

You must follow the *Four Critical Actions* every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

AREA

North Division 1300 664 9777

South Division 1300 655 795

East Division 1300 360 391

West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599

West Division (Metro) 1300 664 9777

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

CHILD FIRST

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station

DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT

(03) 9589 6266

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

(03) 9637 2934

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE

Melbourne (03) 9267 0228

Ballarat (03) 5337 7135

Sale (03) 5622 6600

Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

VICTORIA

(03) 9825 7200