



CHILD SAFE POLICY

Rationale

Yering Primary School is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

Aims

The school aims to:

- Support and respect all children, as well as staff and volunteers
- Ensure the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- Have zero tolerance of child abuse
- Commit to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability
- Empower children as vital and active participants in the school
- Promote diversity and tolerance
- Train staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse
- Take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children.
- Ensure that decisions made when recruiting and assessing incidents will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence
- Comply with legislative responsibilities
- Proactively manage risks of abuse to our children

Implementation

The school will:

- Involve children when making decisions, especially about matters directly affecting them.
- Promote diversity and tolerance at school, including:
 - Cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
 - Cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse background
 - Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers agree to abide by the school code of conduct which specifies the standard of conduct required when working with children.
- Train and support staff to:
 - Identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse
 - Develop their skills to protect children from abuse, promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability

- Supervise new employees and volunteers to ensure they understand the school's commitment to child safety and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.
- Demonstrate the school's commitment to child safety and awareness of social and legislative responsibilities in selection criteria and advertisements for school staff
- Require all teachers to have a successful police record check. All other people engaged in the school, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.
- All allegations of abuse and safety concerns will be recorded on an incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. If an allegation or safety concern is raised, updates will be provided to children and families on progress and any actions the school takes.
- Take its legal responsibilities seriously, including:
 - Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police
 - Failure to protect: People of authority in the school understand that they are committing an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so
 - All personnel who are **mandatory reports** must comply with their duties
- Ensure that risk management strategies are in place to assist in identifying, assessing, and taking steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (e.g. any doors that can lock), and online environments (e.g. no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in the school on social media)
- When an adult at the school has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to a reasonable belief may be:
 - A child states they or someone they know has been abused
 - Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
 - Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
 - Observing suspicious behaviour