

# CHILD SAFETY

## POLICY

### **Rationale/Commitment:**

Underbool Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Underbool Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

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

Every person involved in Underbool Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

### **Definition:**

Child abuse is an act by an adult (person over 18 years) which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time. This may include **Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional abuse and Neglect.**

### **Aims:**

In its planning, decision-making and operations Underbool Primary School aims to;

- Provide an educational environment which recognises, values and builds student wellbeing.
- Develop students who are physically and emotionally healthy.
- Commit to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- Prevent child abuse and identify risks early, and remove and reduce these risks.
- Provide support in all school environments; physical and online.
- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

References: Child safe standards website (all schools): [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards)  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards\\_Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards_Children,_Youth_and_Families_Act_2005). [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)

### **Implementation:**

- Underbool Primary School adheres to the DET human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers to ensure we support and respect all children, we are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We will provide a safe environment for children with a disability.
- Underbool Primary School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation in decision making, listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
- Underbool Primary School staff, volunteers, parents/carers and students will be encouraged to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- Inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)
- We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete.
- We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form<sup>1</sup>, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.
- If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.
- All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.
- Underbool Primary School will support the community in understanding their responsibility – that all adults in Victoria who have 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.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters will comply with their duties.
- Underbool Primary School has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).
- Underbool Primary School staff takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly using the Step-by-Step Guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child First, DET Mandatory Reporting guidelines, call 000 or contacting the DET Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit (24 hrs) 0396372936.

**Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed every two years or following an incident.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

**August 2016**

# Incident report

This report can be provided staff. to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern.

All incident reports must be stored securely.

## Incident details

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

**Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

*(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)*

No

Yes, Aboriginal

Yes, Torres Strait Islander

**Please categorise the incident**

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please describe the incident**

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	
What did you see?	
Other information	

**Parent/carer/child use**

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	

Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

**Office use:**

Date incident report received:	
Staff member managing incident:	
Follow-up date:	
Incident ref. number:	

**Has the incident been reported?**

Child protection	
Police	
Another third party (please specify):	

**Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?**

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes  No

**Further information**

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

Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)>. In particular, [An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](#), has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)>

**Note for registered schools:** a forthcoming Ministerial Order under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* will contain the minimum actions that schools must take to meet each of the child safe standards. There will be a lead in time before regulation will commence to allow schools time to prepare. The Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority will provide information and materials specifically for schools to assist with capacity building and compliance.

**Registered schools** can contact the Department of Education and Training: [child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Early childhood services operating under the *National Quality Framework* or *Children's Services Act 1996* should contact: [licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

# Child Safe Code of Conduct

Underbool Primary School 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 of Underbool Primary School 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 of Underbool Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

## Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, 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 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 are telling you 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 and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership.
- 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 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
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting

- treat a child 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 school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

This Code of Conduct was endorsed/approved by the Underbool Primary School – School Council on for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2018.