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Cranbourne Park Primary School Child Safe Policy

Purpose

The Cranbourne Park Primary School Child Safe Policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards. The policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. Staff, volunteers and contractors must agree to abide by the Cranbourne Park Primary School Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. The policy and code of conduct apply across all school settings and outside of school hours.

Commitment to Child Safety

Cranbourne Park Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Cranbourne Park Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse. Cranbourne Park 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 Cranbourne Park 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.

Principles for Child Safety

In its planning, decision-making and operations Cranbourne Park Primary School will:

- 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
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

Procedures

The School Council of Cranbourne Park Primary School has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and must ensure that appropriate and effective Policies and Procedures are in place. The School Council is also responsible for ensuring that a Child Protection Code of Conduct is in place.

The Principal of Cranbourne Park Primary School is responsible for:

- Dealing with and the initial investigating of reports of child abuse
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct
- Ensuring that all adults within the Cranbourne Park Primary School community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety)
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities

All teachers must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities

Teachers should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff, volunteers and contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Cranbourne Park Primary School's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements

- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the School)
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety

The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and the behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Human resources practices and training

Cranbourne Park Primary School applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Applicants for a role as a teacher at Cranbourne Park Primary School must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Cranbourne Park Primary School may require applicants to provide an up to date police check in accordance with the law, before their employment commences and at regular intervals during their service with the school.

Cranbourne Park Primary School will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure. Once engaged, staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Cranbourne Park Primary School has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns and reporting these concerns to DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency.

Cranbourne Park Primary School takes all allegations of child abuse seriously and staff are expected to follow school procedures thoroughly and quickly. We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an

incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- 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.

In situations where the principal or member of the school leadership team is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

All staff, visitors or contractors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the principal or a member of the school leadership team who will then report the concern to the appropriate external regulatory body.

Risk reduction and management

Cranbourne Park Primary School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. We have 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 on social media).

Listening to children

Cranbourne Park Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers) informed about progress.

Confidentiality and privacy

Cranbourne Park Primary School collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy.

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.



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Cranbourne Park Primary School Child Safe Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers and visitors are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards, and in the company of, children.

The Principal and school leaders of Cranbourne Park Primary School will support the 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 Cranbourne Park 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 the expectations for appropriate behaviour detailed below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Cranbourne Park Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect, 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 or wellbeing officer (who has been appointed as the school's child safety officer)
- 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
- ensuring as far as practicable that children are not left alone with adults
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

Cranbourne Park Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually 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
- exhibit behaviours with children that may be construed as unnecessary physical
- put children at risk of abuse
- do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- 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 extracurricular 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.



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Cranbourne Park Primary School Reporting and Responding to Allegations Policy

What to do when an allegation of child abuse is made.

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:

- Separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, that it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police
- Do not make promises to the child, such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your manager or your organisation's child safety officer, police or child protection
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern:

- Explain that your organisation has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the organisation's management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe

- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely

Staff need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. Staff need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present. If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.

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