



# **SORRENTO PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD SAFE POLICY, PROCEDURES AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Ratified: October 24<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Due for Review: October 2019**

## **PURPOSE**

The 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.

## **SCOPE**

The Child Safe Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and others whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. The policy applies across a range of forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours. Camp Quality (provider of Outside School Hours Care) will be made aware of the policy and the school's underlying philosophy towards the care of children.

## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES**

Sorrento Primary School embraces the values of Respect, Learning, Integrity, Collaboration, Persistence and Resilience. *We aim to provide a collaborative and dynamic learning environment where students will develop literacy, numeracy and life skills that will assist them in becoming valued and active participants of the Local and Global Community.*

In support of this at Sorrento Primary School, we have a zero tolerance for child abuse.

Sorrento 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.

Sorrento 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 Sorrento 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 of every decision they make.

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

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;

7. 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;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Policies and Procedures outlining the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are detailed below.

### **A Child Safe Culture**

- The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.
- The school's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found in the following school policies: Student Inclusion, Engagement and Wellbeing Policy, Mandatory Reporting Policy, eSmart Policy and Procedures, Anti Bullying Policy and Procedures. These policies can be found on the website at <http://www.sorrentops.vic.edu.au/>.

### **Personnel Understand their Roles and Responsibilities**

- School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and 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**

- The 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.
- The school will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of the commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.
- All prospective staff are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check. Education and Support staff and volunteers must maintain a valid Working with Children Check.
- The school's approach to human resources practices that ensure child safety can be found in the following school policies: Visiting Artists Policy and Working with Children Check Policy. These policies can be found on the website at <http://www.sorrentops.vic.edu.au/>.

### **Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint**

- The 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 reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.
- The school's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found in the Mandatory Reporting Policy. This policy can be found on the website at <http://www.sorrentops.vic.edu.au/>.

### **Risk Reduction and Management**

- The 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.
- The school's approach to Child Safety risk reduction and management can be found in Appendix One in this policy.

## Listening to Children

- The 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

- This 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.

## Definitions

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

**Child abuse** includes—

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence or
  - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
  - serious neglect of a child.

**Child-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

## Related Policies and Documents

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)

[School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)



## **SORRENTO PRIMARY SCHOOL'S CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT**

Sorrento 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 and school leaders of Sorrento Primary School will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Sorrento 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 we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety and the school's Child Safe Policy at all times.
- 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.

### **Resources**

#### **Risk Management – Appendix 1**

See [Additional Guidance for School Staff](#) for aligning the Child Safety Code of Conduct to other professional codes.

## SORRENTO PRIMARY RISK ASSESSMENT – APPENDIX ONE

At Sorrento Primary School our process includes risk assessment (see matrix below), implementation of controls and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
Lack of organisational culture of child safety	Child safety code of conduct  Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed</li> <li>Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available</li> </ul>	Principal	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct  Clear child safety reporting procedures  Performance management procedures  Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed</li> </ul>	Principal	Low
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety  Clear child safety	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module</li> </ul>	Principal	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
	reporting procedures						
Children alone with one other person unsupervised	<p>Child safety code of conduct</p> <p>Working with Children Check</p> <p>Volunteers working with children within line of sight of teaching staff</p> <p>Induction for all staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors</p> <p>Clear windows to allow for visibility</p>	Rare	Severe	Medium	<p>Processes updated to require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes in relation to supervising volunteers/visitors reviewed with staff.</li> </ul>	Principal	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	<p>Processes updated to require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criminal history search</li> <li>Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety</li> </ul>	Principal	Low
Engagement with children online	<p>Child safety code of conduct</p> <p>Strategies developed to embed culture of</p>	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing review of policies</li> <li>Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies</li> </ul>	Principal	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
	<p>child safety</p> <p>eSmart Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology discussed with staff, students and community annually.</p> <p>Students trained to be safe in an online environment.</p> <p>Staff trained to detect inappropriate behaviours.</p>						
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	<p>Child safety code of conduct</p> <p>Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety</p> <p>Clear child safety reporting procedures</p>	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks</li> </ul>	Principal	Low
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	<p>Child safe environments</p> <p>Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors</p>	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresher training for frequent contractors</li> </ul>	Principal	Low



Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
	Adequate monitoring						

## Child Safety Risks and Risk Management Strategies

The list below comprises an inventory of potential child safety risk and risk management strategies.

### Risks

- Lack of an organisational culture of child safety
- Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues
- Natural trust of long term employees
- Children alone with one other person unsupervised
- Recruitment of an inappropriate person
- Inappropriate behaviour not reported
- Harassment via email, SMS or other media
- Unsupervised recreational or other activities
- Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)
- Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues
- Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps
- False allegations

### Risk Management Strategies

- Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy
- Child safety code of conduct
- Child safety reporting procedures
- Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour
- Counselling and other resources
- Clear windows to enable visibility of occupants
- Non-lockable doors in hot spots
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks
- Supervision or monitoring of activities

- Performance management procedures
- Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety
- Criminal history checks