



# Glendal Primary School Child Safe Environment Policy

## GLENDAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

### CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

#### **Purpose**

The Child Safe Environment 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 policy will apply to all staff, volunteers, service providers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

The policy will apply across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, excursions, online) and for school forums outside of school hours.

Partner organisations, for example our sister schools, will be made aware of the policy and the school's underlying philosophy towards the care of children.

#### **Statement of Commitment & Principles**

Glendal Primary School is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We 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.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff are within Department of Education guidelines and adhere to current relevant legislation.

We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of all children, including Aboriginal and children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team and staff to achieve these commitments.

All volunteers are required to hold a Working With Children check and are supervised by a qualified staff member.

### **Legislative requirements**

Since the publication of Betrayal of Trust, the first priority of the Victorian Government has been the immediate safety of children. The Victorian Government has introduced three new criminal offences to further protect children from abuse.

The three new offences are:

- a grooming offence which targets communication, including online communication, with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse
- a failure to disclose offence that requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child (unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so)
- a failure to protect offence that applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so

### **Policy and procedures**

- Policies and procedures outlining school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below:
- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Critical Information for all staff
- Identifying signs of child abuse
- Role of a child Safety Officer
- Responding to other Concerns about the Wellbeing of a Child

### 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 on the website at <http://www.glendalps.vic.edu.au/parent-information>

### Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/ Code of conduct

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 Child Safety Code of Conduct and Statement of Values 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. 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 register with the VIT for teachers and for all other staff who are not teachers to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

The school adheres to Department of Education and Training human resources practices that ensure child safety.

### 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 policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the website at <http://www.glendalps.vic.edu.au/parent-information>

### 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 on the website at <http://www.glendalps.vic.edu.au/parent-information>

### Listening to children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/ caregiver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers 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 parent/carer) 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 every three years in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. It will be published on the school's website.
- The review will include input from students, parents and the school community.

### **Definitions**

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

#### **1. Child abuse** which is -

- 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.

**2. 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.

**3. 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.

**4. 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).

**5. 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);

**Related policies and documents**

- School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care
- School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations
- DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework
- School Privacy Policy