

## CHILD SAFE POLICY

### RATIONALE

Thomastown West 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.

Thomastown West Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Thomastown West 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 Thomastown West 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.

Child abuse includes:

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

### BROAD GUIDELINES:

Our policy is guided by the Principles for Child Safety below.

In our planning, decision-making and operations Thomastown West 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.

### IMPLEMENTATION:

- All staff must complete the online Mandatory Reporting module annually.
- Encourage children to tell someone they trust if they are worried or are feeling unsafe.
- A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk (including if the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child). There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:
  - a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
  - a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
  - someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused
  - a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused.
  - the staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development
  - the staff member observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
  - a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

- Staff do not require the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.

**Recruitment:**

1. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work will have a clear statement that sets out:
  - a) the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
  - b) the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
2. All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school will be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).
3. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school will make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
  - a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
  - b) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
  - c) the person's history of work involving children; and
  - d) references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
4. The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in steps (3)(a) to (3)(d), above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
5. The school will ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
  - a) the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
  - b) monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.

**EVALUATION:**

- This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the Thomastown West policy review cycle.