

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS POLICY

PURPOSE

Indie School is committed to creating and maintaining a school in which all children are safe from harm. Indie School has a zero tolerance of child abuse.

We understand and implement our duty of care to all students and we undertake reasonable measures of the proper supervision and protection so that no student faces risks, injury or harm. This duty of care extends to Indie School's students in on and off-site activities.

The child safe policy sets out the principles and framework governing the school's behaviours and activities that enact the child safe standards and which aim to keep all children safe from harm. The policy, together with the policy implementation documents listed on the last page of this document, must be read and understood by all those connected to the school.

PRINCIPLES

1. The school, those that work in it and its wider community together have a duty of care to protect children from harm through abuse or neglect.
2. The school is committed to ensure that this duty is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of the school and that children are safe.
3. In discharging its duty of care, the school is committed to take account of the diversity of all students, including the needs of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

1. To protect students in our care from abuse.
2. To create and maintain a culture of child protection within the school and its community.
3. To comply with the Child Safe Standards as set out in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015:
 - a. Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements;
 - b. Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety;
 - c. Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behavior with children;
 - d. Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel;
 - e. Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
 - f. Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse; and
 - g. Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.
4. To comply with the specific requirements as set out in Ministerial Order 870.

LEGAL AND REGULARLY BASIS FOR COMPLIANCE

1. Duty of Care
2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 (Vic.)
3. Ministerial Order 870 January 2016 (Vic.)
4. Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards: mandated registration requirements
5. Crimes Act 1958 (amended) (Vic.)
6. Betrayal of Trust Report 2014 (Vic.)
7. Working with Children Act 2005

KEY DEFINITIONS

1. '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.
2. 'Child abuse' includes:
 - a. Any act committed against a child involving;
 - i. A sexual offence; or
 - ii. An offence under section 498(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
 - iii. Serious neglect of a child.
3. Ministerial Order 870 defines a 'child' as a child enrolled as a student at the school.
4. 'Child connected work' means work authorised by or on behalf of the governing board and performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
5. 'The school environment' means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the governing board for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:
 - a. A campus of the school;
 - b. Online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
 - c. Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school campus, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

SCOPE

This policy applies to members of the governing board (as individual members of the board as well as to the board as an entity), the principal, all school staff, volunteers, contracted service providers and ministers of religion working in the school environment.

The application of this policy also sets out the schools expectations of parents, visitors and older students and the part they play in ensuring the safety of children in the school.

The school's duty of care is non-delegable. This policy applies when children are learning with an external provider.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The governing board is responsible for authorising the child safe standards policy, for overseeing its implementation and for managing the risk of child abuse.
2. The principal is responsible for the culture of the school in which this policy is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of the school and that children are safe.
3. The principal is also responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements for child safety (including, without limitation, clear and comprehensive policies, procedures, accountability mechanisms and communication strategies) are implemented, monitored and reviewed within the school.
4. The designated [**Child Safety Officer – Deputy Principal**] is responsible for implementing the school's child safe standards policy and the mandated requirements of Ministerial Order 870. Staff may seek advice from the Child Safety Officer if they have concerns about child safe matters and when considering whether to make a report about a child in need of protection.
5. All staff, contractors and volunteers have a duty of care to protect children from harm and a responsibility to comply with the school's child safe standards policies and procedures.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Duty of Care
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Pastoral Care
- Staff Code of Conduct (Vic)
- Privacy Policy
- Complaints Policy & Procedure

COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

The school will make regular and frequent public statements to demonstrate its commitment to child safety and to raise an awareness of the school community's collective responsibility to ensure all children are safe from harm.

This policy will be made publically available on the school's website, and from the school office.

The school will put in place arrangements to ensure that the school community (including applicants for jobs) is informed about the school's child safe standards policies, procedures and allocated roles and responsibilities.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DOCUMENTS

The documents setting out the strategies and actions required to implement this policy are:

- a. Child Safe Standards checklist
- b. Child Safe Standards reporting procedures
- c. Reporting flow chart, including mandatory reporting
- d. Strategic plan to embed a culture of child safety in the school
- e. Strategic plan to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse, including grooming
- f. Detailed roles and responsibilities for implementing the school's child safe standards policy
- g. Communication plan to inform the school community about the school's child safe standards policies and procedures, allocated roles and responsibilities
- h. Child Safe Standards policy review procedures
- i. Child Safe Standards implementation monitoring and review procedures
- j. Code of Conduct
- k. School staff recruitment, supervision and management checklist
- l. Training policy to include training in the school's child safe standards policy
- m. Training and guidance in recognising the signs and indications of child abuse and grooming
- n. Strategic plan to promote child empowerment and participation