

Child Safety Policy

BRUNSWICK EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY

Rationale

Brunswick East Primary School is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at Brunswick East Primary School is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Brunswick East Primary School is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexuality, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

The school has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Brunswick East Primary School is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility of the whole school community including, staff, contractors, associates, and parents/carers.

The school will promote The Child Safety Standards required by Ministerial Order 870 in ways that are readily assessable, easy to understand, and user friendly to students.

The school supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers and acknowledges their cultural diversity. The school is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and will provide a safe environment for children living with a disability.

All allegations will be treated seriously.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Aboriginal child a person under the age of 18 who is, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act, which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Volunteer means a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.

Objectives

- To prevent child abuse within Brunswick East Primary School.
- To empower all students at Brunswick East Primary School.
- To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
- To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide a clear statement to staff, volunteers, contractors, forbidding any such abuse.
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers, contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
- To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.
- Educating staff on the prevention and detection of child abuse.

Child Safety Implementation and Procedures

Responsibilities

The Principal has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.

The **Principal** is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse.
- Ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures including a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place and the community is informed.
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and BEPS Duty of Care Policy.
- Ensuring that all adults within the Brunswick East Primary School community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual or physical 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.
- Promote child safety at all times.
- Assessing the risk of child abuse within the school and eradicating or minimising any risk to the extent possible.
- Educating employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse.
- Facilitating the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Informing the school community about the **Child Safety Policy** in the newsletter and on the website.
- Developing strategies to embed child safety at the school.

The **school** will develop strategies to empower students about:

- Standards of behavior for students attending the school,
- Healthy and respectful relationships including sexuality,
- Resilience,
- Child abuse and awareness.

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

- Be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within the school and be alert for any indications of such conduct.
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Brunswick East 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 principal, police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Reasonable grounds for belief, is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- The child is in need of protection,
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury",
- The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;

- A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

New Staff

Brunswick East Primary School undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff, which aims to promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation. The school will make reasonable efforts to gather:

- Working with Children Check status, or similar check.
- Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.
- The person's history of work involving children.
- References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with the school must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

The school will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

The school will ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:

- The induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work; and
- Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child-connected work.
- Once engaged staff must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Child Safety Policy.

Volunteers

The school will require volunteers to provide a Working with Children check before they commence working at Brunswick East Primary School and during their time with Brunswick East Primary School at regular intervals.

Once engaged, staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Child Safety Policy.

Once engaged volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Child Safety Policy.

Risk Management

Brunswick East Primary School will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach through its:

- Employment of New Personnel
- Use of team teaching in a Learning Community to develop team responsibility for all students
- Procedure for all visitors to sign in at the front office
- Requirement for all visitors and contractors to have a current Working With Children card
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware that some instrumental lessons are 1:1
- Camps will be staffed by teachers and not parents

Brunswick East Primary School will have a risk register for camps.

Reporting

All staff members, volunteers and contractors who have grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the principal about their concern.

In situations where the principal 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 North West regional director.

Principals must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or student sexual assault must **follow, step-by-step the flowchart for [Responding to Allegations of Student Sexual Assault](#)**. This is a Department policy and a **mandatory requirement of all Principals**.

Mandatory Reporting Obligations

The table below sets out the key features of each state and territory's mandatory reporting duties.

	LEGISLATION	MANDATED REPORTERS	WHEN MUST A REPORT BE MADE?	WHO IS A CHILD?
VIC	<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i>	Any person 18 years or older	A mandated reporter must make a report if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years. NB: exceptions may apply.	A person under 16 years old
	<i>Children, Youth and Families Act</i>	Registered medical	A mandated reporter must make a	A person under 17

	2005 (Vic)	practitioners, midwives and registered nurses Teachers registered or granted permission to teach under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 Principals Police	report if: They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse; The parents cannot or will not protect the child; and The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment. NB: exceptions may apply.	years old
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Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the Principal will consult with Department Education and Training policies and the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Principal may decide to conduct such an investigation with support from Department Education and Training legal services. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The Principal will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the Principal and Department Education and Training shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and / or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Brunswick East Primary School will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Adults involved in the investigation must keep accurate and detailed notes that are sent to the Principal as a record of the investigation.

All records will be kept securely in a locked archive.

Reviewing

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the school's care.

Related Documents

- [The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct](#)
- [The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics](#)
- [Responding to Student Sexual Assault](#)
- [Educational Reform Act 2006](#)
- [Child safe standards overview - Department of Human Services ...](#)
- [VRQA Child Safe Standards Readiness Tool - Victorian Registration](#)
- [Child Safe Standards- Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools \(Ministerial Order 807\)](#)
- [Child Protection - Mandatory Reporting Duty of Care](#)
- [Digital Learning Safe Use Policy](#)
- [Student Engagement Policy](#)
- [Responding to allegations of sexual Assault](#)
- [Responding to allegations of sexual Assault - Quick Reference Flowchart:](#)
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>
- <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/default.html>

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