

Footscray City Primary School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Jenine O'Brien, Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator

Purpose

The Footscray City Primary School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student
- volunteer.

Statement of commitment to child safety

Footscray City Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences. Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and responsibilities

School leadership team

Our school leadership and wellbeing teams (comprising the Principal, Assistant Principals, Learning Specialists, MHIPS Coordinator and S&WB Officer) are responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principals and assistant principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#).
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#), including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Footscray City Primary School has nominated a child safety champion to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In addition to these roles, our child safety champion is also responsible for:

- Mental Health in Primary Schools Pilot Program: The MHWC will be required to:
- Promote a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing to students, staff and families
- Support teachers and school staff to expand their capacity to embed evidence-based mental health strategies, interventions and programs and build mental health literacy to identify and support primary school students with mental health concerns.
- Coordinate clear internal and external referral pathways for students identified as requiring further assessment and intervention.
- Proactively work with and support regional staff, school wellbeing and leadership teams, teachers, parents/carers and other external agencies to coordinate targeted mental health support for primary school students.
- Advocate for and value student voice and agency in their wellbeing and mental health needs
- Contribute to the school's existing wellbeing team.

Our principal and child safety champion (Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator) are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Principal and MHiPS Coordinator are responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team, a Wellbeing Student Action Team (SAT Grade 6) and a Student Representative Council (SRC). The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meets regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Wellbeing SAT and SRC 3-6 provide an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Wellbeing Team also operates as the Risk Management Committee and meets on a termly basis (or as needed) to monitor the Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Footscray City Primary School will:

- make sure child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices enable school staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- develop and endorse a policy or statement on online conduct and online safety.
- develop procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties that ensure the safety of students.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Footscray City Primary School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

- equip staff, students, volunteers and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students
- adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated
- address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences
- actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal children, students and their families
- ensure school policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, students and their families
- develop and endorse a policy or statement detailing the strategies and actions the school will take.

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Footscray City Primary School, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and SWPBS. Also, our student Codes of Conduct and the links that these programs have to our school mission, vision and values.

We inform students of their rights through our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and our implementation of SWPBS Tier One. Learning programs that prioritise personal and social capabilities and the implementation of tiered wellbeing intervention give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at the FCPS webpage <http://www.fcps.vic.edu.au/> and the FCPS school reception.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

At Footscray City Primary School we aim to empower children and students by:

- informing students about all their rights, including their rights to safety, information and participation
- recognising the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help students feel safe and be less isolated
- making sure staff and volunteers:
 - are attuned to signs of harm
 - facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- developing a culture that encourages participation and responds to what students say
- giving students opportunities to participate, and respond to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- offering students access to sexual abuse prevention programs and related information in an age-appropriate way.
- developing curriculum planning documents or other documentation that details how the school will address these requirements.

Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Footscray City Primary School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

Footscray City primary School will ensure that:

- Child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at <http://www.fcps.vic.edu.au> or school reception
- Community Bulletins (twice per term) will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school in the wellbeing hub, library and reception

Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy [Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy](#) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

At Footscray City Primary School we support diversity and equity by:

- recognising and responding to students' diverse circumstances
- understanding that some students are at higher risk of harm than others
- providing easy access to information
- adjusting procedures to respond to different needs
- making sure complaints processes are child-friendly, culturally safe and easy to understand.

Suitable staff and volunteers

At Footscray City Primary School, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management.](#)

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by Footscray City Primary School's PDP Process, Coaching and Mentoring Programs

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

To comply with this standard, Footscray City primary School will:

- make sure job advertisements have clear statements about:
 - the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
 - the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- advise job applicants about the child safety practices of the school, including the Code of Conduct
- make volunteers aware of the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
- screen school staff applicants:
 - sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance if they person is required to have one or any equivalent background checks such as Victorian Institute of Teaching registration
 - collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references
- screen volunteers:
 - sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance if they person is required to have one of any equivalent background check
 - consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer's role and, if reasonable and appropriate collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references
- provide an induction to staff, volunteers and contractors engaged in child-related work, regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of the role
- ensure that induction addresses the school's:
 - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
 - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse
- make sure staff, governing body members, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities for:
 - children and students
 - information sharing and reporting obligations
 - recordkeeping obligations
- provide supervision and people management of staff and volunteers that focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with [Volunteers Policy](#), which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

Volunteer child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will:

- Provide training and information to volunteers engaged in child-connected work that is appropriate to their role that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.
- Support staff and volunteers to implement the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct where these policies apply to their role and responsibilities.
- Provide appropriate training and guidance to the members of the governing body every year. This training should include:
 - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
 - child safety and wellbeing risks in the school
 - the child safety policies, procedures and practices of the school.

School council training and education

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually.

Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Footscray City Primary School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Complaints and reporting processes

Footscray City Primary School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found at [Complaints Policy](#).

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees and homestay providers) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#) . Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) and [Bullying Prevention Policy](#) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Communications

Footscray City Primary School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in our Community Bulletin
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

Privacy and information sharing

Footscray City Primary School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

Review of child safety practices

At Footscray City Primary School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices by:

- reviewing and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analysing any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- acting with transparency and sharing pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- [update this list as needed]

Related Department of Education and Training policies

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

Policy status and review

The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the Footscray City Primary School community.

Approval

Created date	August 2022
Consultation	FCPS School Council
Endorsed by	Jessie Hand
Endorsed on	30th March 2023
Next review date	March 2025