

# CHILD SAFETY POLICY



## **Our commitment to child safety**

Upwey Primary School is committed to child safety. As a community 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. There is zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Upwey Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. As a community we support and respect all children as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Upwey Primary School has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

## **Our Children**

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants at Upwey Primary School.

We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

- ensure the safety of children who are vulnerable

The school will support and assist children who disclose child abuse or who are linked to suspected child abuse through:

- direct connection with student Wellbeing Teacher
- direct connection with network psychologist
- seek immediate counselling support (where appropriate) from Regional Counselling Services
- link the child and family (where appropriate) to outside agencies.

## **Our staff and volunteers**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

## **Training and supervision**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Upwey Primary School commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## **Recruitment**

Upwey Primary School follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the [Department's website](#).

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy, including in relation to assessing the suitability of prospective volunteers and obtaining checks required under this policy.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of the check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](#) website for further information.

## **Fair procedures for personnel**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns and store them securely.

## **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

Upwey Primary School has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including school council employees) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/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.

Upwey Primary School will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Upwey Primary School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found at [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations](#)

Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- All Victorian Teachers have a legal responsibility to report incidents where children's safety is at risk. Victorian Government School employees are expected to follow the DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>
- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our school will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

## Communications

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website
- Information in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion.

## 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 Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

## Risk Management:

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, UPS proactively manages risks of abuse to children by removing and reducing these risks and follows the Child Safety Standards. The school has risk management strategies to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments. The school's risk management includes:

- The Child Safety Code of Conduct – outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour with respect to child safety and child abuse. The Child Safety Code of Conduct is publically available.
- Appointing a Child Safety Officer
- Screening as part of the staff recruitment process
- Working With Children checks, Police Record checks, reference checks
- Sign in processes at the school office
- On and off site supervision of children during recess and lunch breaks as well 15 minutes before and after school – staff carry mobile phones
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreement for students
- Teacher supervision of student internet usage
- Protocols to ensure children do not move around the school individually during class time
- Out of bounds areas in the school to ensure that children are not placed at risk
- Staff and volunteer training
- Child safe environments information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Adequate monitoring of visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module

## Providing ongoing support

Our school will provide ongoing support for children who are impacted by abuse. This will include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals in line with duty of care requirements. Strategies may include a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals such as the Student Support Services team.

Further details are available in the [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) PROTECT resource.

## Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

### **Policy evaluation and review**

This policy was approved by the Principal and was last updated on 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 and is scheduled for review in November 2022.

- Code of Conduct
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
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- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)