



RED HILL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

Red Hill Consolidated School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school.

Background:

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards will commence from 1 January 2016 for most organisations working with children, with the aim of promoting cultural change in the way organisations manage the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The child safe standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

The child safe standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations that provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

The Child Safe Standards

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel (See VIT and Working with Children Policies)

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>)

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children (See Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy)

Policy

Red Hill Consolidated School will implement the Child Safe Standards to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students at the School and promote an organisational culture that manages the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Our School has developed policies and procedures that aim to keep children safe. The standards will provide a framework to identify gaps and improve policy and practices around child safety.



RED HILL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

RATIONALE

Every government school has a responsibility to ensure a safe environment for its children. The Child Safe Environments Policy sets out our school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

AIMS

For all staff, volunteers, contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people to be aware of and adhere to this policy to create and maintain a child safe organisation.

To apply this policy across a broad range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours and provide a framework for our approach to the school's Child Safety Standards.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Red Hill Consolidated School is committed to child safety. 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.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which will be followed rigorously.

Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our school has 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.

Red Hill Consolidated School

Presented to School Council

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

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 backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have 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 in our 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 school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal 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.

Our Staff and Volunteers

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

All of 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 school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school 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 to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also 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 our school's 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 school'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

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

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 using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

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.

Risk Management

In Victoria, schools are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a school child via social media).

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.



Red Hill Consolidated School Child Safety Code of Conduct

The following child safety code of conduct clearly spells out the professional boundaries and acceptable and unacceptable adult/child relationships and behaviours. All staff members at our school are expected to have read and to implement the following 'Child Safety Code of Conduct' at all times.

Child abuse is unacceptable. Ensuring children's safety is a top priority for the Victorian Government.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence
- a grooming offence; or
- the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect.

Our aim is to:

- create a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice.
- strengthen existing approaches to preventing and responding to child abuse and provide for consistency in how these issues are managed.

We all have a responsibility for keeping children safe and all registered schools are required to develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school.

At Red Hill Consolidated School we will:

- embed a culture of child safety at the school
- allocate roles and responsibilities to ensure child safe practices are adhered to
- inform the school community about the strategies being employed at the school

Embedding an organisational culture of child safety is critical to reducing the risk of child abuse in schools.

To successfully embed a culture of child safety, a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse** must be led by the school council. This commitment must be shared, openly and transparently, by all members of the school community, including staff (school employees, contractors and volunteers), parents and families, visitors and children.

Red Hill Consolidated School

Presented to School Council

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

All staff, volunteers and council members of Red Hill Consolidated School Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

All personnel of Red Hill Consolidated School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

Making a Professional Judgement

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will;

- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child
- Record interactions and share them with a member of the Principal Class.
- Ensure actions taken are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a leadership team member
- Be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others
- Not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.

Personal/Living space

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will;

- Not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and care givers
- Be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- Not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will;

- Be aware of their organisation's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared
- Only give gifts to an individual child as part of an agreed reward system
- Ensure that when operating reward systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

Infatuations

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will;

- Deal with infatuations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned
- Make sure their own behaviour is beyond reproach
- If they become aware of an infatuation developing or any indications that it may, record it and discuss it with the School Leadership member so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

Communication (including the use of technology)

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Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries including the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- Not share any personal information with a child
- Not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role
- Not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless the need to do so is agreed with School Leadership and parents
- Only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by their organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with school policy
- Only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible
- Not use internet or web-based communication channels to send messages
- Use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the schools policy.

Social Contact

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Not have social contact with children unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with School Leadership
- Not have secret social contact with children and/or their parent(s)
- Always approve any planned social contact with children with School Leadership
- Advise senior management of any social contact that has occurred which may raise concern
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing.

Sexual Contact

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Not engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity. To do so would be considered a criminal offence
- Not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically
- Not discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children
- Ensure relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism
- Ensure language, attitudes and demeanour do not give rise to comment or speculation
- Be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as part of a grooming process, and as such will give rise to concerns about behaviour.

Physical Contact

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities, never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary

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- Seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable
- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Not indulge in rough or boisterous play
- Always encourage children, where possible to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and sensitive to issues of gender
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with School Leadership and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan
- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Behaviour Management:

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child
- Not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments
- Ensure any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Never use corporal punishment
- Follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property
- When, using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident
- Be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, i.e. bullying, changes in home circumstances.

Note: the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Personal/Intimate Care

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Adhere to the school's code of conduct
- Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- Explain to the child what is happening
- Carefully and sensitively observe the emotional responses of the child, and record and report any concerns to School Leadership and parents, if appropriate
- Respect children's privacy at all times
- Avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, other than as part of an agreed care plan
- Not change, in the same place as children
- Not shower or bathe with children
- Not assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves.

One to One Situations/Home Visits

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Ensure that when working alone, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed to
- Avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas
- Always inform colleagues and/or parents about one to one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by

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- Avoid the use of 'engaged' signage on doors where ever possible, these create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- Carefully consider the need of the child when in one to one situation and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry towards you.
- Agree what the purpose for any home visit with School Leadership team unless it is an acknowledged and integral part of your role
- Never put yourself into a one to one situation when little or no information is available about the child.

Transporting

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Ensure requirements around seat belts and car seats are adhered to
- Not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of School Leadership and been agreed with parents
- Ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive
- Record details of the journey in accordance with agreed DET procedures
- Ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance;
- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned.

Trips and Outings

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with by School Leadership
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken
- Have parental consent to the activity
- Never share beds with children
- Not share bedrooms unless it is a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been agreed with the School Leadership, parents and children.

Photography and Videos

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Be clear about the purpose of any activity involving photography and what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded
- Be able to justify the reason for having images of children in their possession
- Avoid making images in one to one situations or situations that may be construed as secretive or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by their school
- Immediately report any concerns if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found
- Have parental consent to take, display and/or distribute any images of children
- Not use images that may cause distress or offence.

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

Adults at Red Hill Consolidated School will:

- Not access, make or store indecent images of children on the internet. To do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation
- Not make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment
- Follow their schools guidance on the use of IT equipment
- Ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through Information and Communication Technology
- Ensure that any materials shown to children are age appropriate
- Immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the School Leadership and follow the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

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Red Hill Consolidated School Child Safety Risk Management Program

At Red Hill Consolidated School our child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. Our school Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct clearly outlines our commitment to implementing the 7 standards for child safety as outlined in the Ministerial Order No. 870.

At Red Hill Consolidated School our process includes risk assessment (see matrix below), implementation of controls and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

Risk Rating Matrix

RISK RATING		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

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Child Safety Risks and Risk Management Strategies

The list below comprises a inventory of potential child safety risk and risk management strategies.

Risks

- Lack of an organisational culture of child safety
- Familiarity breeding a culture of not reporting issues
- Natural trust of long term employees
- Children alone with one other person unsupervised
- Recruitment of an inappropriate person
- Inappropriate behaviour not reported
- Harassment via email, SMS or other media
- Unsupervised recreational or other activities
- Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)
- Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal issues
- Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps
- False allegations

Risk Management Strategies

- Implement an effective child safety risk management strategy
- Child safety code of conduct
- Child safety reporting procedures
- Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors
- Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour
- Counselling and other resources
- CCTV for unsupervised areas, and 'hot spot' areas
- Clear windows to enable visibility of occupants
- Non-lockable doors in hot spots
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks
- Supervision or monitoring of activities
- Online searches (Google, Facebook etc.) to be monitored
- Performance management procedures
- Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety
- Criminal history checks

At Red Hill Consolidated School we believe that our in-depth Child Safe Policy's and Code of Conduct enable for the monitoring of risk and risk management.

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SUMMARY

Summary of the policies and procedures outlining Red Hill Consolidated School's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below.

A child-safe culture

Red Hill Consolidated School's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/Code of Conduct

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Refer to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics

Human resources practices and training

The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with them. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection 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.

Risk reduction and management

The school believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

Listening to children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe

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school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. The collection, use and storage of information is included in school policies.

Breaches

Breaches of Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Obligations are identified in the specific policies.

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Red Hill Consolidated School School Child Safe Definitions:

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafef.

Child abuse includes—

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

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

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.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
 - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
 - a minister of religion¹.

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- **School governing authority** means:
 - The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
 - The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
 - The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

Related policies and Documents	School Policy Advisory Guide – Duty of Care School Policy Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework
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Appendix - The Child Safety Standards and School Responsibilities:

Standard 1

For schools: Ministerial Order No. 870 requirements

Minimum child safety standard: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety in accordance with clause 7.

Clause 7

1. The **school council** will:
 - a. develop strategies to embed a culture of **child safety** at the school;
 - b. allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
 - c. inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;
 - d. put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and
 - e. periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

Standard 2

For schools: Ministerial Order No. 870 requirements Minimum child safety standard: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety in accordance with clause 8.

Clause 8

1. The school council will ensure that the school has a **child safety** policy or statement of commitment to **child safety** that details:

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- a. the values and principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe *school environment* ; and
 - b. the actions the school proposes to take to:
 - i. demonstrate its commitment to *child safety* and monitor the school's adherence to its *child safety* policy or statement of commitment;
 - ii. support, encourage and enable *school staff*, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report *child safety* matters; and.
 - iii. support or assist children who disclose *child abuse*, or are otherwise linked to suspected *child abuse*.
2. The *school council* must inform the school community about the policy or statement, and make the policy or statement publicly available.

Standard 3

For schools: Ministerial Order No. 870 requirements

Minimum child safety standard: A child safety code of conduct in accordance with clause 9.

Clause 9

1. The *school council* will develop, endorse, and make publicly available a code of conduct that:
 - a. has the objective of promoting *child safety* in the school environment;
 - b. sets standards about the ways in which *school staff* are expected to behave with children;
 - c. takes into account the interests of *school staff* (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular *school staff*), and the needs of all children; and
 - d. is consistent with the school's *child safety* strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

Standard 4

For schools: Ministerial Order No. 870 requirements

Minimum child safety standard: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse in accordance with clause 10.

Clause 10

1. Subject to the requirements of the *ETR Act*, the *school council* must ensure that the school implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this clause.
2. Each job or category of jobs for *school staff* that involves *child connected work* must 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*.

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3. All applicants for jobs that involve *child connected work* for the school must be informed about the school's *child safety* practices (including the code of conduct).
4. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must 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.
5. The school must 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*.
6. The school must implement practices that enable the school council to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to *child safety*.

NB: The school council needs to be satisfied about the appropriateness of the school's arrangements that would regulate or guide other people who make such decisions for or on behalf of the school about child safety matters and child-connected work.

Standard 5

For schools: Ministerial Order No. 870 requirements

Minimum child safety standard: Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse in accordance with clause 11.

Clause 11

1. The *school council* must have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to allegations of suspected *child abuse* in accordance with this requirement and other legal obligations.
2. The *school council* must ensure that the procedure is:
 - a. sensitive to the diversity characteristics of the school community;
 - b. made publicly available; and
 - c. accessible to children, *school staff*, and the wider community.
3. The procedure must:
 - a. cover all forms of '*child abuse*' as defined in the *ETR Act* ;
 - b. apply to allegations or disclosures of *child abuse* made by or in relation to a child, *school staff*, visitors, or other persons while connected to a *school environment* ;
 - c. identify the positions of the person or people who are responsible for:

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- promptly managing the school’s response to an allegation or disclosure of **child abuse** , and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously;
 - responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of **child abuse** ;
 - monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure; and
 - managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if the person allocated responsibility under clause (3)(c)(i), above cannot perform his or her role;
- d. include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse;
- e. clearly describe the actions the school will take to respond to an allegation of **child abuse** , including actions to:
- inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting);
 - protect any child connected to the alleged **child abuse** until the allegation is resolved; and
 - make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of **child abuse** and the school’s response to it.
4. The procedure must not:
- a. prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of **child abuse** to a person external to the school;
 - b. state or imply that it is the victim’s responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
 - c. require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of **child abuse** ; or
 - d. prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of **child abuse**.

Standard 6

For schools: Ministerial Order No. 870 requirements

Minimum child safety standard: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse in accordance with clause 12.

Clause 12

1. The **school council will** develop and implement risk management strategies regarding **child safety** in **school environments**.
2. The school’s risk management strategies regarding **child safety** must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of **child abuse** in **school environments** by taking into account the nature of each **school environment**, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

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3. If the **school council** identifies risks of **child abuse** occurring in one or more **school environments** the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

4. As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school council must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
5. At least annually, the **school council** must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the **school council** and **school staff** about:
 - a. individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of **child abuse** ;
 - b. **child abuse** risks in the school environment; and
 - c. the school's current **child safety** standards

Standard 7

For schools: Ministerial Order No. 870 requirements.

Minimum child safety standard: Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment in accordance with clause 13.

Clause 13

1. The **school council will** develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
 - a. standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
 - b. healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
 - c. resilience; and
 - d. **child abuse** awareness and prevention.
2. The **school council** must promote the **child safety** standards required by the Order in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Inclusion Principles

In complying with the child safe standards, schools need to be mindful of the diversity of students and school communities and include the following principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.

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RED HILL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL



CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to explain the roles and responsibilities of school staff to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The full policy with detailed information that all staff in Victorian government schools must follow is found at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

2. Mandatory Reporters

All staff who are Victorian Institute of Teaching (**VIT**) registered teachers (including principals) or who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT are 'mandatory reporters'. This means that in the course of undertaking their professional duties, they must report to the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) Child Protection a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. They must report as soon as practicable after forming the belief.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to report to Child Protection. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.

3. Non-mandated staff members

Any person, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection or Victoria Police when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Red Hill Consolidated School

Presented to School Council

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In order to discharge duty of care, staff members, **whether or not mandated**, need to report a belief formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief, and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

4. Failure to disclose offence

In addition to mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations, **any adult** who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence except in limited circumstances, such as where the information has already been reported to Child Protection or the child is older than 16 when the belief is formed. More information about the offence can be found at <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

5. Duty of care

School staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care.

If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care it is important to take immediate action.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, school staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- Reporting their concerns to Child Protection, Victoria Police or another appropriate agency
- Notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Duty of care obligations are separate and additional to mandatory reporting and 'failure to disclose' reporting obligations.

6. Making a report

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.

Staff are expected to follow the Department policy for making a report set out at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

Reports to Child Protection and Victoria Police are confidential unless you consent or a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for your identity to be disclosed.

7. Staff training

Red Hill Consolidated School

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As part of their initial induction to the school, staff will be informed of child protection reporting requirements and Department policy (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>) and will be provided with supporting documentation in their staff handbook.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/protecting-children-together>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children%2c-youth-and-families/child-protection/specialist-practice-resources-for-child-protection-workers/child-development-and-trauma-specialist-practice-resource>

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/586465/information-guide-registered-teachers-principals.pdf

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>

8. Policy Review

Review and updates will take place annually. Responsibility – Principal

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

NOV 2015

Red Hill Consolidated School

Presented to School Council

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