

CHILD SAFE POLICY

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY:

The Findon Primary School (Findon PS) Child Safety 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](#) 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.

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 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 as identified on the school website and available via the school office.

DEFINITIONS:

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

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

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Findon Primary School is a Child Safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where children 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 environment.

We promote positive relationships between children and adults and between children 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/children 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 or children 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.

We will protect the safety of all children that is consistent with the Child Safe Standards:

- [Standard 1: Culturally safe environments](#) – Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- [Standard 2: Leadership, governance and culture](#) – Ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.
- [Standard 3: Child and student empowerment](#) – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- [Standard 4: Family engagement](#) – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- [Standard 5: Diversity and equity](#) – Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
- [Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers](#) – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- [Standard 7: Child-focused complaints processes](#) – Ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
- [Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness](#) – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- [Standard 9: Physical and online environments](#) – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- [Standard 10: Review of child safety practices](#) - Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- [Standard 11: Implementation of child safety practices](#) – Policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our school leadership team is 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 leadership 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 and 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.

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SCHOOL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety 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 Safe Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safe 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 Safe Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe, when hiring school council employees. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the Principal who is bound by this policy.

SPECIFIC STAFF CHILD SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Findon Primary School has nominated two child safety officers/champions to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training. The responsibilities of the child safety officers/champions are outlined at [Guidance for Child Safety Champions](#). The Principal and Student Wellbeing Officer are the child safety officers/champions at Findon Primary School and are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries, and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents. Our School Council monitors the Child Safe Standards Risk Register.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Child Safe 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 policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, for example, 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 Safe Standards 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 Safe Standards Risk Register.

ESTABLISHING A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

At Findon PS, 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.

To promote cultural safety in our school community Findon Primary School will work in an ongoing capacity with the Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO) to equip the community with the required knowledge and understanding, through professional learning, auditing and addressing gaps in cultural understanding. The school will address racism and community conduct further through the Student Wellbeing Policy, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and Statement of Values and School Philosophy. The school will continue to actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal children, students and their families through regular contact and engagement practices. Actions to support cultural inclusion and participation include, working with the KESO, auditing current practices, Acknowledgement of Country and plaque, Welcome to Country (with KESO support), flag visibility, continuing to build school wide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes, providing clear and regular opportunities to communicate about student learning and wellbeing, and access to policies and procedures via the school website or front office.

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

To support child safety at Findon PS, 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 taught and reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging. We inform students of their rights, responsibilities and school values through the Start Up Program, our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships Education (RRE), and restorative approach to wellbeing, and 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, using a range of modes such as talking, writing, drawing, What's Up box, etc. Students are also empowered through school based transition and buddy programs. Students and families can access information on how to report concerns via the school website.

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/caregivers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

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 Findon PS 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 through School Council, and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- ensuring the Child Safe and related policies are available via the school website (accessible form) and front office
- welcoming feedback related to all school policies
- including items related to child safety in the school newsletter via the Principal message, induction, and through regular discussion and review at School Council, sub committees and staff meetings
- displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters around the school.

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

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- 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 Inclusion and Diversity Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

SUITABLE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

At Findon PS, 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 (DET) 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 Institute of Teaching (VIT) 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.

STAFF INDUCTION

Newly appointed staff will be expected to familiarise themselves with the school's child safety policies, processes and procedures. This will be supported through induction processes related to policy at the beginning of the school year, Principal messages in the school newsletter and ongoing policy review processes.

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. Examples of supervision, but not limited to include Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) checks, Working with Children Check (WWCC), forward planning risk assessment processes and contractor processes. Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child connected work. This will be done by office staff regularly reviewing and updating documentation. 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 will be paramount.

SUITABILITY OF VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety 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 record keeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

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
- Findon PS child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING PROCESSES

Findon PS 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 Dealing Constructively with Parent/Caregiver Concerns and Complaints Policy, which is accessible via the school website or front office. 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 Safe 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 and Bullying Prevention Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to other student harmful behaviours.

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Findon PS 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](#). A consistent template is used for recording information in relation to child safety.

EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION:

This policy shall be reviewed and evaluated after any significant child safety incident, or at least every 2 years and be improved where applicable as part of the ongoing policy and process review. This policy will be communicated with the school community through the school website, access to the policy through the school office, through staff induction, updates in the newsletter, professional learning and briefing, and through annual School Council Presentations.

REFERENCES:

DET Policy Advisory Library

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<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy>

Findon Primary School Policies

<https://www.findonps.vic.edu.au/index.php/school-policies/>

Education Reform Act 2006

<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-training-reform-act-2006/080>