



Learning to Excel Together

Child Safe Policy and Procedures 2018



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Standard 1..... | 3 |
| Organisations must have strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements..... | 3 |
| Standard 2..... | 5 |
| Organisations must have a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety..... | 5 |
| Standard 3..... | 9 |
| Organisations must have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children..... | 9 |
| Standard 4..... | 11 |
| Organisations must have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel..... | 11 |
| Standard 5..... | 12 |
| Organisations must have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse..... | 12 |
| Standard 6..... | 15 |
| Organisations must have strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse..... | 15 |
| Standard 7..... | 16 |
| Organisations must have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children..... | 16 |
| Heatherhill Primary School Well Being Policies..... | 18 |
| CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT..... | 19 |
| BULLYING PREVENTION..... | 24 |
| STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT..... | 29 |
| INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY..... | 37 |
| MANDATORY REPORTING..... | 39 |



Standard 1

Organisations must have strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

Heatherhill Primary School Leadership, Principal and Assistant Principal assume ultimate responsibility for Child Safety at the school. We plan for and implement preventative, proactive and participatory approaches to child safety issues. We support all staff, School Council and volunteers to abide by the school's Code of Conduct, Child Safe Policy and other Well Being policies and procedures.

The safety and wellbeing of children in our organisation is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

Heatherhill Primary School leadership is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety in our organisation. Our school leadership takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, and must be made aware of child abuse allegations and risks and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

We ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by our organisation. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

If we believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse we will phone 000.

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to ensure that Child Safe practices are embedded at the school through:

POLICIES

Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and Well Being Policies

VISION

Learning to excel together

PURPOSE

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to provide a secure, caring and harmonious environment in which students learn the knowledge, skills and values they need to contribute to and live happily in society. The school maximises each student's potential to achieve academic and social success and celebrates and embraces diversity.

CORE BELIEFS

- All members of the diverse school community are treated with respect and positive relationships are sustained. Students feel safe and cared for and therefore, are better able to take advantage of all educational opportunities provided for them.



- There are high expectations for student achievement. The school implements the priorities of the Victorian education system, emphasising the importance of providing all students with strong foundations in literacy and numeracy learning. Provision is made for intervention and enhancement in English and Mathematics. The curriculum is engaging and stimulating and is delivered through high quality planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Students receive excellent instruction – a program that includes high quality, explicit and effective teaching, based on sound methodologies and research, catering for groups and individuals. The development of Personal and Interpersonal Learning utilising Inquiry, Thinking and Information and Communications Technology enables students to be well equipped for their futures.
- All staff members understand and fulfil their professional responsibilities and cooperate and collaborate to address student learning needs. Staff members seek opportunities to enhance their own pedagogical growth through professional learning that is aligned with school goals.
- An atmosphere that is conducive to learning is endorsed throughout the school. Staff, students and parents work together to maintain a congruent, educative, pastoral, emotional, social, and physical environment.

PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Learning is personalised. We are personalising learning when:

- Relationships form the basis of all learning. Learning partnerships are formed to enable students to drive their own learning.
- Learning starts from the point of need, extending and challenging learners to achieve growth and success.
- Learners' engagement needs are met through rich and authentic learning experiences.
- Evidence of learning is made visible within the learning partnership. Assessment and learning continua are used to match the curriculum to the learning needs of individual students.



Standard 2

Organisations must have a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

Heatherhill Primary School Child Safe Policy

Rationale:

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to child safety and to our children being principled, caring, balanced members of our community. We are committed to our children's safety, participation and empowerment and have zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. The school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks and all staff undertake Mandatory Reporting training.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers and are committed to the cultural safety of children from diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Aims:

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. 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. We promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability

Our staff and volunteers

This policy informs 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. 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.



Implementation:

Training and supervision

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

The 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.

For all jobs that require child connected work there will be an induction process providing explicit information about the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities and the school's child safety practices, including the code of conduct.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect all 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.

Heatherhill Primary School has a zero tolerance for any form of child abuse

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ appropriately skilled people to work with children. We identify selection criteria through Recruitment Online which clearly demonstrates our commitment to child safety. The 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 website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information. We carry out reference checks to ensure that we are addressing the person's suitability for the job and working with children. Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration is compulsory and we require proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.

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 and will disclose how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.
- **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 over 16 when the belief is formed.
- **Failure to protect:** Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence. The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation, including Principals, senior school staff, regional directors and other senior managers.

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations 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, swimming), and online environments.

Heatherhill Primary School has a zero tolerance for any form of child abuse.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

The school takes all allegations seriously and works 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

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in July 2016.



Standard 3

Organisations must have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

Heatherhill Primary School

Child Safe Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers and School Council members of Heatherhill Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of Heatherhill Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Heatherhill Primary School child safe policy at all times / upholding Heatherhill Primary School statement of commitment to child safety at all time
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to Heatherhill Primary School leadership, and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to Heatherhill Primary School leadership
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps.)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes



- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our school leadership’s knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate)
- have any social media (Facebook, Instagram etc) contact with a child or their family
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Heatherhill Primary leadership.

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

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date:



Standard 4

Organisations must have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Heatherhill Primary School will ensure that recruitment processes are in place to manage and reduce the risk of child abuse. Processes to ensure that there are appropriate staff induction programs, staff professional development and staff supervision arrangements to ensure a child safe environment will be enacted.

The school will 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.

The school will induct new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and monitor and assess a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.



Standard 5

Organisations must have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Heatherhill has many procedures in place to address Child Safety:

- A Mandatory Reporting Policy which outlines procedures for reporting Child Abuse.
- Several Well Being policies
- Fortnightly Risk Assessment Management Process (RAMP) meetings, at which the Assistant Principal and teaching teams confidentially discuss and record student wellbeing issues.
- Each staff member has a Welfare Diary, which is used to record incidents of concern, including abuse, neglect, bullying.
- An Incident Reporting document, used to record incidents of child abuse. The reports are filed by school leadership in a secure place.



Heatherhill Primary School Incident Report

Incident details

| | |
|---|--|
| Date of incident: | |
| Time of incident: | |
| Location of incident: | |
| Name(s) of child/children involved: | |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved: | |

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

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No
 Yes, Aboriginal
 Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Physical violence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sexual offence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serious emotional or psychological abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serious neglect | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Please describe the incident

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| When did it take place? | |
| Who was involved? | |
| What did you see? | |
| Other information | |

Parent/carer/child use

| | |
|---|--|
| Date of incident: | |
| Time of incident: | |
| Location of incident: | |
| Name(s) of child/children involved: | |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved: | |

Office use:

| | |
|--|--|
| Date incident report received: | |
| Staff member managing incident: | |
| Follow-up date: | |
| Incident ref. number: | |

Has the incident been reported?

| | |
|--|--|
| Child protection | |
| Police | |
| Another third party (please specify): | |

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes

No



Standard 6

Organisations must have strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.

At least annually, the **school** will ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the **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.

At least annually, Heatherhill Primary School leadership will advise and/or train all school staff in the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work.

Staff will monitored for their completion of appropriate training.



Standard 7

Organisations must have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Organisations must ensure that children feel safe to report abuse and have processes in place to ensure that students are empowered to raise any child safety concerns.

Organisations must support students to develop appropriate knowledge and skills so that children can identify and communicate when they don't feel safe.

Heatherhill Primary School will ensure participation is designed to be:

- Ethical
- Age appropriate and child-friendly
- Culturally respectful
- Inclusive of a diverse range of children,
- Demonstrating respect for children of all ages, abilities, social and cultural backgrounds
- Positive
- Voluntary and with informed consent.

Staff involved will:

- Be clear, honest and realistic about the boundaries of a discussion and what can change.
- Give adequate time to consult and make sure the venue is appropriate.
- Listen to what you are being told by children – they may have a very different view to you or what you expect – acknowledge, value and take seriously the views put forward by children.
- Ensure adults involved are skilful in facilitating the participation of children.
- Be clear if the discussion will be confidential or if the outcomes will be made public.
- Monitor the impact your consultation may have had on the children involved.
- Ensure you have procedures in place to provide support to any child who may be distressed as a result of their involvement or disclosure of concerns.
- Provide feedback to children about how their views had informed decision-making.

Heatherhill Primary School has a various teaching programs designed to empower students and to give them a “voice” in decision making and feeling safe:

- School Wide Positive Behaviours
- School based Values Education
- You Can Do It!



- 7 Habits
- Protective Behaviours
- Student Council

Through focus groups and Student Council examples of child participation events may include:

- Conducting a meaningful consultation with children to inform the development of the school's Child Safe Policy – asking them about what makes the children in our school feel safe and unsafe
- Planning and identifying the risks involved in an overnight camp – it is important to be aware that adults' views about safety may be different from those held by children.
- When planning changes to playground areas, consulting students for their opinions about safe and unsafe areas



Heatherhill Primary School Well Being Policies



CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE:

Events that cause severe emotional distress may occur at any time and without warning. These events (variously called Critical Incidents, Traumatic Incidents, Disasters, Emergencies or Crises) often denote disaster or crisis situations which affect many people and which can give rise to a range of stress or trauma responses. They can also refer to events of a much smaller scale.

In most cases emotional and psychological reactions to critical incidents are normal human reactions to abnormal circumstances and, with appropriate support, most people can deal with these and soon return to normal functioning. For some, specialist professional support may be advisable when symptoms are extreme or persistent and are causing an individual ongoing trauma or difficulty.

Healthy coping responses are likely to be facilitated when an organisation acknowledges the effects of traumatic effects on individuals and creates opportunities for individuals to appropriately address their needs for recovery and healing.

DEFINITION:

For the purpose of this policy a critical incident is defined as any event which has a stressful impact sufficient enough to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of either an individual or a group. Critical incidents are typically sudden, powerful events which are outside the range of ordinary human experiences. Since they are so sudden and unusual, they can have a strong emotional effect even on well-trained, experienced people.

Critical incidents can range from small scale localised incidents lasting minutes and affecting a single school or section of a school through to large scale events requiring state level coordination and assistance from external agencies. Critical incidents can also be events which, by their nature, have the potential to leave lasting effects on those involved.

Some Critical Incidents that may affect a school community include:

a death in the school community - following illness, by accident, by suicide or the result of criminal behaviour

serious injury to a member of the school community

students or staff lost or injured on an excursion/camp

violent assault on a member of the school community

witnessing a serious accident or an act of violence

significant damage to, or destruction of, part or whole of the school property, due to vandalism, accident, or fire, flooding or some other extreme of nature

bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard

use of violent weapons in the school



outsiders coming into school and being aggressive towards students and/or staff
disappearance of a student or staff member
media coverage of issues in a way which is distressing to the school community
drug related incident

Such incidents often involve:

rapid time sequences
overwhelming of usual coping responses of individuals and communities
severe disruption, at least temporarily, to the functioning of individuals or communities
perceptions of threat and helplessness, and a turning to others for help

Guidelines:

It is the nature of many critical incidents that they come upon us without warning and require immediate thoughtful response. This response will be guided by the Critical Incident Management Policy and comprises four components:

Preparedness

The continued adherence to the Heatherhill Displan, and the planning and rehearsal of processes to be undertaken when an emergency occurs.

Prevention

The prevention and mitigation of emergencies, including trauma. The identification of risks that are specific to the Heatherhill environment.

Response

The implementation of planned procedures to ensure the ongoing safety of the school community including liaison with emergency services, mobilising action plans, assigning roles and responsibilities.

Recovery

The implementation of recovery processes to facilitate the return to routine including debriefing, the formation of a Critical Incident Response Team to coordinate recovery, monitoring reactions.



Heatherhill will also follow the general procedures of response and recovery set by DET. Refer to DET Guidelines 6.15 Emergency and Critical Incident Management and 7.28 Security Management.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Prevention

Occupational Health & Safety Officer appointed.

Policies developed for the areas of Student Welfare, Prevention of Harassment, First Aid Officer and Anaphylaxis

File created on Staff drive to report repairs & problems with school equipment that is followed up regularly by the OH&S officer

Procedures known to all staff regarding the late arrival or early release of students

Procedures known to all staff regarding visitors to the school including easily identifiable badges

Preparedness

Refer to the Heatherhill Primary School Emergency Management Plan.

Response

The Principal should be notified immediately after a Critical Incident has occurred. The Principal (or their designated representative) will then confirm the incident and collect information about the incident from a reliable source as a matter of urgency.

The formation of a Critical Incident Core Team will comprise of the Principal, Assistant Principal, Student Wellbeing coordinator, DET representative eg Guidance Officer, Emergency Management Support Person

The initial concern will be for the immediate physical safety and well-being of staff and students. As the immediate crisis passes, recovery activities will follow. Short term tasks will include setting up a recovery room, informing staff, informing the students.

The Core Team will be the decision making group who will follow the general procedures of response and recovery set by DET. This also includes the delivery of public statements to the wider school community or the media (*Refer to Managing School Emergencies, Minimising the impact of Trauma on staff and Students.*)

Recovery

Debriefing and counselling are important elements of the recovery that need to be offered to all groups of people affected by a traumatic incident.

Groups affected by trauma may include those who suffer directly from the incident, parents, relatives or friends, helpers or recovery personnel or school community members.



It is especially important for members of the Critical Incident Core Team and the Implementation Team who are required to make swift and often difficult decisions during or immediately following a critical incident to be provided with support.

Support for debriefing & counselling can be provided by DET and the local council.

Long term recovery management requires a continuing awareness of individuals' needs and reactions and a process for managing those responses. The first six month period following a critical incident has been identified as especially critical. Research has shown that recovery can or may take up to three years or longer.

Evaluation:

Successful evaluation and assessment indicators will include:

Emergency drills being conducted on a regular basis

OH&S surveys to be conducted as required

Regular inspection of the grounds and facilities conducted by the Principal and OH&S

Officer

Review of Critical Incident Management Policy as part of the long term recovery procedures following a Critical incident. Changes/modifications may need to be made as a direct result of the experiences gained from an event.

The provision of professional development for staff as deemed necessary



DUTY OF CARE

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain to our school community the non-delegable duty of care obligations that all staff at Heatherhill Primary School owe to our students and members of the school community who visit and use the school premises.

Policy

“Duty of care” is a legal obligation that requires schools to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include personal injury (physical or psychological) or damage to property. The reasonable steps that our school may decide to take in response to a potential risk or hazard will depend on the circumstances of the risk.

Our school has developed policies and procedures to manage common risks in the school environment, including:

- Yard duty and Supervision
- Bullying Prevention
- Camps and Excursions
- First Aid
- Personal Property
- Child Safe Standards
- External Providers
- Emergency Management
- Visitors
- Working with Children and Suitability Checks
- Mandatory Reporting
- Occupational Health and Safety

Staff at our school understand that school activities involve different levels of risk and that particular care may need to be taken to support younger students or students with additional needs. Our school also understands that it is responsible for ensuring that the school premises are kept in good repair and will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of members of our community suffering injury or damage because of the state of the premises.

School staff, parents, carers and students are encouraged to speak to the principal to raise any concerns about risks or hazards at our school, or our duty of care obligations.

FURTHER INFORMATION and resources

School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Duty of Care](#)

Refer to related local school policies e.g Yard Duty

Review Cycle

This policy was last updated on August 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2021.



BULLYING PREVENTION

Purpose

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying
- make clear that all forms of bullying at Heatherhill Primary School will not be tolerated
- ask that everyone in our school community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility to report bullying behaviour to school staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to students who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including victims, bystanders and perpetrators)
- seek parental and peer group support in addressing and preventing bullying behaviour at Heatherhill Primary School.

When responding to bullying behaviour, Heatherhill Primary School aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive and positive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the students involved.

Heatherhill Primary School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy* and *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*.

Policy

Definitions

Bullying occurs when someone, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly upset, harass, intimidate, threaten or hurt another person or damage their property, reputation or social acceptance. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying, where the bully or bullies have more power than the victim due to their age, size, status or other reasons.

Bullying may be direct or indirect, physical or verbal, and includes cyberbullying. Bullying is not a one-off disagreement between two or more people or a situation of mutual dislike.

Bullying can be:

1. *direct physical bullying* – e.g. hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
2. *direct verbal bullying* – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse.
3. *indirect bullying* – e.g. spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude a person and/or damaging a person's social reputation or social acceptance.



Cyberbullying is direct or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technology. For example via a mobile phone, tablets, computers, chat rooms, email, social media, etc. It can be verbal, written or include use of images, video and/or audio.

Mutual conflict involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.

Social rejection or dislike is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Single-episode acts of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied. Harassment, nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of harassment, nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our school.

Many distressing behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant. Students who are involved in or who witness any distressing behaviours of concern are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff.

Bullying Prevention

Heatherhill Primary School has a number of programs and strategies in place to build a positive and inclusive school culture. We strive to foster a school culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

Bullying prevention at Heatherhill Primary School is proactive and is supported by research that indicates that a whole school, multifaceted approach is the most effect way to prevent and address bullying. At our school:

- We have a positive school environment that provides safety, security and support for students and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
- We strive to build strong partnerships between the school, families and the broader community that means all members work together to ensure the safety of students.
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate classroom management strategies that discourage bullying and promote positive behaviour.
- At least one Bullying Prevention incursion/program is planned for each year to raise awareness about bullying and its impacts.
- In the classroom, our social and emotional learning curriculum teaches students what constitutes bullying and how to respond to bullying behaviour assertively. This promotes resilience, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.
- The Peer Mediation program encourage positive relationships between students in different year levels. We seek to empower students to be confident communicators and to resolve conflict in a non-aggressive and constructive way.
- Students are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to teachers and older peers about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.

For further information about our engagement and wellbeing initiatives, please see our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy.



Incident Response

Reporting concerns to Heatherhill Primary School

Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our school.

Students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or students who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to school staff as soon as possible.

In most circumstances, we encourage students to speak to their Home Group teacher first. However, students are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff and especially the Assistant Principal.

Parents or carers who may develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Heatherhill Primary School should contact the Assistant Principal via the main office or on 9546 7562.

Investigations

When notified of alleged bullying behaviour, school staff are required to:

1. record the details of the allegations in their welfare Book; and
2. inform Assistant Principal.

The Assistant Principal is responsible for investigating allegations of bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, the Assistant Principal may:

- speak to the students involved in the allegations, including the victim/s, the alleged perpetrator/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the students involved
- speak to the teachers of the students involved
- take detailed notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.

All communications with the Assistant Principal in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.

The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.

Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

Responses to bullying behaviours

When Assistant Principal has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected students in consultation with all involved teachers, SSS, Assistant Principal and Principal.



There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Heatherhill Primary School will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the victim student
- whether the perpetrator student or students have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the perpetrator demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

The Assistant Principal may implement all, or some of the following responses to bullying behaviours:

- Offer counselling support to the victim student or students.
- Offer counselling support to the perpetrator student or students.
- Offer counselling support to affected students, including witnesses and/or friends of the victim student.
- Facilitate a restorative practice meeting with all or some of the students involved. The objective of restorative practice is to repair relationships that have been damaged by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the person who has bullied someone and forgiveness by the person who has been bullied.
- Facilitate a mediation between some or all of the students involved to help to encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and explore underlying reasons for conflict or grievance.
- Implement disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator students, which may include removal of privileges, detention, suspension and/or expulsion consistent with our Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy, the Ministerial Order on Suspensions and Expulsions and any other relevant Department policy.
- Facilitate a Student Support Group meeting and/or Behaviour Support Plan for affected students.
- Prepare a Safety Plan or Individual Management Plan restricting contact between victim and perpetrator students.
- Provide discussion and/or mentoring for different social and emotional learning competencies of the students involved.
- Monitor the behaviour of the students involved for an appropriate time and take follow up action if necessary.

Assistant Principal is responsible for maintaining up to date records of the investigation of and responses to bullying behaviour.

Heatherhill Primary School understands the importance of monitoring the progress of students who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by students reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Heatherhill Primary School are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.

Further information and resources

Links to local policies:

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Statement of Values.



Evaluation

This will be reviewed on an annual basis following analysis of school data on reported incidents of, and responses to bullying to ensure that this policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- discussion with students
- regular student bullying surveys
- regular staff surveys
- assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of bullying in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups, parents groups, school council]

Review cycle

This policy was last updated on June 2018 and is scheduled for review in March 2019.



STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- expectations for positive student behaviour
- support available to students and families
- our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

Scope

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

Contents

- School profile
- School values, philosophy and vision
- Engagement strategies
- Identifying students in need of support
- Student rights and responsibilities
- Student behavioural expectations
- Engaging with families
- Evaluation

Policy

School profile

The school opened in 1958 and has served the Springvale, Springvale South and Noble Park communities as a centre of educational excellence to the present day. The school staff are highly trained educators, well equipped to provide high level instruction, with high expectations for academic, physical, social and emotional achievement. The school is an integral part of the community and the student population is culturally and linguistically diverse. More than thirty different languages are spoken by school families. Heatherhill Primary School has an enrolment of 218, ensuring that all staff, students and families are well known to each other, working and learning together. Up to 28% of students transfer in or out of the school in any given year, which equates to a high level of transience. Staff and students manage the changes well, quickly absorbing new



students into Learning Centre communities, making them feel welcome, accepted and ready for learning.

School values, philosophy and vision

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to provide a secure, caring and harmonious environment in which students learn the knowledge, skills and values they need to contribute to and live happily in society. The school maximises each student's potential to achieve academic and social success and celebrates and embraces diversity.

Heatherhill Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of respect, integrity and kindness at every opportunity.

The school values are:

- Respect (self, others and property) To be tolerant, considerate and courteous
- Trust To be fair, honest, truthful and reliable
- Doing Your Best To make the best possible use of all our talents and abilities

Engagement strategies

Heatherhill Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- deliver a broad curriculum
- teachers at Heatherhill Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching



- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school concerts, House Sports, Inquiry culminating events and peer support programs

We engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:

- Respectful Relationships
- Anti-bully programs
- Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, Sporting Schools lunchtime activities)
- Peer Mediation
- Students have a wide range of opportunities to participate in school operations. These include:
 - Student Council - Representatives (for all Home Groups) on Student Council are elected by the students
 - Voluntary participation as Peer Mediators (trained once they choose to take on the role)
 - School Captains and Vice-captains selected via application and an interview of shortlisted students by a committee. The committee will have the current School Captains, the Principal and the Assistant Principal.
 - House Leaders elected by the students
 - Leadership training for House and School Captains
 - Student-led weekly assemblies
 - Inter-school Sport leadership roles
 - Intra-school Sport leadership roles
 - Teacher-selected & voluntary monitor roles.

Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.

At Heatherhill Primary we prefer to use prevention strategies but have other strategies and programs to deal with situations as they arise. The table below outlines these. Additional programs (listed in the profile e.g. lunchtime activities) help to redirect student energies and interest in order to prevent problems arising or to cater for students who are experiencing difficulty interacting with others or making friends.



| Primary Prevention Responses. | Early Intervention Strategies. | Intervention Strategies. |
|--|---|---|
| SWPBS lessons Learning Centre Rules School-wide Rules You Can Do It 7 Habits Community Ethos Transition Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welfare and Discipline Policy Student Leaders Leadership Training School Values Personalising learning and responding to individual needs | Peer Mediation Playground Supervision Student Council Student Welfare Support Social Skills Groups Catastrophe Scales SWPBS Behaviour Matrix Protective Behaviours Life Education Breakfast Club Emergency lunches Fruit basket | Administrative organisation Curriculum approaches eg. Stop, Think, Do, You Can Do It, Revved Up Restorative Justice practices |

Targeted

- connect all Koorie students with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- all students in Out of Home Care will be appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and will be referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

Student Support Groups, see:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/supportgroups.aspx>

- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- referral to Student Welfare Coordinator and Student Support Services



- referral to ChildFirst, Headspace, Lookout

Heatherhill Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
- school-based wellbeing supports

Student Support Services

- Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
- Re-engagement programs such as Navigator
- Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:
- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
- with a disability
- in Out of Home Care
- and with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

Identifying students in need of support

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. Heatherhill Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance and suspension data
- engagement with families



Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.
- Students have the responsibility to:
 - participate fully in their educational program
 - display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
 - respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team.

Student behavioural expectations

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Statement of Values. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Heatherhill Primary School's Bullying policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Heatherhill Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges



- restorative practices
- time out
- behaviour reviews
- suspension
- expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx>

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

Engaging with families

Heatherhill Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available at the school
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

Evaluation

Heatherhill Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data (welfare books)
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21
- SOCS

Further information and resources



Links: *Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Bullying Prevention, Child Safe Standards*

Review cycle

This policy was last updated on July 2018 and is scheduled for review in March 2019



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is explain Heatherhill Primary School's commitment to making sure every member of our school community, regardless of their background or personal attributes, is treated with respect and dignity. Heatherhill Primary School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive school environment for all students and members of our school community.

Policy

Definitions

Personal attribute: a feature of a person's background or personal characteristics that is protected by State or Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. For example: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion etc.

Inclusion and diversity

Heatherhill Primary School is committed to creating a school community where all members of our school community are welcomed, accepted and treated equitably and with respect regardless of their backgrounds or personal attributes such as race, language, religious beliefs, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation so that they can participate, achieve and thrive at school.

Heatherhill Primary School acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of backgrounds and experiences in our school community and we will not tolerate behaviours, language or practices that label, stereotype or demean others.

Heatherhill Primary School will:

- ensure that all students and members of our school community are treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that students are not discriminated against and where necessary, are accommodated to participate in education and all school activities (eg schools sports, concerts) on the same basis as their peers
- acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students
- encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
- contribute to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students.

Bullying, harassment and other forms of inappropriate behaviour targeting individuals because of their personal attributes will not be tolerated in our school community. Students who may have experienced or witnessed this type of behaviour are encouraged to speak up and to let their teachers, parents or carers know about those behaviours to ensure that inappropriate behaviour can be addressed.



Heatherhill Primary School will take appropriate measures, consistent with its *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying Prevention* policies to respond to discriminatory behaviour or harassment at our school.

Heatherhill Primary School also understands that it has a special obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist all students to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities through our Student Support Group processes in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers and if appropriate, their treating practitioners. For more information about support available for students with disabilities, please refer to our school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* policy or contact the principal or assistant principal for further information.

Related policies AND RESOURCES

School Policy and Advisory Guide:

[Inclusive Education](#)

[Koorie Education](#)

[Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture](#)

[Safe Schools](#)

[Supports and Services](#)

[Program for Students with Disabilities](#)

Review period

This policy was last updated on June 2018 and is scheduled for review in March 2019.



MANDATORY REPORTING

Rationale:

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. As teachers, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

Aims:

To ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Implementation:

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually.
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- The Principal/or delegate will contact the Department of Human Services by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification.
- Members of the Department of Human Services, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect; teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.
- Students who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff to the principal.



Reporting obligations

The following table summarises the mandatory and other reporting obligations where there is a concern that a child or young person has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.

| Type of Reporting | Reporting obligations |
|--|--|
| <p>Mandatory reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach pursuant to the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) Principals of government and non-government schools | <p>Mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (Child Protection) as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child from that abuse.</p> <p>A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with these reporting obligations may be committing a criminal offence.</p> |
| Failure to disclose | <p>All adults, not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. Failure to disclose the information may amount to a criminal offence unless you have a "reasonable excuse" or have an "exemption" from doing so.</p> <p>To read more information about the 'failure to disclose' offence, see: Department of Justice and Regulation – Failure to disclose offence</p> |
| Failure to Protect | <p>Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.</p> <p>The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation. In a school context, this may include Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals. To read more information about the 'failure to protect offence', see: Department of Justice and Regulations – Failure to protect offence.</p> <p>For more information about managing and responding to the risk of abuse see: Responding to Student Sexual Offending and Risk Management under Department resources below. See also, the Four Critical Actions on the PROTECT portal.</p> |
| Child in need of protection | <p>Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> physical injury and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child |



| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child • emotional or psychological harm and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • the child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • the child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • the child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care. <p>Department policy requires all staff who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police. In the case of school staff, they must also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.</p> |
| <p>Child in need of therapeutic treatment</p> | <p>Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child over 10 but under 15 years of age has been exhibiting sexually abusive behaviours and may be in need of therapeutic treatment should make a report to DHHS Child Protection.</p> <p>Sexually abusive behaviours can be exhibited when a child uses their power, authority or status to engage another person in sexual activity that is unwanted, or where the other party is incapable of giving informed consent (such as other children who are younger or who have cognitive impairments).</p> <p>In the case of student sexual offending, Department policy requires staff to also report to the Victoria Police. In the case of school staff, they must also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.</p> |
| <p>Significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child</p> | <p>Any person who has a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child should report these concerns to DHHS Child Protection, or refer the child and their family to Child FIRST.</p> <p>A significant concern for the wellbeing of a child may arise, for instance, where any of the following factors may have a significant adverse impact on a child’s care, welfare or development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant parenting problems • family conflict or family breakdown • pressure due to a family member’s physical/mental illness, substance abuse, or disability • vulnerability due to youth, isolation or lack of support • significant social or economic disadvantage. In the case of school staff, they must also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team. |



| | |
|--|---|
| | For more information, see PROTECT - Responding to other concerns about the wellbeing of a child |
|--|---|