



Child Safe Policy

Armstrong Creek School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students at the school.

Rationale and Background

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

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

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and members of our community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply to Armstrong Creek School. The specific procedures that are applicable at our school are contained in the appendixes.

The child safe standards aim to drive cultural change in Armstrong Creek School which provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice. Our school values of Care, Collaboration and Commitment forms the foundation of inclusive and respectful community engagements.

Scope

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council-run events, activities and services such as Outside School Hours Care.

The Child Safe Standards

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests. Armstrong Creek School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Family violence
- Neglect (including medical neglect)
- Grooming

The staff at Armstrong Creek School are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to identify and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools.

At Armstrong Creek School we also recognize the diversity of children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

Principle of Inclusion

All of our child safety policies and procedures take account of the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Out of Home Care children, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

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

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

Safety of children with special educational needs

All children are vulnerable but some children need special care and protection to ensure they are safe – children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused. It is unlawful to discriminate against children with a disability and like all children, children with a disability have the right to participate in decision-making that affects them. In Victoria, mandatory child safe standards have been introduced to help protect children from abuse in organisations. In complying with the standards, organisations must promote the safety of children with a disability. It is your responsibility to uphold the legal and human rights of children with a disability to ensure they are safe when in your care. Children with a disability are more vulnerable to harm and abuse such as harassment, bullying, humiliation, physical and sexual abuse. This can be due to:

- social isolation
- limited provision of developmentally appropriate sexual and relationship information
- low levels of expectation held about their capacity to identify and report concerns
- inaccessible pathway to raise issues, concerns and complaints
- communication difficulties
- personal care needs requiring the involvement of different people and various levels of supervision
- signs of abuse being viewed as being related to the child's disability.

Each child is different and will experience their disability and the world differently – it is important not to stereotype or make assumptions. It can be hard for a child with a disability to make themselves heard or understood.

What we do to help keep children with a disability safe in our school:

- Ensure our school has a child safe culture in which abuse and harm is not tolerated and diversity is welcomed.
- Pre-empt unsafe situations via your risk assessment processes.
- Ensure we have sound recruitment and screening processes in place for staff and volunteers.

- Ensure our code of conduct for staff and volunteers clearly outlines boundaries about staff and volunteer interaction with children with a disability, including personal care assistance.
- Have a robust complaint process, encourage feedback and be responsive if problems arise.
- Empower children with a disability by assisting them to build their self-esteem and confidence through Respectful relationships and School Wide Positive Behaviour Support.
- Teach children about their bodies and their safety, including online activities (sex and relationships education).
- Enable and facilitate independence with dressing and toileting and personal care where possible.
- Communicate directly with children with a disability about how safe they feel.
- Be inclusive and collaborative with families.
- Raise awareness about abuse and ways to seek help. Make sure children with a disability know who they can go to if they feel unsafe or have a concern or complaint – make sure these processes take into account the child’s developmental level and communication requirements.
- If children have communication difficulties, organisational procedure must ensure vigilance in identifying indicators or warning signs. Listen to children, no matter how they communicate their thoughts, views and concerns.

To create and maintain a child safe school to which the standards apply Armstrong Creek School implement the following standards:

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

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety (See Appendix 2C)

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

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

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (DET Mandatory Reporting Policy) which can be found at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse (Appendix 4)

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

At Armstrong Creek School we meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety. Please speak with Dehlia Dawson, our Child Safety Officer if you have concerns about the welfare of any child.

**This policy will be reviewed every two years alongside the following policies:
Code of Conduct Policy, Mandatory Reporting Policy**

Date of next review: March 2020

Appendix One – Standard one

STRATEGIES TO EMBED A CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY AT ARMSTRONG CREEK SCHOOL

The following will be embedded to inform the culture of a Child Safe school where staff, students and parents all work cohesively to create such a culture.

- The diverse needs of children in the school are to be recognised. It is important that our school is inclusive and culturally safe places for children and parents. Young children and children with a disability may need greater levels of support and consideration. See Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and Appendix Two that reinforces the inclusive culture of the school.
- Include child safety as a standing item on Leadership Team and Staff Meeting agendas.
- Key people in the school are allocated to undertake child safety roles and responsibilities. See School Child Safety Leader Role and Responsibilities below.
- Communicate the school's stand on child safety that informs all people in the school community of the school's Child Safe Policy based on Ministerial Order 870. Communicate broadly and with a mix of tools: online (newsletters, website, Facebook), paper-based, verbally at information nights for parents, transition forums for new parents in the school and through school council's communication through distributed school council minutes and policy timelines. The schools' Child Safe statement is visible where all school visitors sign in on the Compass Kiosk.

SCHOOL CHILD SAFETY LEADER ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Child Safety Leader, Dehlia Dawson, will undertake the role and accompanying responsibilities to ensure the school embeds a culture of child safety and is compliant with Ministerial Order 870.

Provide Authoritative Advice

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
- Liaise with the principal and school leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety.

- Lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

Raise awareness across the school including staff, students and teachers and others who come into contact with children in the school

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
- Ensure the school actions are reviewed as to the effectiveness of the strategies put into place and to revise accordingly.
- Ensure the school's Child Safe policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. This is being incorporated into the Annual Implementation Plan, Strategic Plan and the 4 yearly Review process.
- Conduct regular briefing sessions for school staff members to ensure a high degree of awareness of The Standards and the school's Child Safe policy.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this. The policy will be uploaded onto the school's website and will be evaluated as part of the policy cycle for all school policies unless changes in the Order dictates changes in the school's policy. The Child Safe Policy will be provided to all new families who come into the school at the time of enrolment.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs, Out of Home Care students, Koori students and young carers. The Child Safe Leader will be actively in communication with the broader leadership team regarding potentially vulnerable and at risk children. 'Child Safe' will be a standing item on both the Leadership Team's meeting agenda and the Consultative Committee's agenda to ensure regular forums do support embedding a child safe culture in the school.
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.
- Work with teachers to include, where appropriate, supporting teaching points into curriculum programs i.e. cyber safety programs, School Wide Positive Behaviour

program, Respectful Relationships program, health and well-being related programs to build a culture of pro-activity and healthy relationships.

- Develop the capacity of the Positive Climate for Learning team members to facilitate Child Safe discussions in each of their Learning Communities.

The Child Safe Lead Will Be Trained and Have Capabilities To Support The School To Embed A Child Safe Culture

Being authoritative in providing advice by:

- keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years
- having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals. Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's Child Safe Policy and procedures, especially new, part time staff and CRTs.
- Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance. An Induction Booklet for all new staff sets out the Child Safe Policy.

Child Safe Leader to be aware of and use resources and responsibilities to support role and responsibilities:

- Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No. 870.
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) Information Sheet. CHILD SAFETY STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety.
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0. A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST, Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

- Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations - eLearning module
- State of Victoria (2010) Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian School

Appendix Two – Standard two

Child Safe Environment Policy

Purpose

The child safe policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards. Our school values of Care, Collaboration and Commitment support a child safe school community.

A Statement of Commitment to child safety helps raise awareness about the importance of child safety in the school and the community and affirms the organisation's commitment to child safety and expectations.

Scope and Audience

The policy covers all staff, volunteers, contractors (whether they come into contact with children and applies to all school related activities including those beyond the school environment i.e. camps, excursions, outside hours' care, holiday programs, YMCA as a partner provider).

Our commitment to child safety

Armstrong Creek School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people including students with additional needs. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Our commitment is further demonstrated through adhering to our school values of Care, Collaboration and Commitment. The school has zero tolerance for child abuse.

The school is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to cultural safety of Aboriginal children, young children, Out of Home Care children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in the school has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role s/he plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and

safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In its planning, decision – making and operations Armstrong Creek School will:

- take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children. This will be supported by all staff understanding their child safety role, being mindful of and building respectful and safe relationships between children and their teachers and other school staff;
- respect diversity in cultures and child rearing while keeping child safety paramount;
- provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- engage only the most suitable people to work with children and high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise issues;
- report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- provide non-verbal students with strategies and a means of communication;
- share information appropriately and lawfully with the school community where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk;
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Armstrong Creek School is structured around learning communities and so all children will be able to forge strong and respectful relationships in their learning spaces with multiple teachers thereby giving them opportunities to seek support from a number of significant others in their immediate day to day learning environment.

Policy and Procedures

Policies and procedures outlining the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below. The school's Child Safe Leader whose role and responsibilities (Appendix One) may be contacted for more information.

A Child Safe Culture

The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

- Armstrong Creek School is committed to child safety.
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- Our school is committed to the regular training and educating of our staff and volunteers in responding to students with special educational needs.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, young children and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
- Our school values of Care, Collaboration and Commitment promote the rights and responsibilities of all. Our school values are embedded in our School Wide Positive Behaviour Support as well as Respectful Relationships frameworks.
- Induction programs for staff and students elaborate on the school values and visuals are made explicit in all Learning Communities and admin spaces.

Armstrong Creek School is in a growth corridor and induction of new staff, students and parents must include the Child Safe Policy. New staff must be made aware of Mandatory Reporting and the Code of Conduct Policy.

- 'How to be safe' booklet for Primary Students (Protect Website) are displayed in all Learning Communities.
- The expectation matrix is displayed in all Learning Communities and students are explicitly taught each of the expectations. Parent/ carer are made aware of expectations at fortnightly assemblies.

If there is a belief that a child is in immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

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

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety of students in out of home care (a member of staff are trained as Designated Teacher)
- ensure that the safety of particularly young children is considered
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally
- promote student voice through the Student Representative Council.

Our staff and volunteers

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

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

The school's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found on the school's website along with all of the school's policies.

Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/Code of Conduct

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. The Code will be discussed and a shared/collective staff understanding of the Code's content will form part of the first curriculum day of each school year, to ensure staff are aware of their child safe responsibilities.

New staff will have the Code of Conduct provided to them as part of their induction, so that they too will have the same understanding as all other staff, and in turn, apply it accordingly. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and can be found on the school's website alongside the Child Safe Policy and Mandatory Reporting Policy.

Human Resources, Practices and Training

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

The leadership team recruits special educational needs teachers and therapists to support the education, wellbeing and communication of students with additional needs in their Learning Community. Through co-teaching models these teachers and therapists build the capacity of their colleagues to provide modified curriculum programs as well as emotional and wellbeing support to students with additional educational needs.

Additional support through Individual Learning Plans, social stories, visual schedules, peer modelling and the targeted use of adaptable learning spaces further ensure that the wellbeing of students with additional needs are met.

We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

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

Training and Supervision

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

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

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

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

The school's approach to human resources practices that ensure child safety can be found on the school's website along with all other school policies.

Allegations, Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include

reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.

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 including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the school's website along with all other school policies. The school use COMPASS: Professional Reports to store all records.

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

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

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

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

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

How to Respond

It is of the utmost importance that disclosures are treated in a sensitive and discreet manner. Anyone responding to a young person making such a disclosure should take the following steps.

- Take what the young person says seriously.

- React calmly, as over-reaction may intimidate the young person and increase any feelings of guilt that they may have.
- Reassure the young person that they were correct to tell somebody what happened.
- Listen carefully and attentively.
- Never ask leading, suggestive questions.
- Make interpretations about the information
- Use open-ended questions to clarify what is being said and try to avoid having them repeat what they have told you.
- Do not promise to keep secrets.
- Advise that you will offer support but if you judge the person to be at risk that you must pass on the information.
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser to the person reporting to you.
- Explain and make sure that the young person understands what will happen next.
- Do not confront the alleged abuser.
- Write down immediately after the conversation what was said, including all the names of those involved, what happened, where, when, if there were any witnesses and any other significant factors and note any visible marks on the individual making the report or any signs you observed.
- The person recording the event must sign and date all reports and indicate the time the notes were made.
- Ensure that the information is restricted to those who need to know it.
- Pass any allegations to the Designated Person immediately.

Legislative responsibilities

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our school will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Risk Reduction and Management

Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

All Victorian Teachers have a legal responsibility to report incidents where children's safety is at risk. Victorian Government School employees are expected to follow the DET Mandatory Reporting policy which can be found at:

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

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

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

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

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

The school's approach to Child Safe risk reduction and management can be found on the school's website along with all other school policies.

Listening to Children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parent/carers to understand their rights and responsibilities. When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers) informed about progress.

Confidentiality and Privacy

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

Policy Evaluation and Review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in context of school self – evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from the students, parents/carers and the school community. This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two-year review cycle and following significant incidents if they occur.

Definitions

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

Child abuse includes—

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

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

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

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

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

School staff means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
 - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
 - in a non-government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
 - a minister of religion¹.
 - **School governing authority** means:
 - The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
 - The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
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- The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

References and Resources

Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No. 870.

Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) Information Sheet. CHILD SAFETY STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety.

Commission for Children and Young People (2015) A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0.

Appendix Three – Standard three

Code of Conduct (Read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct Policy)

A Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It identifies professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

The objective of this Code of Conduct is to guide school staff in identifying and regulating their own behaviour and the behaviour of other school staff, and to protect children from abuse in the school environment. Armstrong Creek School will, develop, adopt, review and maintain a Child Safe Code of Conduct and have this endorsed by the School Council (interim council). The Code of Conduct will be published on the school's website on an ongoing basis and will form part of embedding the Code of Conduct into the Child Safe culture of the school.

The Code of Conduct is consistent with school policies related to student supervision, duty of care, volunteers, camps and excursions, anti-bullying policy and disciplinary procedures described in the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy.

Armstrong Creek School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Armstrong Creek School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning

environments. The Principal and school leaders of the school will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Embedding the Code of Conduct

To ensure the Code is fully appreciated, understood and applied by all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents the following actions will be taken:

- Ensure that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are aware of the code and how it applies;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of the induction for new staff;
- Inclusion of the Code in induction for all pre-service teachers;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of annual training for existing school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers);
- Discussion of the Code at staff meetings; communication of the Code through school communication channels including email, Compass, shared drive, team meetings and Consultative Committee meetings; as well as shared spaces including the staff room and office areas
- Informing parents/carers and other persons associated with the school of the expected behaviour for the school's leadership, staff, contractors and volunteers;
- Using the school's and the Department's reporting procedures should a breach of the Code be suspected or identified;
- Including the Code in employment advertisements and service contractors to ensure compliance;
- Communication to students in an appropriate way;

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times, adhering to the school's Child Safe Policy.
- creating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young children
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or Child Safety Leader.
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting

- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes. The school must obtain get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. Written consent is sought at the beginning of each school year from parent/carers. This applies for excursions and school activities.
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Making a professional judgement

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a member of School Leadership or Child Safe Leader
- Be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others
- Not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of an inappropriate nature.

Personal/living space

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

- Not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with

parents and School Leadership or the home has been designated as a work place
e.g. childminders, foster carers

- Be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- Not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Gifts, rewards and favouritism

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

- Be aware of the Department of Education and Training's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared
- Gift giving to an individual as part of a reward system should be avoided, instead, be based on collective or team based positive reinforcement.
- Ensure that if operating reward/award systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

Infatuations

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

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

Communication (including the use of technology)

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will:

- Ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries this includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, and blogs.
- Not share any personal information with a child
- Not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role

- Not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless the need to do so is agreed with School Leadership and parents
- Only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by their organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with school policy
- Only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible
- Not use internet, web-based or social media communication channels to send messages
- Use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the school's policy.

Social Contact

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

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

Sexual Contact

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

- Not engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity, to do so would be considered a criminal offence;
- Not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically
- Not discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children
- Ensure relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism

- Ensure language, attitudes and demeanour do not give rise to comment or speculation
- Be aware that consistently displaying special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as part of a grooming process, and as such will give rise to concerns about behaviour.

Physical Contact

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities, never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary
- Seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable;
- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort;
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Always encourage children, where possible to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with School Leadership and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan
- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Behaviour Management

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

- Not use any form of degrading treatment towards a child
- Not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments

- Ensure any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Never use corporal punishment
- Follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property
- When using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident
- Be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, i.e. bullying, changes in home circumstances

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

Personal/Intimate Care

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will;

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

One to one situations/home visits

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will:

- Ensure that, when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed
- Avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas

- Always inform colleagues and/or parents about one to one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- Avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs, where ever possible, these create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- Carefully consider the need of the child when in one to one situation and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry towards you
- Gain approval from school leadership for any home visit ensuring it is integral part of your role
- Never put yourself into a one to one situation when little or no information is available about the child.

Transporting

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will:

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

Excursions and Camps

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with by school leadership
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken
- Have parental consent to the activity
- Never share beds with children

- Not share bedrooms unless it is a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been agreed with a school leadership, parents and children.

Photography and Videos

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will:

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

Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

Adults at Armstrong Creek School will:

- Not access, make or store indecent images of children on the internet, to do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation
- Not make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment
- Follow their schools guidance on the use of ICT equipment
- Ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through ICT
- Ensure that any materials shown to children are age appropriate
- Immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the school leadership and follow mandatory reporting policy.

DEFINITIONS

Child abuse includes—

- any act committed against a child involving:
- a sexual offence or
- an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:

- physical violence or
- serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

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

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Proprietor in relation to a government school, means the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

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

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

School governing authority means, in the case of a government school:

- the Secretary;
- or a school council, as authorised by or under the **Education and Training Reform Act 2006**; or
- the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school or under the **Education and Training Reform Act 2006**.

School staff being an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;

- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary), and including a chaplain or minister of religion. A school lead for child safety should have sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate), to undertake the role effectively.

Appendix Four - Standard Four

Child Safe Risk Management Program: School staff selection, supervision and management practices

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

Read in conjunction with Armstrong Creek Schools Requirement and Selection Process.

Implementing child safe standard 4- Departmental and school actions

The table below outlines the steps that will be implemented to meet the requirements of Standard 4.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
<p>1. <i>Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have clear statements regarding the child safety requirements of the role and the expectations of the occupant</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated and requires that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the following standard 'Child safe environments' clause: "Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The school's Child Safe Code of Conduct is available on the school's website. " Position descriptions generated in Recruitment Online (ROL) are automated to include a standard clause regarding child safety. The Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include the text italicised in the below: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions include the standard 'Child safe environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide. For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safe Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3. Note that the Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include reference to the Standards, and all contracts offered on or after 1 August will include the revised wording.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preamble: The aims of the Department include: "the provision of a child safe environment" - Schedule B – Accountabilities of a principal – Student Support: "Pt 2) Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general well-being of all students in attendance at the school including compliance with the Child Safe Standards " <p>This will apply for future contracts.</p>	
<p>2. <i>All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
<p>3. <i>In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:</i></p> <p>4. <i>The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated to include that, the Principal, prior to an external applicant person commencing employment, must be satisfied that the person: "meets the Child Safe Standards." http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant <i>meets the Child Safe Standards</i> prior to the applicant's employment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
<i>gather, verify and record the information about a particular individual within the previous 12 months</i>		
5. <i>The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to induction and continuing suitability for child connected work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on alignment of/ changes to Induction will be developed in 2018. • Advice on alignment of/ changes to Performance and Development will be developed in Term 1, 2018, with changes to be determined for the 2019- Performance and Development cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction of new staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, procedures and Performance and Development • Monitor and assess jib applicant's continuing suitability for child connected work • strategies are in the process to be developed in Term 3 2019 to ensure schools fully meet this Standard.
6. <i>The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Councils to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2]
7. <i>Include Child safe in the OHS inspection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHS walks to include Child Safe lens • Child Safety Officer to attend OHS walks or delegate nominee
8. <i>Ensure school community embrace diversity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights awareness through community evenings • Inclusive Schooling Index pilot program • Parent Engagement Strategy • Newsletters
9. <i>School Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative nature of Learning Communities, glass doors and windows support an inclusive learning environment

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
		<p>and decrease the risk of abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play areas are zoned and staff members perform active supervision • NDIS therapists: needs to work with students in the Learning Communities. Where they need one to one support, NDIS workers work with students in meeting rooms which are glass doors. Staff are made aware of visits through COMPASS. • All contractors are employed/hired through Spotless. Armstrong Creek School has requested their Induction process and also to ensure a Spotless Manager accompany the contactors on the premises. • All volunteers, visitors and contactors enter the school through the foyer. Students are sent to the office or collected by the admin staff in cases where students are being picked up by a parent/ carer. • Parent volunteers follow an induction program during which Armstrong Creek School as a Child Safe school environment are highlighted • The school grounds have a secured fence around the perimeter.
10. <i>Camps and Excursions</i>	• Camps and Excursion Policy	• All Risk Assessments needs to ensure a Child Safe component are included as part of the Risk Management Plan
11. <i>Behaviours of Concern (BoC)</i>	• School Wide Positive Behaviour Support from network	Students who display BoC to have a Behaviour Plan and/or a Safety Plan. In some cases, students may have an alternative program. Staff are trained in Team Teach as well as Prevent- Teach- reinforce to ensure strategies are put in place for de-escalation of aggressive behaviours. Online Behaviour Management Modules.

Appendix Five – Standard Five

Responding to allegations of suspected child abuse (Read in conjunction with the Mandatory Reporting Policy)

As a school staff member you have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under your care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this applies to ALL school staff). The question of what constitutes “**reasonable steps**” will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or agencies when the school staff member is unsure of what steps to take
- reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities such as the Victoria Police and DHHS Child Protection arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child providing on-going support to the child – this may include attending DHHS Child Protection Case Planning meetings, and convening regular Student Support Group meetings
- sharing information with other school based staff who will also be responsible for monitoring and providing on-going support to the child.

The following is our procedure for responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of allegations of suspected child abuse. This document will be included in the induction program for all staff, volunteers and contractors engaged at our school. This document will be made available to our wider community via our website.

- As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.
- You must act, by following the 4 critical actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.

- You must act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
 - You must use the responding to allegations of suspected child abuse template to keep clear and comprehensive notes.
- * A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action

ACTION 1: RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- **calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying the Principal (or Nominee) as the contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.
- Informing the SSSO coordinator for your school.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

ACTION 2: REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM WITHIN THE SCHOOL:

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

- School Principal (or nominee) and/or leadership team
- Informing the SSSO coordinator for your school.
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Security Services Unit

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY
DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

- School Principal (or nominee) and/or leadership team
- DET Security Services Unit
- Informing the SSSO coordinator for your school.

ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your Principal (or nominee) must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- **not to contact** the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse).
- **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals etc.

Students with special educational needs may also need additional support in terms of social stories, visuals and 'checking in' with a familiar adult on a regular basis. The leadership team provides staff with strategies on how to positively engage student with additional needs.

Support additional needs students by assisting them through building their self-esteem and confidence through social stories, structured peer socialisation and the Respectful Relationship Program.

Provide safe and calming spaces and activities for students experiencing trauma.

Provide teachers with professional development on the identification and support of traumatised children.

Raise the awareness of students with additional needs to ensure they know who they can go to if they feel unsafe or have a concern or complaint – make sure these processes take into account the child's developmental level and communication requirements. (Protect Website)

You **must** follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you must still act.

This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

West Division 1800 075 599

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

CHILD FIRST

www.dhs.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or contact your local police station

DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT

(03) 9589 6266

STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT

(03) 9637 2934

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

NB. Duty of care also extends to students who are:

- **aged 17 years and over** - In circumstances where you suspect that a student over the age of 17 is subject to abuse you should still follow the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse (pg. 21). Although DHHS Child Protection work with children under 17 they can still be contacted with concerns relating to students 17 and over for referral and advice.
- **involved in student sexual offending** - You have a duty of care towards all students involved in student sexual offending, including the alleged victim, assailant

and any other students in the school who may have witnessed and/or been affected by the abusive behaviour.

Different types of abuse and recognising the possible physical and behavioural indicators of:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- grooming
- emotional or physiological harm
- neglect
- family violence.

When identifying child abuse, it is critical to remember that:

- the trauma associated with child abuse can significantly impact upon the wellbeing and development of a child
- all concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, or the conduct of a staff member, contractor or volunteer must be acted upon as soon as practicable.

If physical and/or behavioural indicators lead you to suspect that a child has or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, you must respond as soon as practicable by following the Four Steps (described below).

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse

If you believe that a student is **not** being abused, but you still hold concerns for their safety or wellbeing, refer to advice about Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Child (see below) to determine who to consult with, when to make a report and when to engage other wellbeing professionals. Regardless of the suspected cause, all concerns about the wellbeing of a child (or their unborn child) should be taken seriously and acted upon. This includes concerns about the wellbeing of a child, which do not appear to be the result of abuse.

You should make a referral to **Child FIRST/Orange Door** if:

- you have a significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- your concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- you/your school has discussed the referral with the family and they are supportive of it.

You **must** contact **Victoria Police** if:

- there is any concern for a child's immediate safety and/or
- a child is partaking in any risk taking activity that is illegal and extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the child.

You should contact **DHHS Child Protection** if:

- after consideration of all of available information you form a view that the child is in need of protection
- you believe that the child's parent/carers will not be open to support from family services to address their child's wellbeing.

If you are unsure whether to take action, or what action to take you should discuss this with the Principal and/or Child Safe Leaders and make contact with authorities for further advice.

Definitions of the different types of abuse – source:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/progress/health/protect/Pages/schidentify.aspx>

What is physical child abuse?

Physical child abuse can consist of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. Examples of physical abuse may include beating, shaking or burning, assault with implements and female genital mutilation (FGM).

PHYSICAL indicators of physical child abuse include (but are not limited to):

- bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, e.g. back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs

- bruises or welts in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury, e.g. fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth
- burns from boiling water, oil or flames or burns that show the shape of the object used to make them, e.g. iron, grill, cigarette
- fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs (especially those not consistent with the explanation offered, or the type of injury possible at the child's age of development)
- cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears and external genitalia
- bald patches where hair has been pulled out
- multiple injuries, old and new
- effects of poisoning
- internal injuries.

Behavioural indicators of physical child abuse:

- disclosure of an injury inflicted by someone else (parent, carer or guardian), or an inconsistent or unlikely explanation or inability to remember the cause of injury
- unusual fear of physical contact with adults
- aggressive behaviour
- disproportionate reaction to events
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- wariness or fear of a parent, carer or guardian
- reluctance to go home
- no reaction or little emotion displayed when being hurt or threatened
- habitual absences from school without reasonable explanation
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative
- unusually nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self and/or others
- poor sleeping patterns, fear of the dark or nightmares and regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting
- drug or alcohol misuse, suicide or self-harm.

What is child sexual abuse?

Child sexual abuse:

- is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity
- can include a wide range of sexual activity including fondling the child's genitals, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

Child sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact (e.g. kissing or fondling a child in a sexual way, masturbation, oral sex or penetration) and can also include non-contact offences, for example:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- sending sexual messages or emails to a child
- exposing a sexual body part to a child
- forcing a child to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to a child)
- having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation).

Child sexual abuse does not always involve force. In some circumstances a child may be manipulated into believing that they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love, through a process of grooming.

Who is most at risk of child sexual abuse?

Any child can be victim to sexual abuse, however children who are vulnerable, isolated and/or have a disability are much more likely to become victim, and are disproportionately abused. Perpetrators can include (but are not limited to):

- a family member (this is known as intra family abuse and can include sibling abuse)
- a school staff member, coach or other carer
- a peer/child 10 years or more in age*
- a family friend or stranger
- a person via a forced marriage (where a student is subject to a marriage without their consent, arranged for by their immediate or extended family - this constitutes a criminal offence and must be reported).

- See the context page of the Child Safe Safety Policy which elaborates on the sensitivity around the children with additional needs which are most at risk at Armstrong Creek School.

**Unwanted sexual behaviour toward a student by a person 10 years or over can constitute a sexual offence and is referred to as student-to-student sexual offending.*

Please note that a child who is under 10 years of age is not considered to be capable of committing an offence. Any suspected sexual behaviours by children under 10 is referred to as problem sexual behaviour.

PHYSICAL indicators of sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- injury to the genital or rectal area, e.g. bruising, bleeding, discharge, inflammation or infection
- injury to areas of the body such as breasts, buttocks or upper thighs
- discomfort in urinating or defecating
- presence of foreign bodies in the vagina and/or rectum
- sexually-transmitted diseases
- frequent urinary tract infections
- pregnancy, especially in very young adolescents
- anxiety-related illnesses, e.g. anorexia or bulimia.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- disclosure of sexual abuse, either directly (from the alleged victim) or indirectly (by a third person or allusion)
- persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity, e.g. excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults
- drawings or descriptions in stories that are sexually explicit and not age-appropriate
- fear of home, specific places or particular adults
- poor/deteriorating relationships with adults and peers
- poor self-care or personal hygiene.
- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis

- sleeping difficulties
- regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting or speech loss
- depression, self-harm, drug or alcohol abuse, prostitution or attempted suicide
- sudden decline in academic performance, poor memory and concentration
- promiscuity
- wearing layers of clothing to hide injuries and bruises.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators for perpetrators of child sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

Family Member (adult)

- attempts by one parent to alienate their child from the other parent
- overprotective or volatile relationship between the child and one of their parents/family members
- reluctance by the child to be alone with one of their parents/family members.

Family Member (sibling)

- the child and a sibling behaving like boyfriend and girlfriend
- reluctance by the child to be alone with a sibling
- embarrassment by siblings if they are found alone together.

School staff member, coach or other carer

- touching a child inappropriately
- bringing up sexual material or personal disclosures into conversations with a student/s
- inappropriately contacting the student/s, e.g. calls, emails, texts, social media
- obvious or inappropriate preferential treatment of the student/s (making them feel "special")
- giving of gifts to a student/s
- having inappropriate social boundaries, e.g. telling the potential victims about their own personal problems etc.
- offering to drive a student/s to or from school

- inviting themselves over to their homes, calling them at night
- befriending the parents themselves and making visits to their home
- undermining the child's reputation (so that the child won't be believed).

What is grooming?

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.

Sometimes it is hard to see when someone is being groomed until after they have been sexually abused, because some grooming behaviour can look like "normal" caring behaviour.

What is online grooming?

Online grooming is a criminal offence and occurs when an adult uses electronic communication (including social media) in a predatory fashion to try to lower a child's inhibitions, or heighten their curiosity regarding sex, with the aim of eventually meeting them in person for the purposes of sexual activity. This can include online chats, sexting, and other interactions.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators that a child may be subject to grooming include (but are not limited to):

- developing an unusually close connection with an older person
- displaying mood changes (hyperactive, secretive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn, depressed)
- using street/different language; copying the way the new 'friend' may speak; talking about the new 'friend' who does not belong to his/ her normal social circle
- possessing jewellery, clothing or expensive items given by the 'friend'
- possessing large amounts of money which s/he cannot account for
- using a new mobile phone (given by the 'friend') excessively to make calls, videos or send text messages
- being excessively secretive about their use of communications technologies, including social media
- frequently staying out overnight, especially if the relationship is with an older person

- being dishonest about where they've been and whom they've been with
- using drugs; physical evidence includes spoons, silver foil, 'tabs', 'rocks'
- assuming a new name; being in possession of a false ID, stolen passport or driver's license provided by the 'friend' to avoid detection
- being picked up in a car by the 'friend' from home/school or 'down the street'.

What is emotional abuse?

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person, to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health. Emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

PHYSICAL indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to):

- speech disorders such as language delay, stuttering or selectively being mute (only speaking with certain people or in certain situations)
- delays in emotional, mental or physical development.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to):

- overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour
- extremely demanding, aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour or anti-social and destructive behaviour
- low tolerance or frustration
- poor self-image and low self-esteem
- unexplained mood swings, depression, self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- behaviours that are not age-appropriate, e.g. overly adult, or overly infantile
- fear of failure, overly high standards, and excessive neatness
- poor social and interpersonal skills
- violent drawings or writing
- lack of positive social contact with other children.

What is neglect?

Neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health or physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk.

In some circumstances the neglect of a child:

- can place the child's immediate safety and development at serious risk
- may not immediately compromise the safety of the child, but is likely to result in longer term cumulative harm.

PHYSICAL indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- appearing consistently dirty and unwashed
- being consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- being at risk of injury or harm due to consistent lack of adequate supervision from parents
- being consistently hungry, tired and listless
- having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care
- having inadequate shelter and unsafe or unsanitary conditions.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- gorging when food is available or inability to eat when extremely hungry
- begging for or stealing food
- appearing withdrawn, listless, pale and weak
- aggressive behaviour, irritability
- involvement in criminal activity
- little positive interaction with parent, carer or guardian
- poor socialising habits
- excessive friendliness towards strangers
- indiscriminate acts of affection
- poor, irregular or non-attendance at school
- staying at school for long hours and refusing or being reluctant to go home
- self-destructive behaviour

- taking on an adult role of caring for parent.

What is family violence?

Family violence can include physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional and physical abuse, sexual abuse and financial and social abuse.

A child's exposure to family violence constitutes child abuse. This exposure can be very harmful and may result in long-term physical, psychological and emotional trauma. Action must be taken to protect the child, and to mitigate or limit their trauma.

PHYSICAL indicators of family violence include (but are not limited to):

- speech disorders
- delays in physical development
- failure to thrive (without an organic cause)
- bruises, cuts or welts on facial areas, and other parts of the body including back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs
- any bruises or welts (old or new) in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury (such as fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth)
- internal injuries.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of family violence include (but are not limited to):

- violent/aggressive behaviour and language
- depression and anxiety and suicidal thoughts
- appearing nervous and withdrawn, including wariness of adults
- difficulty adjusting to change.
- psychosomatic illness
- bedwetting and sleeping disorders.
- 'acting out', such as cruelty to animals
- extremely demanding, attention-seeking behaviour
- participating in dangerous risk-taking behaviours to impress peers
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative behaviour
- taking on a caretaker role prematurely, trying to protect other family members

- embarrassment about family
- demonstrated fear of parents, carers or guardians, and of going home
- disengagement from school and/or poor academic outcomes
- parent-child conflict.

For older children and young people indicators can also include:

- moving away/running away from home
- entering a relationship early to escape the family home
- experiencing violence in their own dating relationships
- involvement in criminal activity
- alcohol and substance abuse.

With knowledge of the types of abuse and indicators of the respective abuse as described above, the following **describes the 4 Critical Actions** that **MUST** be followed by the school and those charged with the safety of the children in the school. These actions include **informing appropriate authorities** about the allegation, including but not limited to **mandatory reporting**.

The Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Child Safe Leader are responsible for promptly **managing** the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously.

The Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Child Safe Leader are responsible for **responding** appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

The Principal, Assistant Principal and /or Child Safe Leader is responsible for **monitoring** overall school compliance with this procedure. The school will use a part of its mandated curriculum day at the commencement of each school year or a PD session within the first 2 weeks of the year to allow the staff to undertake the on-line learning module: <http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/schools/>

The Principal, Assistant Principal and /or Child Safe Leader are responsible for managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if the person allocated responsibility under **Ministerial Order clause 11 (3)**

(c) (i) i.e. promptly managing the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously;

cannot perform his or her role. Fulfilling these roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure, the Principal, Assistant Principal or Child Safe Leader does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

Responding to suspected child abuse: for Victorian schools

School staff should use the template below to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. This document should be used in conjunction with the following: **4 Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.**

If a child is in immediate danger, school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

Recording and retaining the record

The Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Child Safe Leader will ensure the **record of the allegation and the school's response to it is made secure and retained.** It is a requirement under **Ministerial Order No. 870- Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of child abuse in schools** for schools to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.

The aim is to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of Court proceedings. These notes may assist later if required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

Ongoing staff training, awareness raising and promotion of the school observing and adhering to Child Safety, will support school staff to proactively and with knowledge, prioritise reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school; further the school will support the alleged victim by responding and acting in accordance with the

Ministerial Order 870 and fulfil their legal obligation to report an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Staff are not required to make judgement about the truth of the allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARE MAKING A REPORT TO DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE YOU MUST SEEK ADVICE BEFORE CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS SO AS NOT TO COMPROMISE ANY INVESTIGATION OR PLACE A CHILD AT FURTHER RISK

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS
Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION As a school staff member, you play a critical role in protecting children in your care.

- You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- You must act if you form a suspicion or reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (eg, if the teacher or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template to keep clear and comprehensive records, even if you make a decision not to report.

*A reasonable belief is a relationship law threshold. It is a subjective test which is to be investigated and taken action.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling 000 for urgent medical aid or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential abuse scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
 You must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contact the witness or witness to Victoria Police.

You must also report internally to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Employee Conduct Branch
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Committee for Children and Young People on 0300 782 878.

All allegations of reportable conduct must be reported as soon as possible to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - Employee Conduct Branch
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - Diocesan education office
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - Committee for Children and Young People on 0300 782 878.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
 You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- at risk of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed or has been harmed and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE
 You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You must also report internally to:

- GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre
- CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/carers in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parents/carers to be contacted
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

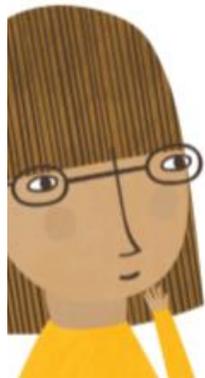
Your school must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a Student Support Plan in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

Schools may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You must follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

<p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA North Division 030 864 677 South Division 030 855 785 East Division 030 360 381 West Division (Burst) 1800 675 599 West Division (Metro) 0300 654 677</p> <p>AFTER HOURS After hours, weekends, public holidays 02 92 78</p> <p>CHILD FIRST http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/childfirstand-support.html</p> <p>ORANGE DOOR http://www.diocecan.vicatholic.com/orange-door/</p>	<p>VICTORIA POLICE 000 or your local police station</p> <p>DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE 1800 126 126</p> <p>INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT 1800 126 126</p> <p>EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9437 2505</p> <p>DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne (03) 9267 6228 Brisbane (03) 5337 7115 Adelaide (03) 5443 2377</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9825 7200</p> <p>THE LOOKOUT The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: http://www.lookout.org.au</p> <p>Family violence victim/survivors can be referred to 1800 Support for counselling, information and a national service: 1800 737 732.</p>
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TEMPLATE FOR:

RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

(hard copies can be found at the Child Safe display in admin block)

When to use this template:

School staff should use this template to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused.

This template should be used in conjunction with following the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Completing this template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

Why record this information?

When completing this template your aim should be to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of Court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

It is a requirement under Ministerial Order No. 870 - Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools for schools to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE
NAME: OCCUPATION: LOCATION (SCHOOL ADDRESS): 100 Central Boulevard, Armstrong Creek RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If anyone is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000.

See Action 1 of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FIRST AID? PROVIDE DETAILS IF 'YES'.

WHO ADMINISTERED THIS? (NAME AND TITLE):

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FURTHER IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

CURRENT LOCATION AND SAFETY STATUS:

E.G. ARE ALL IMPACTED STUDENTS SAFE AND NOT IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER?

IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO VICTORIA POLICE ON 000.

CHILD'S INFORMATION

PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:

GENDER:

DATE OF BIRTH:

YEAR LEVEL/CLASS:

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

PARENT/CARER NAME/S:

PARENT/CARER CONTACT:

LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN BY CHILD:

DISABILITIES, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:

CHILD'S BACKGROUND

CULTURAL STATUS AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

IF THE CHILD IS OF ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BACKGROUND, GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS MUST CONTACT THEIR KOORIE ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT OFFICER, TO ARRANGE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT. IF THE CHILD IS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT YOU MUST NOTIFY THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION DIVISION ON (03) 9637 2990.

ANY KNOWN PREVIOUS HISTORY OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

(PRIOR TO THIS INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OR INVOLVEMENT WITH AGENCIES):

FAMILY BACKGROUND

FAMILY COMPOSITION (IF KNOWN):

LIST PARENTING OR CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND SIBLING NAMES AND AGES

ANY OTHER PEOPLE LIVING WITH THE CHILD (IF KNOWN):

DISABILITY, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES IN FAMILY (IF KNOWN):

LIKELY REACTION TO A REPORT BEING MADE (IF KNOWN):

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

INDICATORS OR INSTANCES WHICH LED YOU TO BELIEVE A CHILD/CHILDREN ARE SUBJECT TO CHILD ABUSE, OR AT RISK OF ABUSE:

DETAIL ANY DISCLOSURES OR INCIDENTS OR SUSPICIONS (INCLUDING NAMES, TIMES AND DATES DOCUMENTING A CHILD'S EXACT WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE). INCLUDE SPECIFIC DETAIL HERE ON WHAT LED YOU TO FORM A REASONABLE BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF BEING ABUSED

ANY PHYSICAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR OR PRIOR CONCERNS LEADING UP TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION:

DETAILS OF PERSONS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED THE ABUSE (IF KNOWN)

NAME:

GENDER:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

NOTING IF THEY ARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL OR WITHIN THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
(THIS WILL IMPACT WHO YOU REPORT TO)

ADDRESS:

CONTACT DETAILS:

CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

See Action 2 of Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES TICK THE AUTHORITIES YOU HAVE REPORTED TO:

- VICTORIA POLICE
- DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
- CHILD FIRST
- DECISION NOT TO REPORT

IF YOU'VE DECIDED NOT TO REPORT, LIST YOUR REASONS HERE. ALSO INCLUDE ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY YOU BELOW:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR REPORT:

DATE:

TIME:

AUTHORITY:

OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

REPORTING INTERNALLY

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:

DATE:

TIME:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS TO EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:
GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STAFF MUST REPORT TO SECURITY SERVICES UNIT AND ALSO
TO THE EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

DATE:

TIME:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

See Action 3 of Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents,
Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

ACTIONS TAKEN

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS/CARERS (IF APPROPRIATE):
SCHOOL STAFF MUST CONSULT WITH VICTORIA POLICE AND/OR DHHS CHILD
PROTECTION TO DETERMINE IF IT IS APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENTS. IF IT IS,
PARENTS MUST BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (PREFERABLY ON THE SAME
DAY OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION).

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?

- No
- Yes

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER?

- No
- Yes

LIST REASONS IF IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER:

IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER MAKING THE CALL:

NAME OF PARENT/CARER RECEIVING THE CALL:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

See Action 4 of Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

PLANNED ACTIONS

INCLUDE DETAIL ON WHAT FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS HAVE OCCURRED TO SUPPORT THE STUDENT (FOR EXAMPLE REFERRAL TO WELLBEING PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER SPECIALISED SERVICES, THE CONVENING OF A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT PLANS)

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

SUPPORT:

REFERRAL(S):

PROCESS OF REVIEW

COMPLETE THIS SECTION BETWEEN 4- 6 WEEKS AFTER AN INCIDENT, SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM. THIS WILL SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL TO CONTINUE TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE AND TO REFLECT ON YOUR PROCESSES AND THE NEED FOR ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM?

- No
- Yes

IF NOT CONSIDER THE NEED TO MAKE A FURTHER REPORT.

DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED?

- No
- Yes

IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN.

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE?

- No
- Yes

IF SO HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET?

- No
- Yes

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/WITNESSED AN INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE ANY SUPPORT?

- No
- Yes

IF SO HAS THIS BEEN RECEIVED?

- No
- Yes

REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

HAVE SCHOOL STAFF FOLLOWED THE FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE?

WAS AN APPROPRIATE DECISION MADE IN RELATION TO WHEN TO ACT?

- No
- Yes

COULD THE SUSPECTED ABUSE HAVE BEEN DETECTED EARLIER?

- No
- Yes

ACTION 1

DID THE SCHOOL TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IN AN EMERGENCY?

- No
- Yes

ACTION 2

WAS A REPORT MADE TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES AND INTERNALLY?

- No
- Yes

WERE SUBSEQUENT REPORTS MADE IF NECESSARY?

- No
- Yes

ACTION 3

DID THE SCHOOL CONTACT THE PARENTS/CARERS ASAP?

- No
- Yes

HAVE THE PARENTS CONTINUED TO BE ENGAGED IF APPROPRIATE?

- No
- Yes

ACTION 4

HAS THE SCHOOL PROVIDED ADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT?

- No
- Yes

HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN BEEN ESTABLISHED, IMPLEMENTED & REVIEWED?

- No
- Yes

WAS THE STUDENT APPROPRIATELY SUPPORTED IN ANY INTERVIEWS?

- No
- Yes

HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS BEEN RECEIVED?

- No
- Yes

HAVE THE COMPLAINTS BEEN RESOLVED?

- No
- Yes

OTHER LEARNINGS

Appendix 6 & Appendix 6 (1)

Standard Six

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.

The School will mitigate, remove or reduce the risks of child abuse. The school will take into account the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

The school has developed a plan (that will necessarily alter over time based on potential changes in the school), including a record of those risks and the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls). The plan indicates the arrangements for monitoring (part of the role of the Principal and as detailed in Standard One where the Child Safe Leader's roles and responsibilities have been documented).

The plan includes reference to the training and education of staff about their individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse. The plan references the Code Of Conduct, the 4 critical actions to be taken in response to an allegation of child abuse, and the Child Safe training and training about abuse risks in the school, that must be undertaken as scheduled (beginning of the year, induction as examples) and as the need arises (e.g. after an incident). The training, depending on the risk, would involve the School Council and/or school staff.

OHS inspections to have a Child Safe lens to ensure child safe areas are monitored. The OHS activity calendar to include Child Safe.

Major and Minor behaviour incidents will be logged on Compass; Student Chronicles.

See the Risk Assessment Table

Appendix 7- Standard Seven

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

Child Safe Standard 7 requires the delivery of appropriate education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- Resilience
- Child abuse awareness and prevention

The following programs/frameworks and Policy will be delivered by the school, working to complement their aims, intentions and requirements. School staff will be supported in their professional learning to ensure the observance and delivery of a Child Safe environment through such programs, frameworks and Policy. Curriculum documents and resources will be easily accessible to school staff through the Compass portal and Google Drive; the 2 electronic platforms that will assist school staff accordingly.

Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy

The school's Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy provides the basis on which it develops and maintains a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment. The policy articulates the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour. The Policy also references the Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)

As a new school, the school make central to the positive and safe culture of the school, the SWPBS framework. It is an evidence-based framework for preventing and responding to student behaviour. It aims to create a positive school climate, culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for all community members. A team of teaching staff are professionally developed through the SWPBS resource as a priority.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/wholeschoolengage.aspx>

Victorian Curriculum

The relevant domains of the Victorian Curriculum will be provided as part of the mandated curriculum delivery. Specifically, to address the Child Safe Standard 7, the following will support children at Armstrong Creek School to build resilience, healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality) and to gain insight into appropriate behaviour and what is not, hence being empowered to feel safe and to be safe. The development of the Respectful Relationship initiative will drive the implementation of students ability to use a strength based approach to problem solve, engage in strategies to seek help and manage stress, being a positive bystander and build their resilience.

The Personal and Social Capability curriculum aims to develop knowledge, understandings and skills to enable students to:

- recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions
- demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience
- develop empathy for and understanding of others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community
- understand how relationships are developed and use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships
- work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively.

Other resources and programs to support the **Child Safe Policy** and to be compliant with **Ministerial Order 870** will be considered and included as the school opens, grows and evolves.

Child Safe specific resources

Child safe specific resources will be displayed in each of the Learning Communities as well as a central space in the administration block.

Useful resources

Davis Miller and Jon Brown, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), United Kingdom, 'We have the right to be safe' Protecting disabled children from abuse, October 2014

Government of South Australia, Department for Education and Child Development, Families SA, Protecting children and young people with disability: a booklet for parents and carers, August 2012

State of South Australia, Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities, A guide to protecting children and young people with disability and preventing sexual abuse: For parents and carers, 2012

Robinson, S. & McGovern, D. (2014) Safe at School? Exploring safety and harm of students with cognitive disability in and around school. Lismore, Centre for Children and Young People. Report completed for the NSW Law and Justice Foundation.