



WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safe Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety

Williamstown PS Child Safety Officer Role Statement

The Williamstown PS Child Safety Officer is Andrea Duxson (Principal).

The role of the Child Safety Office at Williamsdtown PS includes to:

- Provide authoritative advice
 - Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety
 - Liaise with 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
 - Ensure the Williamstown PS policies are known and used appropriately
 - Ensure the Williamstown PS child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework
 - 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 the school in this
 - Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
 - Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.
- Training and being authoritative in providing advice by:
 - Keeping 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 referral – Compass and Welfare files
 - Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the Williamstown PS child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff
 - Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

Child Safe Standard 1 was endorsed/approved by the Williamstown Primary School council on 21st April 2020, for review in April 2023 or if legislative or other changes are required in the interim.



WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safe Standard 2: Statement of commitment to child safety

Williamstown PS Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Williamstown Primary 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 the diversity of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students in out of home care, LGBTI students, children with disabilities and vulnerable children.

Williamstown Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Every person involved in our school has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she 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 our 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
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- Provide written guidance and policies on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and, have high quality supervision and professional development in this school
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- Share information appropriately and lawfully, with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children at risk
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Child Safe Standard 2 was endorsed/approved by the Williamstown Primary School council on 21st April 2020, for review in April 2023 or if legislative or other changes required are in the interim.



WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safe Standard 3: A child safety code of conduct

Williamstown PS Child Safety Code of Conduct

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

Williamstown Primary 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 Williamstown Primary 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 Williamstown Primary 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 childrelated 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.

Acceptable behaviours:

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in childrelated work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children and taking into account the diversity of all children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating 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 and vulnerable children

- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer
- 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 childrelated 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
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Child Safe Standard 3 (Code of Conduct) was endorsed/approved by the Williamstown Primary School council on 21st April 2020, for review in April 2023 or if legislative or other changes are required in the interim.



WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safe Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse

Williamstown PS Human Resources Practices Guidelines

Williamstown PS has embedded screening, supervision, training practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing staff. It is important for Williamstown PS to have strong human resources practices in place to help protect children from abuse.

Williamstown Primary School will foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as be aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations. Robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, our school needs to provide opportunities for staff to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety such as the - Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations Online Module that is required to be completed by all staff every year. This will support our staff to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

We will reinforce our organisation's commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of all our staff and external providers in keeping children safe and protected.

Child Safety Officer (see Child Safe Standard 1 - School Child Safety Officer)

Williamstown Primary School has an designated Child Safety Officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist our school in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with our legal requirements, policies and procedures.

The designated Child Safety Officer will provide a single contact for children, parents, staff and external providers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with our school.

Training and Induction

At Williamstown PS training and education is an important tool to help staff understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Staff and external providers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will need support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff might need to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

Training and support also promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and external providers to ensure that the school meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

Training should enhance the skills and knowledge of our staff and external providers as a prevention to reduce exposure to risks.

Staff and external providers working with children need to receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Williamstown PS policies and procedures
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including Williamstown PS Child Safety Reporting Process
- cultural awareness training.

Training can be formal such as:

- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally

Training can also be informal such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Elders, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching.

Supervision

Supervision of staff and external providers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed.

As a matter of good practice, new staff and external providers should be supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including our school's internal reporting procedures (such as your Child Safety Officer (Principal), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve staff skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance should be measured against our schools standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the code of conduct and child safe policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

The Williamstown PS Child Safe Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures should be accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures should be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Staff and external providers should be aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within the school. Staff should also be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Children and their families should be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Our school's disciplinary procedures following DET procedures and processes clearly outline what staff or external providers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

Resources and References

- *Commission for Children and Young People (2015) A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0.*
- *Department of Education and Training (2016) Recruitment in Schools*
- *Department of Education and Training (2016) Suitability for Employment*
- *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 Qualifications Authority (2016) Child Safety Standard 4: Staff Selection Checklist*

Regular review

- These guidelines will be reviewed every year and following significant incidents if they occur.

Child Safe Standard 4 was endorsed/approved by the Williamstown Primary School council on 21st April 2020, for review in April 2023 or if legislative or other changes are required in the interim.



Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

1. PURPOSE

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

2. 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).

3. POLICY

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests.

Williamstown Primary School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

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

The staff at Williamstown Primary School are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

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

Mandatory Reporting

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses, registered psychologists, school counsellors and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse, and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Williamstown Primary School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually. We also require all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)*.

Child in need of protection

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131 278 – 24-hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS Child Protection, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#)*.

At Williamstown Primary School we also encourage all staff to make a referral to Child FIRST when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations.

Reportable Conduct

Our school must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child; or
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our principal must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health staff and school council employees.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they should notify the Regional Director.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)*.

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (i.e. persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.
 - “Reasonable excuse” is defined by law and includes:
- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department’s *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Failure to disclose offence](#)*.

Failure to protect offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (i.e. persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department’s *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Failure to protect offence](#)*.

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic). This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in 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.

For more information about this offence and reporting obligations see: [Child Exploitation and Grooming](#).

4. RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- WPS Child Safety Policy
- WPS Child Safe Standards

5. REVIEW AND POLICY HISTORY

- This policy is due for formal review in April 2023 although it may be changed at any time as required after discussion with School Council and the Principal or if guidelines change.

Policy History

Version Approval Date	Summary of changes	VRQA Requirement	DET Mandated Policy	School Council Input
April 2020	Comprehensive review	Yes	No	Consultation not required. Noting required.

6. APPENDIX A – CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCEDURES AT WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

6.1 - For students

- All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a student does not know who to approach at Williamstown they should start with our Child Safe Officer and Principal, Andrea Duxson.

6.2 - Managing disclosures made by students

When managing a disclosure you should:

- listen to the student and allow them to speak
- stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you").

When managing a disclosure you should AVOID:

- displaying expressions of panic or shock
- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
- going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault
- making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

6.3 - General procedures

Our school will follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse \(Four Critical Actions\)](#) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

All staff at our school who believe that a child is in need of protection, even if it doesn't meet the threshold required for mandatory reporting or the staff member is not a mandatory reporter, should in the first instance, speak to our Child Safe Officer and Principal, Andrea Duxson, or should make the required reports to DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police as necessary.

At our school our Child Safe Officer and Principal, Andrea Duxson, will be responsible for monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a staff member or any other person from reporting to the relevant authorities if they form a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of abuse.

6.4 - Reporting suspicions, disclosures or incidents of child abuse

Responsibilities of all school staff

If a school staff member reasonably suspects or witnesses an incident of child abuse or receives a disclosure of child abuse, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid and call 000.
- Speak to our Child Safe Officer and Principal, Andrea Duxson, as soon as possible, who will follow the [Four Critical Actions](#).
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure using the Responding to [Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in confidential locked filing cabinet in a locked office only accessible by leadership keys.
- If the staff member is a mandatory reporter and reasonably believes that a student has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse from which the child's parents have not protected the child, they must ensure that a report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police has been made by our Child Safe Officer and Principal, Andrea Duxson. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the mandatory reporter must make the report.
- If the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child, they must ensure that a report to Victoria Police has been made by our Child Safe Officer and Principal, Andrea Duxson. If the report has not been made by another staff member, the staff member must make the report.

In circumstances where a member of the leadership team disagrees that a report needs to be made, but the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that the child is in need of protection and/or has been the victim of sexual abuse, the staff member must still contact DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police to make the report.

Responsibilities of the Williamstown Primary School Child Safe Officer

The Child Safe Officer is responsible for promptly managing the school's response to an incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the incident, suspicion or disclosure is taken seriously. The Child Safe Officer is also responsible for responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

If the Child Safe Officer receives a report from a school staff member or member of the school community of a suspicion, disclosure or incident of child abuse, they must:

- Follow the [Four Critical Actions](#) as soon as possible, including:
 - Responding to an emergency
 - Reporting to authorities/referring to services
 - Contacting parents/carers and
 - Providing ongoing support.
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure, including actions taken using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in confidential locked filing cabinet in a locked office only accessible by leadership keys.
- They are also responsible for ensuring that any staff member who reported the incident, disclosure or suspicion to them also makes and keeps notes of the incident.
- At Williamstown Primary School, the Child Safe Officer will be responsible for ensuring that there is a prompt response to the disclosure and that the child is appropriately supported.

6.5 - Duty of care and ongoing support for students

Fulfilling the requirements in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of abuse.

All staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students. All staff must ensure that The Principal and Child Safe Officer is aware of any incidents, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible after they occur. This will allow appropriate supports to be put in place for the student affected.

6.6 - For school visitors, volunteers and school community members

All community members aged 18 years or over should be aware of their legal obligations – see Failure to disclose offence above, in this Policy.

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details see the Four Critical Actions -

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

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 a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime 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, contracted volunteer or visitor 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 school chairperson
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

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**
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**.

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:

- 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 chairperson.

OTHER CONCERNS

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing, you **must** seek this advice from:

- Child FIRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police.

For suspected student sexual assault, please follow 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.

*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

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/carer (eg. 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 parent/carer 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. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

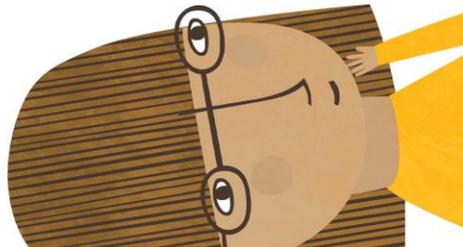
You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (eg. if the victim 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 notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

There is no requirement for community members to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DHHS Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the school, and where disclosure of that concern will not compromise any potential police investigation, the community member should report this concern to the Principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken.



CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA North Division 1800 664 977 South Division 1800 665 795 East Division 1300 360 381 West Division (Rural) 1800 075 699 West Division (Metro) 1300 664 977	VICTORIA POLICE 000 or your local police station	INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA (03) 9625 7200
AFTER HOURS After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78	DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE 1800 126 126	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
CHILD FIRST https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referral-and-support-teams	INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT 1800 126 126	Family violence victims/enablers can be referred to 1800 Respect for counselling, information and a referral service: 1800 737 732
ORANGE DOOR https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html	EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH (03) 9637 2595	
	DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne (03) 9267 0258 Ballarat (03) 5337 7135 Sale (03) 5622 6600 Sandhurst (03) 5443 2377	



Source:

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf



WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

Williamstown PS Risk Statement

Williamstown Primary School has an active risk management approach to the duty of care in protecting our children from any possible safety risk. We have a commitment to continuous improvement and a legal responsibility to ensure the safety of all children. Ensuring our children are safe is a shared responsibility for the management of risks for all staff.

Williamstown PS has implemented a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. The strategy outlines how risk is managed, including who is responsible for the process (the school governing authority), and a description of the process itself. The process includes risk assessment, implementation of controls, and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

The school's risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and ultimately remove the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of our school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in our environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Process for identifying and reducing or removing risks of child abuse

Managing risk at Williamstown PS will involve the following steps and considerations:

- Identify the school's child safety risks across the range of school environments (including excursions, camps, online). See Williamstown PS Child Safety Risk Register
- Identify any existing risk reducing measures or internal controls
- Assess and rate the school's child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk
- If the risk rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further risk management strategies through additional controls or other prevention or detection and removal strategies and then re-assess the risk

The risk management process will be documented, recorded and reviewed periodically. Effective risk management strategies are dynamic and change over time as new risks arise and others may no longer be relevant.

Effective risk management strategies will be transparent, well understood and diverse, to take account of the increased level of risk associated with the specific nature of some activities and the vulnerability of particular groups.

Williamstown PS will be implementing this standard by including the following Risk Management strategies:

- ensuring clear and accessible processes for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities appropriate to the school, its size and resources, physical and online environments, and the characteristics of the children to whom it provides services
- developing, recording and communicating clear processes for removing risks to children (e.g. cyberbullying)

- providing staff with training in identifying child abuse risks
- engaging methods for continual improvement in how risks are managed by learning from past experiences, including policy review and staff training.
- reinforcing/reviewing supervision of children requirements for staff
- establishing processes for periodic review of risk management approaches and/or processes following any incidents
- recognising and adapting to the needs of children and communities, taking into account the diversity of all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children, children with a disability and vulnerable children. For example, acknowledgement that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed for some children with a disability
- recognising and addressing risks to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children which might exist if a child does not feel safe identifying themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or if there is an inadequate response to self-identification
- recognising and addressing risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, which might exist because of their experiences, by increasing communication with families to build trust and understanding of school activities
- recognising and addressing risks for children with a disability and vulnerable children, such as communication barriers when telling an adult they feel unsafe
- having a Child Safety Officer as a central reporting and advisory contact for staff to raise concerns with, and regarding concerns about a children safety

Resources and References

- [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0.
- Department of Education and Training (2016) School Policy Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy and associated tools:
 - School risk register which can be edited and has automatic tools embedded is available, see: [Risk Management in Schools – Risk Register.](#)
 - Subordinate risk registers for specific activities such as overseas travel/excursions or projects, see: [Risk Management in Outdoor Education – Education Outdoors.](#)
 - Online risk management module: [Risk Management - Online Risk Module](#)
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module (login required)
- 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 Schools.
- 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 Qualifications Authority (2016) Child Safety Standard 6: Child safety risk management strategies

Child Safe Standard 6 was endorsed/approved by the Williamstown Primary School council on 21st April 2020, for review in April 2023 or if legislative or other changes are required in the interim.



WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safety Risk Register

The Williamstown Primary School Council as the school governing body will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls as part of its risk management strategy. The School Council will do this as a part of the school's Annual Implementation Plan process, in which a Child Safe Standards Compliance Self-Assessment and Action Plan will be undertaken.

Responsible staff member:

Approved by school principal:

Date reviewed:

Next review due (no longer than 1 year from date reviewed):

Location(s):

Risk Event or Environment	Existing Management strategies or internal controls	Current Risk Likelihood	Current Risk Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management controls or internal controls	Who is responsible?	Residual risk
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Severe	Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available Training for all staff, visitors and induction of contractors 	Principal or nominee	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures Performance management procedures	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed School Council to be trained in the Child Safe Policy/Code of Conduct and Response to an allegation Refresher training for staff – see eLearning 	Assistant Principal	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing Management strategies or internal controls	Current Risk Likelihood	Current Risk Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management controls or internal controls	Who is responsible?	Residual risk
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Major	High	mandatory reporting module <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual and Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module 	Assistant Principal	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Processes updated to require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal history search Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety Criminal history checks and confirming currency of Working With Children Check 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies 	Principal or nominee	Low
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks. Address this through the risk assessments for School Council camp approvals. Ensure Code and strategies apply in all school contexts 	Principal or nominee	Low
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (e.g. maintenance)	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for frequent contractors Induction for new contractors 	Principal, or nominee	Low
Children alone with one other person unsupervised	Child safety code of conduct	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed applied understanding of Child Safe Code of Conduct with staff, students, visitors Reinforce Standard 7 actions to empower children in the school Clear windows in walls to enable visibility of 	Principal, or nominee	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing Management strategies or internal controls	Current Risk Likelihood	Current Risk Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management controls or internal controls	Who is responsible?	Residual risk
False allegations	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Moderate	Medium	occupants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows not to be fully covered with student work or vision-impairing posters • Embed applied understanding of Child Safe Code of Conduct with staff, students, visitors • Revisit with staff and relevant people involved in the false allegation, the process and importance of addressing allegations of abuse and apply the 4 critical action process 	Principal, or nominee	Low

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



WILLIAMSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safe Standard 7: Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment

Williamstown PS Empowerment and Participation of Children Strategic Plan

Williamstown Primary School has a whole school approach to empowerment and participation of students. Empowerment – by helping the children have their say and, Participation – by giving them an opportunity to have a say about issues and concerns that affect them.

Becoming a Child Safe school means developing strategies to communicate and engage with all children who are involved with our school. It is important to ask our children when they feel safe, and when they feel unsafe.

As 'Trusted Adults' we ensure that our children's voices are heard, respected and valued. We encourage, listen and support our children when they speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing.

By enabling the participation of our children in our school we are:

- demonstrating our commitment to upholding the rights of children
- strengthening the commitment of children in our school
- building the communication and leadership skills of children – Junior School Councillors and House Captains
- building cultural understanding and respect
- enhancing the safety of children

We teach our children about their rights, recognise what abuse is and understand it is not okay and that they can do something about it (age appropriate).

We talk to our children about safety; both physical (the environment around them) and psychological (feeling, valued, respected and cared for).

At Williamstown PS we have a whole school approach to promoting the participation and empowerment of children through our delivery of the school developed programs (aligned with the Victorian Curriculum), policies and procedures. We work on the premise of primary prevention in giving our children strategies through the following whole school programs/approaches/policies:

- The Willy Kids program
- Buddies program (Years P/1 and 5/6)
- The Child Wise program
- The Respectful Relationships program
- Digital technology program and policy (including the eSmart Digital Licence)
- Health Education (in Years 5/6)
- Formal transition processes and procedures for Prep and Year 6 students, new students to the school and as students transition at each year level
- Established discipline processes
- Student Attendance Policy
- Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy

- Explicit Williamstown PS values referenced at all times including the construction of a classroom agreements
- Planned participation in national days such as National Day of Action Day Against Bullying and Violence
- Day-to-day continual awareness raising
- A Student Engagement and Wellbeing Team (SEW)

As a school, we have implemented strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children in our school such as:

- providing children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse
- ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children, through curriculum programs
- ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- considering access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability and vulnerable children when drafting communications materials
- gathering feedback from children through surveys such as the Student Attitude to School Survey regarding their connectedness to peers, safety and wellbeing and implement improvements based on this feedback
- enabling children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them
- providing professional learning for staff on methods of empowering children and encouraging children's participation
- raising awareness in the community about children's rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites and newsletters

Williamstown PS prides itself on being a school where children are able to articulate what they are learning, how they know they will be successful, how well they are going and what their next steps are for learning. Students are involved in their education, engaging them in their learning and assessment. Students are empowered to learn by setting individual learning goals. These goals are developed, reviewed and monitored in collaboration with the classroom teacher and Educational Support Officer (where applicable). The goals are directed at their specific learning needs, to enable them to grow and improve. This philosophy at Williamstown PS Primary School allows every student to be empowered and to participate in their education. They are critically engaged in their learning, their progress and their next steps for learning.

Resources to support students attending the school

- Williamstown PS Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- [Child Wise Personal Safety Education Program](#)
- [DET Respectful Relationships curriculum](#)
- [Safe Schools Hub for Students](#)
- [Healthy Together Achievement Program](#)
- [KidsMatter](#)
- [Building Resilience: A model to support children and young people](#)
- [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum](#)

- [Protect Resources](#)

Child Safe Standard 7 was endorsed/approved by the Williamstown Primary School council on 21st April 2020, for review in April 2023 or if legislative or other changes are required in the interim.