BRENTWOOD PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

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CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD ONE

Strategies to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children and support cultural inclusion

- Beginning events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item.
- Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Displaying plaques to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Celebrating the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff and families. Share information through school newsletters and provision to individual families.

Guide and train staff and volunteers

- Staff undertaking Cultural Understanding and Safety Training (CUST).
- Representation at Marrung Network Meetings.
- Anthea Barry, First Nations ES staff member presenting Cultural Understanding and Awareness PD to staff at staff meetings.

Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum

- Leading on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learning more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speaking with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people. Building schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills, and attitudes, through Anthea Barry, First Nations ES staff member presenting talks to Foundation to Year Six classes. Use of Australians Together as a resource.

Partner with Aboriginal communities

- Forming partnership with Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and welcoming VACCA into the school to assist families.
- Engage with Koorie Education Officer.

Actively address racism

- The Student Code of Conduct and Child Safe Code of Conduct and the following policies: Child Safety, Student Wellbeing and Engagement, Student Wellbeing and Discipline, Bullying and Prevention and Inclusion and Diversity outlines zero tolerance of racism.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD TWO

Strategies to embed child safety and wellbeing in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

The Brentwood Park Primary School Council and staff share overall responsibility for ensuring a culture of child safety is embedded at the school.
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. Younger children, children with a disability, indigenous children and those other children from culturally diverse backgrounds may require greater levels of support and consideration.

- Include child safety as a standing item on the Staff, PLT and School Council meeting agendas.
- Key people in the school are allocated to undertake child safety roles and responsibilities. See School Child Safety Officer Role and Responsibilities below. Jenny Reid is the Child Safety Officer.
- 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: website, Foundation handbook, staff meetings, as induction process documents maintained in the Learning and Teaching Folder.

<u>Leadership in a child safe environment</u>
Working with children can be very rewarding and it brings additional responsibilities. Brentwood Park Primary School will protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Child Safe Officer (Jenny Reid) has the responsibility of working with School Council and staff to build and maintain a culture of transparency, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults will know what to do if they observe or are subjected to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. Key responsibilities of the Child Safe leader include:

- acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to School Council, staff, students and parents.
- liaising with the principal and other school leaders to ensure a collaborative, transparent and unified approach to child safety.
- leading the development of the school's child safe culture including being a child safe champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

<u>Governance in a child safe environment</u>
Overall, School Council has the responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in our school. The school's policies, events, activities and management practices will take into account the Child Safe standards.

<u>Raising awareness across the school including staff, students and teachers and others who come into contact with children in the school</u>

- 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 Safety Policy* is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. This being incorporated into the Annual Implementation Plan, Strategic Plan and the four 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 Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures* (*Mandatory Reporting) 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. The policy will be published on the school's website, newsletter and be included in the Foundation Transition Booklet.

- Encourage, amongst staff, a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them. Daily whole school *Emotional Check In Program* provides a pathway.
- Work with teachers to include, where appropriate, the inclusion of teaching points into curriculum programs i.e. cyber safety programs, health and wellbeing related programs (*You Can Do it! and Respectful Relationships Programs*) to build a culture of pro-activity and healthy relationships.

Identifying and analysing risk of abuse

Brentwood Park Primary School will adopt an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy *(BPPS Child Safe Standards Risk Register and Risk In Planning and School Operations Policy)* that sets out how our school identifies, assesses and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

In its commitment to Child Safety Standards, Brentwood Park Primary School has:

- Developed a Child Safe policy.
    - This child safe policy outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.
- Developed a Code of Conduct
    - Brentwood Park Primary School has a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.
- Completed the *Child Safe Standards Risk Register Risk In Planning* and *School Operations Policy*

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

Employ suitable employees and volunteers

Brentwood Park Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education (DoE) recruitment processes, it will ensure it includes:

- Selection criteria in job descriptions
- Police record and identity checks
- Working with Children Checks, where required
- Face-to-face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager.

Supported, trained, supervised and enhanced performance

Brentwood Park Primary School ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. In particular, the principal and leadership team understand their responsibilities.

Information Sharing

When sharing information under the information sharing schemes:

- work to build trust by being open and transparent about information sharing and keep the child and family informed each time their information is shared if it is appropriate, safe, and reasonable to do so

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD THREE

Strategies to empower children and young people about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Whole School approach to implementing Respectful Relationships program.

Continue empowerment programs:

- *Be You Framework*-Be You is the national mental health in education initiative delivered by Beyond Blue, in collaboration with Early Childhood Australia and headspace. Be You supports educators from early learning services and schools to develop a positive, inclusive and resilient learning community where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health. Be You is the student wellbeing framework, under which the whole school program of You Can Do It! is implemented aligning with the learning standards under Personal and Social Capability and Health and Physical Education.
- *Learning and Growing Together Program* undertaken by the whole school at the commencement of the year aims to achieve a learning community based on building positive relationships. To have all members learn and grow together; to think about themselves as learners and to think about their relationships with others. The program involves:
    - the students participating in 'Getting to Know You' activities.
    - the students outlining the reasons why they are at school.
    - the students establishing a MISSION: To make our class a happy and good place to learn well.
    - the students forming a VISION: What is a good classroom, a good student and class teacher?
    - the students exploring shared values and school community values: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, EXCELLENCE and TEAMWORK.
    - the students exploring the relationships that they will build for the year and the value of teamwork being reinforced.
- *You Can Do It! program*- The year one to six program teaches attitudes, values, character strengths, and social-emotional skills for success, relationships, and wellbeing as well as overcoming social-emotional blockers. The lessons cover:
    1. Achievement: Work Confidence, Persistence, Organisation and Teamwork.
    2. Relationships: Values, character strengths and getting along skills.
    3. Wellbeing: Resilience and Happiness.
    4. Social -Emotional Blockers: awareness and management of anger, not paying attention, procrastination, worry, feeling down.

  The Foundation program focuses on the positive attitudes and social emotional skills that develop getting along, confidence, organisation, persistence and resilience.
- Peer Mediation
- Student Representative Council
- Buddy program
- Wellbeing support provided by Mel Dennis, Mental Health and Well-being leader.

Deliver age-appropriate curriculum content about respectful relationships, and sexual abuse prevention through the Resilience Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials.

- *Respectful Relationships program:* Respectful Relationships supports schools and early childhood settings to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. It teaches students how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. The You Can Do It! program meets the first six topics of the Resilience, Rights & Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials. Topic 7: Gender and Identity and topic 8: Positive Gender Relations will be implemented in the curriculum foundation to year six.
- The RR program:
    - Informs students of their rights.

- Provides age appropriate and accessible information to students such as information about:
- the school's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.
- the Charter of Commitment under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Year 5 students).
- the work of the Commission for Children and Young People (Year 5 students).
- how the adults in the school should behave.

Inform students of their rights and special protections including the right to:

- live and grow up healthy.
- have a say about decisions affecting them.
- get information that is important to them.
- be safe and not harmed by anyone.

Teach students practical protective strategies, including:

- what to do when they feel unsafe.
- phrases they can use to raise an objection-No Go Tell.
- online safety behaviours.
- identify trusted adults and friends they can talk to about a concern at school, at home or in the community. -hand symbol (five trusted people) .
- discuss healthy boundaries for friendships. Point out that the risk of harm can occur in child-to-child interactions, as well as adult-to-child interactions.

Demonstrate that the school takes students seriously by acting on their concerns, noting that what might seem unimportant to an adult may be important to a young person.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD FOUR

Strategies to ensure that families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Create a welcoming environment:

- Office staff create a welcoming environment at school reception, so community members and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto school grounds.
- Office Manager, Mandy Scarlett is the contact person for new enrolments.
- Volunteers are provided with a Volunteer Pack that includes the following policies:
  -Volunteer Policy
  -Child Safety Policy
  -Child Safety Code of Conduct
  -Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures (Mandatory Reporting)
  -Values, Purpose Statement and Beliefs about Learning Statement
- School community events, such as Athletics and Cross-Country events, Education Afternoon, Years 5 and Mini- fete, welcome families and promote community participation.
- Transition for new studetns

Engage families and communities in building a child safe organisation:

- Principal staff are on yard-duty before and after school to welcome parents and ask about their children. They are available for parents to ask questions and or arrange future meetings about any concerns.
- Staff are available for formal meetings before and after school and the formal parent/teacher interviews to discuss the needs of the students. Also, they are available for informal meetings at pick-up and drop-off.
- Foundation Transition sessions are conducted for parents in October outlining Child Safe Standards.
- Information sessions are held for parents via zoom are provided on the year five Changes in Our Bodies sessions and year six Health and Human Relations sessions in term 3.
- Child safety topics are discussed at school council meetings.

Provide regular opportunities to communicate:

- Interpreters are engaged from The Language Loop Interpreter Service for parent communication.
- A variety of methods of communication are used including email, phone calls, XUNO notifications, face to face parent teacher interviews based on preferred methods of communication.
- Student and Parent Opinion surveys are analysed to measure awareness and confidence in the school's child safety approach and to support ongoing improvement.
- Information on online safety is provided in the school newsletter.
- Complaints are taken seriously, and all stages of the process are followed adhering to the school's Complaint Policy.

Reflect the diversity of the school community:

- The school newsletter promotes the diversity of the school community and celebrates cultural events.
- Volunteers are welcomed from diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Provide inclusive and accessible information:

- The PROTECT Poster is displayed in every classroom and office area and therefore accessible to parents and the community.
- The school's child safety policies are on the school's website in the school's and in the newsletter.
- The students, school staff, and members of the school community are made aware that Jenny Reid is the Child Safety Officer through the website and newsletter.

Build family and community involvement in child safety into business as usual:

- Child safety is a standing item at school council.
- The reviews of policies are published in the school's newsletter to the school community.
- The whole school approach to Respectful Relationships is promoted to the school community through the school's newsletters and parent information session.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD FIVE

Strategies to ensure equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

The school has students from diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances who require special consideration:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- the needs of students with disability and responses to disability.
- the needs of students from diverse religious and cultural communities.
- the impact of trauma.
- gender differences.
- the needs of students who identify as gender diverse.
- challenges for students who are in foster care, out of home care, living away from home or international students.
- challenges for families experiencing financial hardship.
- socio-economic factors.
- the needs of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students.

Identify and address challenges that students experience due to their diverse attributes:

- The Bullying Prevention Policy communicates that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated.
- We inform students of their rights through the following policies: Student Engagement and Wellbeing and Student Wellbeing and Discipline and our Code of Conduct; and whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and You Can Do It! programs and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Families can report concerns at the office which will be followed up by a principal class officer.
- The Student Wellbeing Leaders check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met.
- Through the Respectful Relationships program students discuss what they need to be safe and feel safe.
- The Daily Emotional Check In validates students' feelings and support can be provided if necessary.
- The Buddy Program offers mentoring and friendship for students.
- We recognise the diversity of the children, young people, and families at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering and responding to child safety incidents or concerns.
- We follow the set procedure for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD SIX

Strategies to ensure people working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Human resource practices

Overview:
Human resource practice (HRP) at our school includes recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel. School Council needs to be satisfied about the appropriateness of the school's HRP arrangements which will comply with the Department of Education (DoE) recruitment practices and guidelines.

Brentwood Park provides opportunities for employees and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety along with the expectations and accountabilities of all staff and/or volunteers in ensuring child safe practice is embedded at Brentwood Park Primary school.

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

Requirement	**Departmental action**	**School action**
1. Each job or category of jobs for school staff (including non-teaching staff) that involves child connected work must have clear statements regarding the child safety requirements of the role and the expectations of the occupant.	The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide requires that position descriptions for all new positions are to 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 Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website."* Position descriptions generated in Recruitment Online (ROL) will be include a standard clause regarding child safety.	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, volunteers, contractors, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct. Principal Class Contract of Employment references Child Safe Standards.
2. All applicants for jobs (either teaching or non-teaching) that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).	As above	As above
3. 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	The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide advises that the Principal, prior to an external applicant person	Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant meets the Child Safe Standards prior to the applicant's employment including:

person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work.	commencing employment, must be satisfied that the person: "meets the Child Safe Standards."	a) Interview processes b) Working with Children Check status, or similar check. c) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications. d) the person's history of work involving children; and e) references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children. Questions to be asked of the referees: 1. Have you directly observed [applicant's name] work with children? 2. During the period that [applicant's name] worked in your organisation, did you have any concerns about [applicant's name] behaviour or conduct when working with a child or children? If yes, what steps were taken to deal with these concerns? Were these concerns satisfactorily resolved? 3. Do you have any concerns about [applicant's name] working directly with children? 4. Has any disciplinary action been taken against the applicant in relation to inappropriate or unprofessional conduct towards a child? 5. Were there instances where you had concerns that [applicant's name] did not always behave with integrity in their employment, such as not dealing with others in an ethical manner, not declaring or managing a conflict of interest appropriately or not dealing with sensitive or confidential information in an appropriate way? If yes, what steps were taken to deal with these concerns? Were these concerns satisfactorily resolved?
4. The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to induction and continuing suitability for child connected work. (includes volunteers and contractors)	DoE Induction portal to reflect Child Safe requirements for new and beginning teachers, mentors and buddies	All new staff or returning staff participate in an induction program and provided with Learning and Teaching Folder with relevant Child Safe policies. Induction by Student Teacher/Work Experience Co-ordinator

		Volunteer Pack provided to volunteers outlining Child Safe Policies.
5. 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.	As above	School Council to oversee and review Standard Six as part of the school's Annual Action Plan and School Child Safe Policies. School Council to complete annual Child Safe training

Training and induction:
Training and education is an important strategy to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Staff receive induction and ongoing training in Child Safe Standards. New staff will be provided with support and information when they begin their new role and existing staff are provided with ongoing support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions. Child Safety will be a standing item on staff, PLT and School Council agenda with DoE's PROTECT resources providing the basis for ongoing learning.

Employees and volunteers working with children receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks.
- Brentwood Park Primary School's policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy).
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to protect and 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. Referring suspicion to Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid
- cultural awareness training.
- New staff members are allocated a mentor for the first 12 months to provide guidance on teaching practices and professional conduct.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD SEVEN

Strategies to ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Develop complaints processes to be child-centred and empowering

- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures reviewed every two years to promote the school's commitment to child safety.
- The complaints process is child-centred and empowering through Respectful Relationships program:
- Encouraging students to raise concerns with a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Each year reinforcement of NO,GO, TELL slogan
- Facilitating student discussions about what would help them speak up when they have concerns. Let students know that they can make a complaint about any kind of harm, perpetrated at school, outside school, by an adult or by other children, including bullying or cyberbullying and all forms of abuse.
- Complaints are received thoughtfully, taking care to validate students' experiences – what may seem small to an adult might not be to a child.
- Complaint handling systems and processes are confidential, and that only authorised staff can access complaint records.

Encourage students to raise concerns with a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe

- Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid, Mel Dennis Student Wellbeing Leader and principal class officers can be approached to raise concerns.
- Students develop the skills to make complaints and raise concerns by implementing the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships.
- The PROTECT poster is displayed in each classroom.

Be transparent and open about the steps in the complaints process

- Students, families, staff, and volunteers can access and understand the complaints process as the Complaints Policy in the newsletter annually and on the school website and physical copies available from the school.
- The PROTECT Four Critical Actions poster is displayed in the staff room.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand the complaints policy, the Four Critical Actions, failure to report and failure to protect offences, grooming, child abuse and family violence, mandatory reporting, and their roles in the process. Outline the responsibilities school leaders have to act on complaints and concerns related to child safety and wellbeing, including the responsibilities of the Child Safety Officer.
- Set out actions when the complaint is about a staff member, volunteer, parent, or another adult in line with protection authorities and other government agencies or regulatory bodies in line with PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse.
- Refer to the National Office for Child Safety Complaint Handling Guide for processes.

Support staff and volunteers to participate in building a child-focused environment

- Empower all staff and volunteers to act on concerns about behaviour and report their concerns, complaints, or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct to school leadership or the regional office.
- Recordkeeping, information sharing, privacy, and employment law obligations are in line with department guidelines.
- Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise the different ways students express concerns or distress, such as changing their behaviours or demeanour.
- Staff are encouraged to maintain an approachable, professional standard to help students feel confident and supported to raise issues at any time.
- Staff and volunteers are trained in the complaints policy, the Four Critical Actions, failure to report and failure to protect offences, grooming, child abuse and family violence, mandatory reporting and their roles in the process.
- Staff and volunteers are to act on concerns about behaviour and report their concerns, complaints or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct to school leadership or the regional office.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD EIGHT

Strategies to ensure that staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Responding to allegations of suspected child abuse:
At Brentwood Park Primary School, procedures for responding to allegations of child abuse apply to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made in relation to a child, by school staff, visitors or any other person connected to our school environment. Whether a school staff member, visitor, maintenance person, contract staff member etc., each adult has a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under their care and/or supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this applies to ALL persons connected to the school environment).

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. It is particularly important for visitors and/or others associated with the school, such as contractors, maintenance personnel etc., to seek out school personnel who can assist and advise regarding further steps that need to be taken.
- reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities, such as the Victoria Police and DFFH Child Protection.
- arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child providing on-going support to the child. This may include attending FFH 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.

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.

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. bedwetting.
- 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).
- 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.

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, should alert teachers to the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

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.

How should an adult respond and what should they do?

If physical and/or behavioural indicators leads to a suspicion that a child has or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, then 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 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 refer your concerns to Jenny Reid (Child Safety Officer) and a referral to Child FIRST may be made 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.
- Jenny Reid, Child Safety Officer has discussed the referral with the family, and they are supportive of the referral.

The school (via Child Safety Officer or Jim Bell, Jo Doran) 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.

The school (via Child Safety Officer or Jim Bell, Jo Doran) will contact DFFH 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 Jenny Reid, Child Safety Officer) or Jim Bell/Jo Doran and the school will make contact with authorities for further advice.

The principal, assistant principal and/or Child Safety Officer 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.
- responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse. The support of the child/children affected needs to be ongoing with a follow up support plan put in place.
- monitoring overall school compliance with the school's response to incidents procedures.
- 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.

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 these four key steps:
All reporters who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person:

- is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse must report their concerns to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.
- is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment should report their concerns to DFFH Child Protection.

The reporter must:

- make a report as soon as practicable.
- make a report on each occasion that they form a belief or
- ensure that a report has been made in instances where another mandated reporter has undertaken to make the report.

FAILURE TO PROTECT and FAILURE TO DISCLOSE OFFENCES

Any staff member or person associated with the school (e.g. visitor, contractor, maintenance worker etc.) who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police.

Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, unless a reasonable excuse has been formed such as:

- information has already been reported to DFFH Child Protection.
- fear for own or others' safety.

The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.

If an adult fails to take reasonable steps to protect a child from harm and/or fails to disclose, this may amount to a criminal offence. Refer to the Department of Justice fact sheets on FAILURE to Protect and Failure to DISCLOSE for further information.

If you need to report a child in immediate risk or danger of a sexual offence, please call triple zero (000).

Reducing or removing the risk of child sexual abuse posed by an adult associated with Brentwood Park Primary School.

If required, the principal (or assistant principal) may need to take reasonable steps to reduce or remove a known substantial risk that an adult associated with their organisation will commit a sexual offence against a child.

Examples could include:

- A current employee who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children in the organisation should be immediately removed from contact with children and reported to appropriate authorities and investigated.
- A community member who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children should not be allowed to volunteer in a role that involves direct contact with children at the organisation.
- A parent who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children in a school should not be allowed to attend overnight school camps as a parent helper.
- Removing a suspected adult from child-related work pending investigation.

Action/notification to DFFH Child Protection must occur if a 'reasonable belief' has been formed. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused.
- signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- there are indications that a child is being groomed.

Notification

- South Provision Child Protection 1300 555 526
- After hours-13 12 78

In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact triple zero (000) or the local police station.

For Victorian government schools, the allegations must be reported to the:

- principal or member of the school leadership team.
- Department's Security Services Unit on (03) 9589 6266.
- relevant Regional Office (where applicable, the Koori support officer is to be notified).
- Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit on (03) 9637 2934 or (03) 9637 2487.

In the case of international students, the principal must notify the International Education Division on (03) 9637 2990 to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student.

Interviews

DFFH Child Protection and/or Victoria Police may conduct interviews of children and young people at the school without the parent's knowledge or consent.

Interviewing children and young people at school should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interests of the child to proceed in this manner.

DFFH Child Protection and/or Victoria Police will notify the principal or a member of the leadership team of their intention to interview the child or young person on the school premises.

When officers from DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police come to the school premises, the principal or a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the child or young person.

When a child or young person is being interviewed by DFFH Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, school staff must arrange to have a leadership team member present with the child or young person.

Support for the child or young person

The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children who are involved with DFFH Child Protection may include the following:

- acting as a support person for the child or young person.
- attending DFFH Child Protection case planning meetings.
- observing and monitoring the child's behaviour.
- liaising with professionals.

Requests for Information

DFFH Child Protection and/or Child FIRST and/or Victoria Police may request information about the child or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the child or young person.

In certain circumstances, DFFH Child Protection can also direct school staff and department staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the child. Such directions should be in writing and only be made by authorised persons within DFFH Child Protection. For more information see: Requests for Information about Students

Witness Summons

If DFFH Child Protection makes a Protection Application in the Children's Court of Victoria, any party to the application may issue a Witness Summons to produce documents and/or to give evidence in the proceedings.

Responding to suspected child abuse: for Victorian schools

The Child Safety Officer will 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.

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

Recording and retaining the record

The Child Safety 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.

Please refer to Appendix D for "Responding to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse" form.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS – STANDARD NINE

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Promote a culture of online and physical safety for all students

- Supervise students properly in all settings, including the playground, excursions, and camps.
- Supervise appropriately adhering to ratios.
- Articles placed in the school's newsletter about cyber safety issues
- Families adhere to the *Digital Technologies Student Acceptable Use Agreement* regarding iPad usage
- The school keeps up to date with online safety issues and expert information from specialist government and non-government bodies including the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner, and eSmart Schools.
- Create a respectful, sensitive, and safe environment for people who may be experiencing family violence. To align to the MARAM framework over time. MARAM requires schools to create a respectful, sensitive, and safe environment that enables a child or young person to feel comfortable to talk about their experiences of family violence and seek support.

Manage risk in physical spaces

- The school's child safety risks are identified and documented in the school's risk register and ensure strategies are in place to manage those risks.
- Records are kept of risk management activities, including risk assessments for camps and excursions. Minimum requirements for documentation for each type of excursion is adhered to.
- Records of any court orders are kept regarding access or intervention orders and communicate to staff who can collect students in these circumstances.
- Organise professional learning to discuss risk and harm prevention and hazard awareness with staff, volunteers, and school council members. Competing OH &S online modules.
- The Occupational Health and Safety management team observes, implements and fulfills its responsibilities in adhering to the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS). The Employee Health, Safety and Wellbeing Division is responsible for updating the OHSMS and communicating changes.
- Records are kept of incidents that occur, including accidents and medical events.

Promote student safety online

- Inform students about online safety risks, including:
  -cyberbullying and trolling, invasion of privacy or digital surveillance, inappropriate sharing of images, phishing, harvesting of personal information or data theft, identity theft, malevolent software (malware), offensive images and messages, age-inappropriate online content, impersonation/catfishing, grooming.
- Outline acceptable use of personal devices for students as per *Digital Technologies Student Acceptable Use Agreement*
- Use of filtering software on school-based devices.
- Parents are encouraged to use parental controls on personal devices.
- Students are advised on how they can seek help from a trusted adult if they are exposed to inappropriate imagery or content that upsets them.
- Monitoring of online activity and respond to breaches of the online policies and procedures with appropriate consequences. Address acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour in online environments in the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Promote acceptable behaviour by staff and volunteers

- Promotion of acceptable behaviour by staff and volunteers.
- Outline acceptable use of personal devices by staff and volunteers.

- Have guidelines for taking, storing, and using images of children and students – including photos and video recordings.
- Policies upheld and breaches reported in accordance with the school's complaints handling processes and Code of Conduct.
- Students, families and staff are to report online issues or concerns.
- Protection of student privacy by supporting students to limit the amount of information provided online.

Consider procurement and third parties

- Contractors to provide their Working with Children Clearance upon entry to the school.
- Business Manager is responsible for collecting child safety compliance information about third party providers.
- Provide contractors with a copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Require vendors to provide evidence of compliance with the Child Safe Standards when establishing contracts to deliver services to students.
- Ensure third parties provide a Privacy Impact Assessment for any software handling student personal information.
- Make child safety a feature in legal contracts. The Victorian Government Common Funding Agreement has this as standard.
- If a vendor is found to be non-compliant with the Child Safe Standards:
    - cease all activities with the vendor until the issue is resolved.
    - if appropriate, inform the vendor of the non-compliance and provide an opportunity to rectify the problem, or
    - if the issue is serious, contact the relevant authorities.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD TEN

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Create and update child-safe policies

- Brentwood Park Primary School does comply with this standard by
    - reviewing and evaluating our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices after any significant child safety incident, or at least every 2 years and all policies are developed in consultation with school council and endorsed by school council. An excel spreadsheet of the schedule of review of policies is monitored.
    - analysing complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures and to inform continuous improvement.
    - reporting on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff, volunteers, the community, families, and students.
    - completing the Risk Register.

Implement current child safe policies and procedures

- Inform the school community of any child safety policy changes were relevant or applicable.
- Use surveys, focus groups and discussions to review the accessibility and level of awareness of child-safe policies and procedures by students, families, staff and volunteers.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - STANDARD ELEVEN

Policies and procedures are made easily accessible

- Child safety policies are located on the school's website.
- Child safety is integrated into induction processes, ongoing education, training and supervision for all staff and volunteers.
- Copies of child safety policies are placed in welcome packs and transition resources.
- Jenny Reid is the Child Safety Officer who promotes, monitors and reports on the implementation of the school's child safety strategies.

Build a culture of ongoing monitoring and reviewing

- Child safety is highlighted in recruitment processes.
- Complaints policies and procedures are child-focused.
- Review of recordkeeping of child safety complaints is reviewed to make sure it captures all relevant information.
- Child safety risks relating to child abuse are managed using the Child Safety Risk Register template.
- Champion and modelling of compliance with policies and procedures.
- Allocation of regular time for a child safety agenda item at PLT, staff and school council meetings
- Posters are displayed, articles written in newsletters on child safety topics.
- Staff and volunteers trained on school policies and their responsibilities.
- Integrate child safety into policies, procedures and practices.
- Jenny Reid, Child Safe Officer to ensure in the effective implementation and monitoring of the child safe policies and practices.

The school's policies, procedures and statements adhere to the eleven Child Safe Standards. Child Safe Standards Booklet maintained covering all standards.

POLICY DOCUMENTS

CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE:
Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Brentwood Park staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS
All staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding our commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety Policy
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and gender diverse.
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid.
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our , refer to Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations(Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS
All staff, volunteers, contractors and members of our school community involved in child-connected work must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts)
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- treat a child or student 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 schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter

- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy
- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Brentwood Park's Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid.

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

BREACHES TO THE CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education and Training Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Brentwood Park Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal, James Bell on 9702 2022.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact Jenny Reid, on 9702 2022.

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

Created date	6/8/2024
Consultation	Consultation with Brentwood Park School Council
Endorsed by	Endorsed by James Bell, principal, and Brentwood Park School Council President, Manju Kiriyan
Endorsed on	6/8/2024
Next review date	August 2026

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

PURPOSE:
The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

SCOPE:
This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

DEFINITIONS:
The following terms in this policy have specific definitions:

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

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY:
Brentwood Park is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families. We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

- We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.
- We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.
- We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment.
- When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.
- Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as gender diverse, and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics,

such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

- Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION:
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:
School leadership team:
The school leadership team is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359. Principals and assistant principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers:
All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (Mandatory Reporting)Policy including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School council:
In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety. School councils can use the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on PROTECT.
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At Brentwood Park school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

SPECIFIC STAFF CHILD SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES:
Brentwood Park has a Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid, to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the Child Safety Officer are outlined at Guidance for child safety champions. The principal and Child Safety Officer are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

THE CHILD SAFETY OFFICER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Child Safety Officer if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.
- other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

The school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing.
The principal class team monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT
The Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.
We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct.docx also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

MANAGING RISKS TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING
At Brentwood Park we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.
Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our principal class team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

ESTABLISHING A CULTRUALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT
At Brentwood Park we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.
We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following actions to build a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion:

- Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children and support cultural inclusion
- Beginning events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item.
- Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Displaying plaques to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Celebrating the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff and families. Share information through school newsletters and provision to individual families.

Guide and train staff and volunteers

- Staff undertaking Cultural Understanding and Safety Training (CUST).
- Representation at Marrung Network Meetings
- Anthea Barry, First Nations ES staff member presenting Cultural Understanding and Awareness PD to staff at staff meetings.

Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum

Leading on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learning more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speaking with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people. Building schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills, and attitudes, through Anthea Barry, First Nations ES staff member presenting talks to Foundation to Year Six classes. Use of Australians Together as a resource.

Partner with Aboriginal communities

- Forming partnership with Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and welcoming VACCA into the school to assist families.
- Engage with Koorie Education Officer
- Actively address racism

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

To support child safety and wellbeing at Brentwood Park, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful Relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to our wellbeing programs: Learning and Growing Together, You Can Do It! and Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, our school values.

We inform students of their rights through the following policies: Student Engagement and Wellbeing and Student Wellbeing and Discipline and our Code of Conduct; and whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and You Can Do It! programs and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Families can report concerns at the office which will be followed up by a principal class officer.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Brentwood Park we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to be informed of the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- all our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents on the school website.

- Updates in the school newsletter will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school.

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

- We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.
- We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:
- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as gender diverse

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

SUITABLE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

At Brentwood Park, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- Recruitment in Schools
- Suitability for Employment Checks
- School Council Employment
- Contractor OHS Management.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
    - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
    - the person's history of working with children
    - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

STAFF INDUCTION

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety Policy
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.
- ongoing supervision and management of staff
- all staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

- staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work.
- inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

SUITABLITY OF VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

CHILD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND AWARENESS

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

SCHOOL COUNCIL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Brentwood Park child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING PROCESSES

Brentwood Park fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaints Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed,

we will ensure our school follows:

- the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

COMMUNICATIONS

Brentwood Park is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in our school newsletter
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Brentwood Park collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: Schools' Privacy Policy.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: Records Management – School Records

REVIEW OF CHILD SAFETY PRACTICES

At Brentwood Park, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of the child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Parent Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Discipline Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW

The Curriculum Leader/ Child Safety Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing

Policy at least every two years.

Approval

Created date	6/8/2024
Consultation	Consultation with and approved by school council
Endorsed by	James Bell, principal
Endorsed on	6/8/2022
Next review date	August 2026

CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS AND PROCEDURES (MANDATORY REPORTING) POLICY

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures our school has in place to respond to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities

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

This policy applies to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school (physical and online).

DEFINITIONS:
Child abuse
Child abuse includes:

- physical violence inflicted on a child
- sexual offences committed against a child
- grooming of a child by an adult
- family violence committed against or in the presence of a child
- serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

The definition of child abuse is broad and can include student to student incidents and concerns, as well as behaviour committed by an adult.

Grooming
Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. 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 (including electronic communications) and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

School staff member
For the purpose of this policy a school staff member includes a contractor engaged by the school or school council to perform child-related work.

IMPLEMENTATION:
Brentwood Park understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse. We have a range of policies and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring at our school or during school activities.

Information 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, they should start with Jenny Reid, Child Safety Officer. Refer to Child Safety Policy.

Identifying child abuse
To ensure we can respond in the best interests of students and children when complaints or concerns relating to child abuse are raised, all staff and relevant volunteers must:

- understand how to identify signs of child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators - for detailed information on identifying child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators refer to Identify child abuse.
- understand their various legal obligations in relation to reporting child abuse to relevant authorities - for detailed information on the various legal obligations refer to Appendix A
- follow the below procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, which ensure our school acts in the best interests of students and children and complies with both our legal and department policy obligations.

At Brentwood Park we recognise the diversity of the children, young people, and families at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering and responding to child safety incidents or concerns.

Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse
In responding to a child safety incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, we will follow:

- the Four Critical Actions for Schools for complaints and concerns relating to all forms of child abuse
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending
- our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy for complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful student behaviours.

School staff and volunteer responsibilities

1. **Immediate action**
   If a school staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident of child abuse, or reasonably believes, suspects or receives a disclosure or allegation that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, they must:
   - If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid (appropriate to their level of training) and call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance where required to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
   - Notify the Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid, or if not available Mel Dennis, Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, or a principal class officer as soon as possible, who will ensure our school follows the steps in these procedures.

   NOTE for staff and volunteers:
   - if you are uncertain if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion gives rise to a concern about child abuse you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid.
   - if the Child Safety Officer is unavailable, Mel Dennis, Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Jim Bell, principal and or Jo Doran, assistant principal will take on this role.
   - if the concerns relate to the conduct of the Child Safety Officer, notify the principal, or if the concerns relate to the principal, notify South Eastern Victorian Region, Dandenong Office by contacting 1300 338 738, who must then take on responsibility for ensuring our school follows these procedures.

   Refer to Appendix B for guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse.

2. **Reporting to authorities and referring to services**
   As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, the Child Safety Officer must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible.

   The following steps will ensure our school complies with the four critical actions as well as additional actions required under the Child Safe Standards.

The Child Safety Officer must ensure:

- all relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police or relevant services where required.
- the incident is reported to the Department's eduSafe Plus portal or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy.
- all reportable conduct allegations or incidents are reported by the principal to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will then make a report to Employee Conduct Branch.

NOTE: In circumstances where staff members are legally required to report child abuse to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police and they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another person at the school or the designated member of school staff does not agree that a report needs to be made, the staff member who has formed the reasonable belief must still contact DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to make the report.

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 or The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3. Contacting parents or carers

The Child safety Officer must ensure parents and carers are notified unless advised otherwise by DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, or there are other safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to informing parents/carers.

Principals may contact the Department of Education and Training Legal Division for advice on notifying parents and carers, and where relevant, the wider school community.

For further guidance, refer to PROTECT Contacting parents and carers

4. Ongoing protection and support

The Child Safety Officer must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the school to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of abuse. These steps must be taken in consultation with any relevant external agency or department staff such as DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, Legal Division or Employee Conduct Branch. Ongoing protection will also include further reports to authorities if new information comes to light or further incidents occur.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected students. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the Department, parents and carers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, student support group meetings, and, for student to student incidents, behaviour management and support measures.

5. Recordkeeping

The Child Safety Officer will ensure that:

- detailed notes of the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion are taken using the *Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse* document including, where possible, by the staff member or volunteer who reported the incident, disclosure, or suspicion to them
- detailed notes are taken of any immediate or ongoing action taken by the school to respond to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion
- all notes and other records relating to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, including the schools immediate and ongoing actions, are stored securely in a locked office filing cabinet

For school visitors and school community members
All community members aged 18 years or over have legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse – refer to Appendix A for detailed information.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details, refer to the Four Critical Actions.

Members of the community do not have to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DFFH Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the school, the community member should report this concern to the principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken.

Additional requirements for all staff
All staff play an important role in supporting student safety and wellbeing and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the above procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse. This means that if, after following the actions outlined in the procedure, a staff member reasonably believes that a child remains at risk of abuse, they must take the following steps:

- if they are concerned that the school has not taken reasonable steps to prevent or reduce the risk, raise these concerns with the principal in the first instance, and escalate to the regional office if they remain unsatisfied.
- report the matter to the relevant authorities where they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another staff member

Staff must refer to Appendix A for further information on their obligations relating to reporting to authorities.

COMMUNICATION
This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes, included in the Learning and Teaching Folder and annual staff training
- Included in volunteer induction processes and training for relevant volunteers

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES
The following Department of Education and Training policies and guidance are relevant to this policy:

- Child Safe Standards
- Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations
- Managing and Reporting School Incidents
- Reportable Conduct
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Identify child abuse
- Report child abuse in schools (including four critical actions)
- Identify and respond to student sexual offending

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Yard duty and Supervision Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	6/8/2024
Consultation	Consulted with and approved by Brentwood Park School Council
Approved by	James Bell, Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2026

APPENDIX A

LEGAL OBLIGATONS RELATING TO REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The following information outlines the various legal obligations relating to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.
It is important to note that the procedures outlined in the above policy ensure compliance with the below reporting obligations, and also include additional steps to ensure compliance with Department policy and our school's duty of care obligations.

Mandatory reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection
The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic):

- registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including principals and school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT).
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare coordinators, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff.
- nurses.
- registered psychologists.
- police officers.
- registered medical practitioners.
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers).
- early childhood workers.
- youth justice workers.
- people in religious ministry.
- Midwives.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) 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 or carers 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 Brentwood Park 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 or any other mandatory reporter does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

If charged with not making a mandatory report, it may be a defence for the person charged to prove that they honestly and reasonably believed that all of the reasonable grounds for their belief had been the subject of a report to child protection made by another person.

The identity of a person who reports any protective concerns to DFFH Child Protection is protected by law. It is an offence for a person, other than the person who made the report, to disclose the name of the person who made a report or any information that is likely to lead to their identification.

At our school, all school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually.

The policy of the Department of Education (DoE) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to discuss their concerns with the school leadership team and to report their concerns to DFFH and in some circumstances to Victoria Police, or to ensure that all the information relevant to the report has been made by another school staff member.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection (13 12 78 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection even if they are not a mandatory reporter listed above.

Reporting student wellbeing concerns to Orange Door
At Brentwood Park we also encourage staff to make a referral to The Orange Door when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST/Child FIRST see the Policy and Advisory Library: Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations.

Reportable Conduct
The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focussed on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children.

There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005:*

- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- sexual misconduct (which includes grooming) against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- significant neglect of a child.

A reportable conduct allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that ***may*** involve reportable conduct.
If school staff or volunteers become aware of reportable conduct by any current or former employee, contractor or volunteer, they must notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they must notify the Regional Director.

The principal or regional director must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former employees of the school (including Department, allied health, casual and school council employees), contractors and volunteers (including parent volunteers).

Employee Conduct Branch: 03 7022 0005 or employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au

The Department's Secretary, through the Manager, Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.
For more information about reportable conduct see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library*: Reportable Conduct and the Commission for Children and Young People's website.

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 in Victoria.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000, local police station or the Police Assistance Line 131 444) 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 lead 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 to Victoria Police and you have no further information to add (for example, through a mandatory report to DFFH Child Protection or a report to Victoria Police from another member of school staff).

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.

Further information

For more information about the offences and reporting obligations outlined in this fact sheet refer to: Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations.

APPENDIX B:

MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE

Important information for staff

***When managing a disclosure relating to child abuse 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")
- Take prompt action in relation to following the procedures outlined below.

***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 any promises you will keep the information the student provided confidential.
- 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).

Responding to Disclosures

It is important to remain calm when the student is making the disclosure to you as this maybe the first time they have disclosed this abuse and /or family violence.

Observation Indicators

- Unexplained injuries
- Bruises
- Behavioral Issues
- High risk behabiors
- Student not feeling safe or wanting to go home
- Being made aware of abuse or violence through student's classwork
- Student sending a letter or email to you with concerns for their wellbeing and safety

Student makes a disclosure of abuse and / or violence being perpetrated against them or you have observed indicators of abuse and / or neglect

Staff

Step 1
Ask
Know the signs and ask the question

Step 2
Listen
Without interupting or giving your opinion

Step 3
Believe
Not being believed is their biggest fear

Step 4
Inform
Child Safety Officer ~ Jenny

Leadership

Step 5
Record
using the Child Safe Standards template

Step 6
Report
to CP
1300 655 795
8783 7777
131 278 AH

Step 7
Confirm
inform staff of the outcome

Staff

Step 7
Monitor
Monitor and provide ongoing support

APPENDIX C

ROLES OF WELLBEING STAFF

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, Mel Dennis:
The Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator oversees all aspects of Student Wellbeing including:

- Assess student wellbeing referrals from staff and parents. Also, self-referrals from students.
- Identifying students, "at risk" in relation to behavioural, social and emotional issues. Then refer them to relevant staff, medical practitioners, psychologists, agencies and counsellors to improve educational, social and emotional outcomes.
- Keeps staff up to date with Student Wellbeing Referral processes and procedures. Records need to be detailed and kept in a secure place.
- Support and monitor students who have wellbeing and safety concerns.
- Identify needs of students and the school. Initiate and coordinate whole school programs, Learning and Growing Together, You Can Do it! and Respectful Relationships programs to promote connectedness, safe behaviours, healthy relationships, and mental health.

Disability Inclusion Leaders, Natasha Macallister and Jo Doran:
The Disability Inclusion Leaders:
Jo:

- organise assessments.
- organise SSG meetings.
- conduct and document termly SSG meetings with funded students
- complete Disability Inclusion Profiles.
- support Individual Education Plan development and monitor the plans.
- provide advice for staff about differentiated strategies.
- embed inclusion and disability expertise in planning and assessments.
- provide student observations and targeted recommendations.
- provide professional development, resources or additional support regarding disability/inclusive practices to teachers and Education Support staff.

Natasha:

- conduct and document termly SSG meetings with funded students
- complete Disability Inclusion Profiles.
- support Individual Education Plan development and monitor the plans.
- provide advice for staff about differentiated strategies.
- embed inclusion and disability expertise in planning and assessments.
- provide student observations and targeted recommendations.
- provide professional development, resources or additional support regarding disability/inclusive practices to teachers and Education Support staff.

Student Wellbeing and Discipline Leader, Jenny Reid:
The Student and Wellbeing and Discipline leader:

- helps to manage relationships with family, teachers and peers.
- ensures adherence to the school's Student Code of Conduct that sets the expectations of self-discipline and encourages cooperation and respect for others.
- manages issues of concern, including behaviour
- provides mediation to resolve issues between students.
- provides information about and referrals to other support agencies.
- encourages attendance and learning at school.
- provides support with health and wellbeing, including social / emotional support for students to be

physically and psychologically safe.

Out of Home Care Students and Koorie students, Jo Doran:

- Meets with class teachers and oversees Individual Education Plans.
- Oversees wellbeing and engagement programs for Koorie students.
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how students in out-of-home care learn.
- Make sure the student has a voice in setting learning targets.
- Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual students
- Make full use of assessment for learning.
- Ensure that students in out-of-home care are prioritised in tuition arrangements.
- Ensure carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Have lead responsibility to ensure each student in out-of-home care has a quality IEP.
- Promote implementation of all elements of the Partnering Agreement.
- Be the lead contact for the LOOKOUT Centre within their school.
- Koorie students have a cultural support plan and are linked with the Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO) (government schools).

EAL Coordinator, Sharlene Marsche:

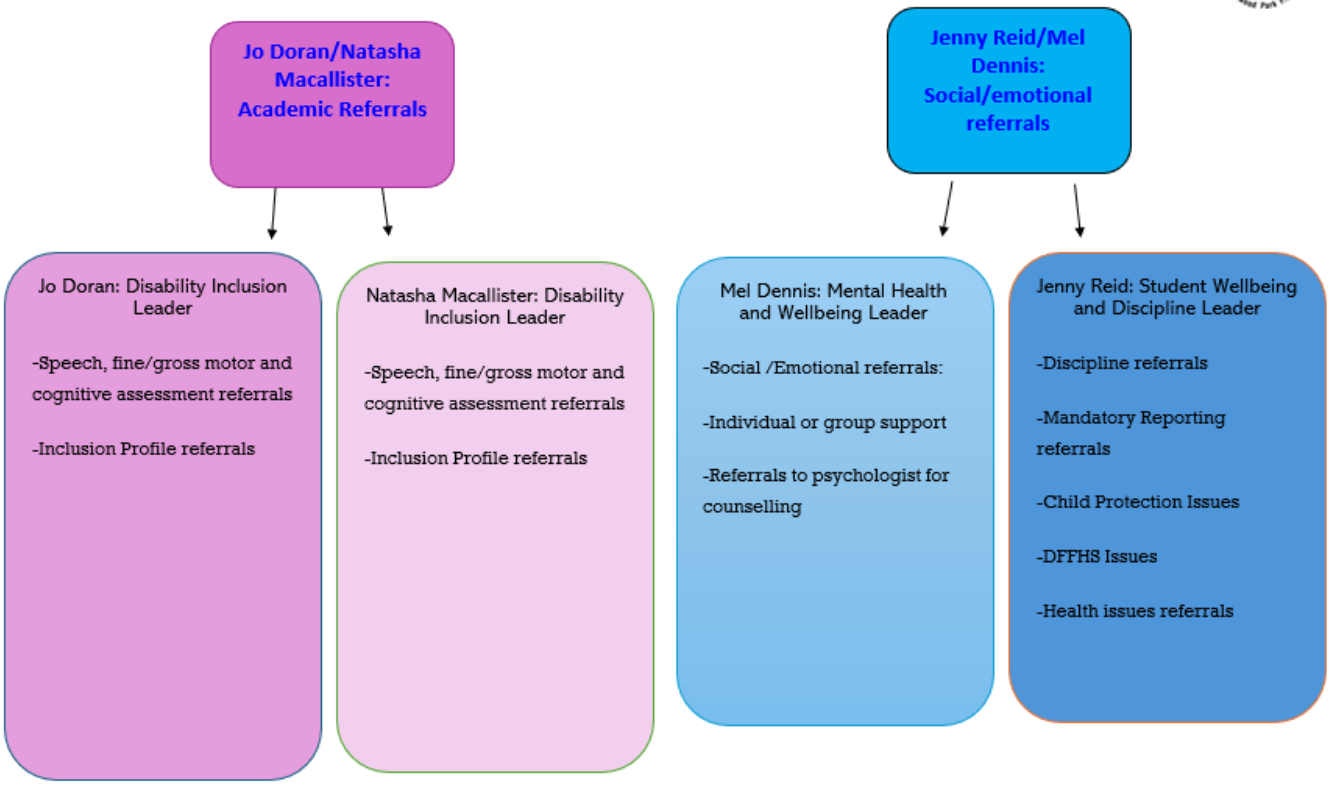
- Primarily in charge of curriculum.
- Liaises with class teachers on differentiated learning strategies
- Liaises with the language schools.

Child Safety Officer, Jenny Reid:

The Child Safety Officer:

- is a point of contact for child safety concerns for staff, volunteers and students.
- provides advice on Child Safe Standards to staff and liaises with principal staff .
- raises awareness about the school policies and ensures the Child Safe policy is publicly available to the community.
- Encourages a culture of child safety needs and raises awareness of the staff's duty of care in relation to child abuse.
- Provides child safety training for school staff, volunteers and school council members.
- Keeps staff up to date with Student Wellbeing Referral processes and procedures. Records need to be detailed and kept in a secure place.
- collates documentation after a critical incident and checks Child Safe/Critical Incident processes are followed.

FLOWCHART for REFERRAL OF STUDENTS



APPENDIX D

BRENTWOOD PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL
RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

CHILD'S NAME: …… GRADE:……

DATE:…… REPORTER: ……

DISCLOSURE OR INCIDENT THAT LEADS TO THE BELIEF OF CHILD ABUSE:

ACTION:

WHO WAS CONTACTED:

POLICE ☐ DFFH CHILD PROTECTION ☐ CHILD FIRST ☐

NAME OF INTAKE WORKER:

……

FOLLOW UP ACTION:

DETAIL DECISION NOT TO REPORT