



CREATING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

This policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organization where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors who are in the school, regardless of whether they are engaged in direct work with children or young people. It applies at all times, both inside and outside of the classroom as well as inside and outside of school hours. This includes camps, excursions, community dinners and online.

Statement of commitment

Traralgon South Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of vulnerable children and children with a disability.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Traralgon South Primary School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- Value and empower children to participate in all decisions which affect their lives
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behavior towards children
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children, and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and engaged to raise such issues.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities

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- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organizations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Policy and procedure

TSPS have a range of policies and procedures that outline our approach to the child safe standards. These policies are:

- Code of Conduct
- Statement of commitment
- Child safety reporting (mandatory reporting)
- Risk Management Assessment relating to child safety
- Duty of care
- TSPS Teaching and Learning Plan

Please contact Principal Adam Downes if you have any questions regarding our policies or procedures.

A child safe culture

The school encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns which make it difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. Staff undertake learning modules on identifying harm and follow procedures in place to raise these with the Principal and relevant authorities.

The school's policies for creating a child safe culture can be found at <https://www.traralgonsthrs.vic.edu.au/> or they can be obtained from the front office.

Understanding roles and responsibilities

All staff at Traralgon South PS understand the role they play in keeping children safe. School leadership will continue to ensure each person fully comprehends the responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children, from all back grounds, from abuse and neglect. Our Code of Conduct sets out clear expectations and a clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviours.

At the beginning of every year, staff will go through the Child reporting module and through our Teaching and Learning Plan, revisit our duty of care and code of conduct. Posters are displayed in and around the staff room and school buildings detailing steps we can all take to ensure the safety of children from abuse and harm.

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Human resources practices and training

Traralgon South Primary School applies the departments best standards when recruiting and screening staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. School leadership will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check or current Victorian institute of Teaching registration.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers when making a report for about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action must be taken, including reporting their concern to DHHS child Protection or other appropriate agency, notifying the Principal of those concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.

The schools Reporting obligation and Procedure policy can be found on our website at <https://www.traralgonsthps.vic.edu.au/> or via the front office.

Risk Reduction and management.

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

This includes camps, excursions, incursions and for volunteers and visitors. Traralgon South Primary school recognises that even though we are a small rural school where every teacher knows every student and parent, risks are still evident. The staff and leadership are mindful that abuse and neglect can look like many different things.

The schools approach to Child safety risk reduction and management can be found on the website at <https://www.traralgonsthps.vic.edu.au/> and at the front office.

Listening to Children

Traralgon South Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parent/carers to understand their rights and responsibilities.

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When the school is gathering information in relations to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously. When doing so, the school will discuss with the child who they feel most at ease with and trust to give their account to and where practicable, have more than one staff member present. We will check for understanding and keep the child informed about progress. Where appropriate, we will also engage with the child's parents/carers.

Confidentiality and privacy

The school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection use and storage of information is included in the Department's 'School Privacy Policy'. This policy can be found on our school's website <https://www.traralgonsthps.vic.edu.au/> Staff are regularly briefed on this policy.

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the wider school community.

The policy will part of staff induction and beginning of the year discussions.

Definitions

For reference Ministerial Order 870 provides the following definitions that relate to the Creating a safe environment policy.

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

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

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Child-connected work

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

Child safety

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

School environment

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

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

School staff

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

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- a minister of religion.

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