

CHILD SAFETY

RATIONALE

Solway Primary School has a commitment to continually developing child safety policies and processes to create and maintain a child safe school environment and to put in place actions to:

- Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy
- Support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse

AIMS

- To create and maintain a child safe environment for learning for all at Solway Primary School
- To promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability

GUIDELINES

- Solway Primary School will follow the DET guidelines for Child Safety.
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy are to be read in conjunction with this policy.
- Solway Primary School has a zero tolerance of child abuse.

IMPLEMENTATION

Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds:

1. A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

Reporting a belief:

2. Mandated staff members (Teachers and Principals) must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection. Staff members, whether or not mandated, need to report to the Principal or Assistant Principal their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief. If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report. (Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse).

These procedures do not:

3. Prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school
4. State or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation.
5. Require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

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

6. Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies: Risk Management Policy; Mandatory Reporting Policy; Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy; Duty of Care Policy
7. If Solway Primary School identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments, a record must be made of those risks and specify the action(s) that will be taken to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).
8. Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

9. As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
10. Solway Primary School will ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of staff about:
 - i. Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse; child abuse risks in the school environment; and current child safety standards.
 - ii. Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation.
 - iii. Solway Primary School leadership will develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about: standards of behaviour for students attending the school; healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality); resilience; and child abuse awareness and prevention.
11. Solway Primary School will promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible and easy to understand.

EVALUATION

The Child Safety Policy will be regularly reviewed by School Council

REFERENCES

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>
- <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/ChSafMINOrder8702.pdf>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childsafes.aspx>
- <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/default.html>