



## NEERIM SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL Child Safe Environment Policy



**Respect**

**Learning**

**Teamwork**

**Perseverance**

### 1. Rationale

- 1.1. The child safe environments policy: sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1. All staff, volunteers, contractors and whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. Across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

### 3. Statement of Commitment (see Neerim South Primary School Statement of Commitment policy)

- 3.1. Neerim South Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.
- 3.2. **Neerim South Primary School School has zero tolerance for child abuse.**
- 3.3. Neerim South Primary School 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 children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.
- 3.4. Every person involved in Neerim South Primary School School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

#### **In its planning, decision-making and operations Neerim South Primary School School will:**

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

### 4. Implementation

#### 4.1. **A child-safe culture**

The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. The school's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found on the website and U:\EWC\POLICY.

#### 4.2. **Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/ Code of Conduct**

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the schools **3.2(g) Code of Conduct** and **3.2(e) Duty of Care**.

4.3. **Human resources practices and training**

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

4.4. **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint. See **3.4(a) Mandatory Reporting**.

4.5. **Risk reduction and management**

The School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures. See **Standard 6** of the **Child Safe Standard**.

4.6. **Listening to children**

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

4.7. **Confidentiality and privacy**

This 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 **1.5 School Privacy Policy**.

#### 4.8. **Personal Protective Equipment**<sup>1</sup>

Students are required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment when necessary to reduce injury risk

#### 4.9. **Student Teaching and Learning**<sup>1</sup>

Students are educated about positive safety behaviours including road safety, correct use of facilities and equipment and cyber safety

#### 4.10. **Supported Staff**

Staff are supported to access professional development and resources about safety education

OH&S guidelines are met to ensure a safe work environment for staff

Safety information and policy requirements are included in staff orientation/induction

#### 4.11. **Families and Community Partnerships**<sup>1</sup>

Safety information is provided to families such as information and strategies to support safety in the home

Partnerships are established with relevant organisations and health professionals to support safety practices where appropriate

### 5. **Definitions** (as per Ministerial Order 870)

#### **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

#### **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)

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<sup>1</sup> As per email dated 15/10/2018 to meet requirements of the **Healthy Together Achievement** program as advised by



## 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

## 6. Related Policies

6.1. **1.5 School Privacy Policy**

6.2. **3.2(g) Code of Conduct**

6.3. **3.2(e) Duty of Care**

6.4. **3.4(a) Mandatory Reporting**

6.5. **7.6 Standard 6 Risk Management**

## 7. Evaluation

- 7.1. This policy will be reviewed as part of DET's directive to review this policy 3-yearly or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

## 8. Revision History

Date	Description	Author
18/07/2016	Ratified by School Council	Environment SC
10/10/2018	Integrate policy into NSPS template	Environment SC
17/10/2018	Add Clauses 4.8 to 4.11 to comply with <b>Healthy Together Achievement Program</b> as directed in <a href="#">email</a> from Claire Rennie, Cancer Council dated 15/10/2018	Environment SC
19/11/2018	Approved and endorsed by School Council version 3	Environment SC