



Child Safe Standard 4

Human Resources Practices

UNIVERSITY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

PURPOSE:

It is important for schools to have effective and focused human resources practices to keep children and young people safe from harm and abuse. All registered schools are responsible for meeting the child safety requirements for staff screening and selection, staff supervision, training and management (Clause 10, Ministerial Order 870).

The purpose of the University Park Primary School (UPPS) Child Safe Standard 4, Human Resources Practices Policy is to provide a framework for the school's approach to; recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that will support a child safe school. UPPS is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe school where children and young people are safe and feel safe within a supportive environment.

UPPS provides opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. These opportunities will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of safeguarding children from harm and enable them to consistently follow UPPS child safety and procedures.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated. This policy will apply to the school environment (refer to Definitions section) and covers both school and outside of school hours.

DEFINITIONS:

The Act: Child Safety and Well Being Act 2005

Child or young person: A person who is under the age of 18 years.

Aboriginal Child: A person under the age of 18 who: is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Community

Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds: A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis

Child Safe Organisation: In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse

Cultural Competency: A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations

Cultural Abuse: Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community. The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity

Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children: Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to:

- Identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning
- Have an education that strengthens their culture and identity maintain connections to their land and country maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders
- Receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner. Be involved in services that are culturally respectful

Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds: An environment, which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages

Children with a Disability: A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury, intellectual disability, or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden

Organisation: The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005* (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as: an unincorporated body or association (however structured) an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities

Child Abuse: For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: physical violence, sexual offences, grooming, serious emotional or psychological abuse or serious neglect. For further information regarding child abuse refer: Ministerial Order 870-Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools 2016

Child physical abuse: Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour. (Safe Schools Hub)

Child sexual abuse: Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e., a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can also be:

- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g., a teacher); the age of consent laws does not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated
- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion
- sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion
- non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g., a 14-year-old and an 11-year-old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse. (Safe Schools Hub)

Child-connected work: Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training 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

Child protection: Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm. (Safe Schools Hub)

Mandatory Reporting: The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners. (Safe Schools Hub)

Reasonable Belief: When staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

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

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

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

- employed by the Department of Education and Training
- directly engaged or employed by a school council, or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

POLICY:

Human resources practices include the recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance of all personnel. UPPS upholds a strong commitment to safeguarding the safety of children and recognises the positive work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe from harm. The following provides an outline of examples of how the school will implement human resource practices aimed at supporting child wellbeing and safety.

Child Safety Officer

Employees and volunteers are supported through the appointment of a designated child safe officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist us in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with Department of Education and Training (DET) legal requirements, policies and procedures.

The designated child safe officer can also provide a single point of contact for children and young people, parents/carers and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children at University Park Primary School.

Staff Recruitment

[Ministerial Order No. 870](#) provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. UPPS will ensure that: -

1. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work will include a clear statement that sets out:
 - a. the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
 - b. the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
2. All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school will be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).
3. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school will make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
 - a. Working with Children Check status, or similar check.
 - b. proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.
 - c. the person's history of work involving children; and
 - d. references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
4. Appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
 - a. the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
 - b. monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.

Training and Induction

Training and education are an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. University Park Primary School employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse. We provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

All staff, volunteers and contractors have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and wellbeing of students including: -

- Duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students
- Obligations under child protection legislation; and
- Obligations under work health and safety legislation

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training in child safety to enhance their skills and knowledge and reduce exposure to risks. New and existing staff will be provided with information and support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that UPPS meets its duty of care when working with children. Our staff are committed to promoting the rights, safety and wellbeing of children by ensuring that child safety concerns are front and centre of the work that they carry out.

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

- Identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- University Park Primary School's policies and procedures (including Child Safe and VIT Code of Conduct)
- Legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- How to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including UPPS reporting guidelines
- Mandatory Reporting
- Cultural awareness training

Training can be formal such as:

- Higher education training and accreditation
- Training offered by external organisations
- Training developed and delivered internally
- On-the-job training meeting key objectives
- Email updates on specific resources

Training can also be informal such as:

- Inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- Inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- Inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- Internal mentoring and coaching

Supervision

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance. For instance, where practical, two staff members are present during activities with children (e.g., student visits). In particular, children and young people with a disability may require additional supervision. As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including the UPPS internal reporting procedures (such as the child safe officer or leadership team), the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (child protection), or police if a child or young person is believed to be at imminent risk.

Performance and Development Review

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve employees and volunteers' skills and knowledge of child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in recognising and responding to suspected child abuse.

Performance is measured against University Park Primary's School's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within University Park Primary School. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Our Code of Conduct will be made publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person and can expect to be listened to and supported. University Park Primary School's disciplinary procedures clearly outline what employees or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide for Creating A Child Safe Organisation*, Version 2.0.

Department of Education and Training (2016) *Recruitment in Schools*

Department of Education and Training (2016) *Suitability for Employment*

Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*, Ministerial Order No. 870.

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (2016) *Child Safety Standard 4: Staff Selection Checklist*

Health and Human Services – <https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards> Commission for Children and Young People - <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:

www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION:

This policy was last updated June 2021 and is scheduled for review in June 2022 and or in accordance with the UPPS review schedule. In addition to annual evaluation this policy will be reviewed as part of any risk event follow up

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