

TPS CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY 2019

PURPOSE

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 Thornbury Primary School's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

OBJECTIVE

Thornbury Primary is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Thornbury Primary has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Thornbury Primary 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.

Every person involved at Thornbury Primary 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to 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.

POLICY

Thornbury Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.

Thornbury Primary School Statement of Commitment

In its planning, decision-making and operations Thornbury Primary School has a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse. We will take the following actions to ensure the safety of every child:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety in both physical and online environments;
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. Support, encourage and enable children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters;
5. Respect diversity in cultures, children and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
6. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
7. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
8. 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, including follow up support after a disclosure;
9. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
10. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
11. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

The Child Safety Officer at Thornbury Primary School is the Wellbeing Leader and can be contacted for more information regarding the Child Safety Policy and Procedures.

Policies and procedures outlining school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below:

- 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 at <https://thornburyps.vic.edu.au/about/#policies>

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 school's Code of Conduct.
- The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

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.

Further information may be found:

- "The school's approach to human resources practices that ensure child safety can be found on the [website](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m9fQeYIz7kHYU5bRTXY5T5zloCnyBCkIFp21MtZRGkY/eDjt) at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m9fQeYIz7kHYU5bRTXY5T5zloCnyBCkIFp21MtZRGkY/eDjt>
- and <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BFz9tKoEYqitP9T2LK8h0hwGtgqOhd--kZxOheF9WN4/edt>

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.
- The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the website at <https://thornburyps.vic.edu.au/about/#policies>

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.
- The school's approach to Child Safety risk reduction and management can be found on the website at <https://thornburyps.vic.edu.au/about/#policies>

Child Safety Champions

- PLT Leaders at Thornbury Primary School have this role in the school with responsibility to promote, monitor and/or report on the implementation of the school's child safety strategies (with appropriate leadership support)

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, 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.

Confidentiality and privacy

Introduce the intent of this element of the policy. For example:

- 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 School Privacy 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 school community.

Definitions

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

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

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

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

- 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); or
 - a minister of religion.

Vulnerable

- Children with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children in Out of home care and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Child

The words 'child' and 'children' in this guide refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This definition is consistent with the national framework, Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers, the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. Harm and abuse This guide uses a broader definition of 'abuse' of children than may be adopted in some Victorian legislation. The use of the word 'harm' is often used to describe an event that is seen as possibly less detrimental than 'abuse' but is clearly not in the child's best interest or promoting their safety and wellbeing. This guide acknowledges that abuse of children takes many forms. It views all such incidents, regardless of whether they are seen as 'harm' or 'abuse', as damaging.

Aboriginal

The term 'Aboriginal' in this guide is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Disability

Use of the term 'disability' is consistent with that in the Disability Act 2006: In relation to a child, the use of the word 'disability' incorporates: • a sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain

injury or any combination thereof, which— – is, or is likely to be, permanent; and – causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication; and – requires significant ongoing or long term episodic support • an intellectual disability; or • a developmental delay.

Cultural and linguistic diversity

The term ‘cultural and linguistic diversity’ refers to the range of different cultural and language groups represented in the population who identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations. The term acknowledges that diversity may arise from a range of circumstances including place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home.



RELATED POLICIES

- [School Policy and Advisory Guide - Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide - Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)
- [DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework](#)
- [School Privacy Policy](#)

RESOURCES

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf

REVIEW CYCLE

- This policy was last updated on 13/08/2019 and is scheduled for review in February 2022.