

### Child Safety Policy

#### **Rationale:**

The protection of children and young persons is the responsibility of everyone who works at Mount Evelyn Primary School, including its staff, contractors, parents and volunteers. We all share responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children. Staff at our school have a responsibility to respond to the safety, care and welfare of students, in all environments and outside of school hours. Mount Evelyn PS has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and to keeping them safe at all times.

#### **Aim:**

Teachers and ancillary staff at Mount Evelyn PS are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and:

- promote child safety in the school environment
- ensure the safety and best interests of the children in our care, taking into account children of cultural and linguistic diversity and those with disabilities
- have a zero tolerance of child abuse
- actively work to empower the students in our care
- implement and continuously improve procedures and systems that promote and influence an organisational culture of child safety; one that provides a safe environment for our students

#### **Implementation:**

The Principal and the staff are responsible for developing strategies that embed an organisational culture of child safety at Mount Evelyn PS. These strategies will give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing.

The following principles will guide Mount Evelyn PS in implementing consistent policies and influence an organisational culture of child safety:

- child safety policies and procedures will support ongoing assessment, identification and minimisation of the risk of child abuse in the school environment.
- our culture will foster openness and transparency so that all personnel, including students, may feel safe to disclose concerns or risks of harm
- all staff, school councillors and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. A signed copy of the agreement will be kept on file at the school in accordance with privacy legislation
- policies will support the processes that assist the school to engage the most appropriate personnel to work with children.

- regular staff training will ensure there is a full awareness and understanding of policies and processes.
- suspected or actual abuse of children will be reported promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- support and assistance will be provided to children who have suffered abuse and to their families.

### **Recruitment of staff**

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and job advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. When recruiting staff and volunteers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. Our processes will ensure:

- new and existing staff, volunteers and contractors understand the importance of child safety and are inducted into our policies, procedures and codes of practice. They are trained to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and detect potential signs of child abuse.
- new and returning employees participate in an induction program and are assigned a mentor to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse.
- we carry our reference checks and ensure that all teaching staff are registered with the Victorian Institute of teaching
- all employees engaged in child related work including office staff, support staff, contractors and volunteers hold a current Working with Children Check and provide evidence of this
- all staff have signed a copy of the school's Child Safe Statement of Commitment

### **Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse**

Mount Evelyn PS will implement and continually improve its procedures for responding to and reporting suspected abuse of a child. We will implement practices and programs that will support, encourage and enable staff, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters. Our procedures will be based on the following:

- compliance with mandatory reporting laws and obligations imposed by the criminal law to report a belief that child abuse may have occurred
- ensuring any situation is handled appropriately
- we have appropriate risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks
- concerns of child abuse are reported to the Victoria police and relevant authorities
- Mount Evelyn PS provides support to the person/s making allegations of child abuse
- all parties involved in an allegation of child abuse are treated fairly and consistently
- ensuring that there is a continuous review and improvement process in place
- ensuring that everyone involved has access to school support personnel, such as counsellors and school psychologists
- ensuring the situation is treated confidentially and with sensitivity
- all allegations of abuse and safety concerns and any investigation updates are recorded on the incident reporting form ( Appendix 1)
- the storage of personal information will adhere to all aspects of the privacy legislation and DET requirements

## **Communication**

The School community will be informed about this policy. It will be publicly available. It will be available on the School's website and communicated in the School's newsletters, personnel induction programmes and during recruitment and enrolment processes for staff, contractors and volunteers. School Council, staff, volunteers and contractors of Mount Evelyn PS will be made aware of this policy and our commitment to child safety.

## **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year cycle.

## Appendix 1

# Incident Reporting Form

The child safe standards require all schools to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This form can be provided to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern. Staff can also use this resource to record disclosures.

All incident reports must be stored securely.

### Incident details

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

### Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No

Yes, Aboriginal

Yes, Torres Strait Islander

### Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

### Please describe the incident

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	

<b>What did you see?</b>	
<b>Other information</b>	

### Parent/carer/child use

<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</b>	

### Office use:

<b>Date incident report received:</b>	
<b>Staff member managing incident:</b>	
<b>Follow-up date:</b>	
<b>Incident ref. number:</b>	

### Has the incident been reported?

<b>Child protection</b>	
<b>Police</b>	
<b>Another third party (please specify):</b>	

### Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

*(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)*

Yes  No