

Child Safe Policy

North Melbourne Primary School

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SCHOOL Nº 1402



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NMPS Child Safe Policy

Statement of Commitment

North Melbourne 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.

North Melbourne Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse. We adhere to all the child safe standards of ministerial order 870. We are 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 with North Melbourne Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively. They will 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, North Melbourne Primary School will take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.

We Commit to:

- Valuing and empowering children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
- Fostering a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respecting diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- Providing written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- Engaging only the most suitable people to work with children and having high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensuring 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
- Reporting suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- Sharing information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk



- Valuing the input of and communicating regularly with families and carers.

Code of Conduct

The North Melbourne Primary School Code of Conduct can be found in [Appendix 1](#)

Wellbeing Coordinators/Child Safety Officer

The Wellbeing Coordinator (also the Child Safety Officer) is responsible for the coordination of a multi-disciplinary professional team who work with and support the wellbeing of children in order to optimise positive learning outcomes for the students at North Melbourne Primary School.

The Wellbeing Coordinator liaises with the core leadership team, along with teachers, ESOs, DET Student Support Officers and other school personnel regarding the most effective ways of dealing with student wellbeing concerns. The Wellbeing Coordinator also sources support from allied health services and key stakeholders.

The Wellbeing Coordinator will be responsible for communicating between and collaborating with teachers, parents and administration staff regarding the wellbeing of students. They will achieve the best outcome for students and provide support to teachers as they work towards achieving the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of students. The Wellbeing Coordinator will be available to parents to discuss matters concerning their children as required.

The role requires the Coordinator to maintain open communication with staff in order to ensure any pertinent decisions are made collaboratively.

The Wellbeing Coordinator applies for funding through the Program of Students with Disabilities (PSD) and assistance from the Education Department for students that have been identified with 'special needs'.

The Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for convening meetings between teachers, parents and students and ensuring up to date records are maintained.

The Wellbeing Coordinator plays an integral role in addressing psychosocial factors that impact on the student within the school setting. The role requires the Coordinator to facilitate the provision of excellent evidence based practice with children and their families through advocacy, referral, interventions for vulnerable/at risk children, support and counselling and crisis intervention.



Child Protection Awareness Programs & Participation

North Melbourne Primary School illustrates the commitment to implementing best practice plans and learning strategies for children through individual and group experiences. For example by empowering children to speak out or disclose information through awareness programs that encourage children and adults to discuss what is 'safe' and who may be a 'safe' person to talk to.

At North Melbourne Primary School, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe, and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

School Awareness Programs

In relation to child safety, North Melbourne Primary School educates students in the following areas:

- Anti Bullying: Teaching children to understand and use peaceful ways to solve problems and encourage students to stand up for themselves verbally, not physically. Showing children safe ways to help others and making it clear that we expect students to take action if they see someone being hurt, or if they are hurt themselves. We encourage our more experienced students to set a good example and to build empathy in students.
- Online safety: Students investigate ways they can be safe and responsible users of technology. They learn about potential risks online, how to respond appropriately and how being online can create a digital footprint. Students examine agreements that are in place at school and the importance of them. Students are asked to talk to their parents about their technology usage at home and create a responsible technology agreement for home.
- Positive mental health: Schools already have a range of strategies in place that promote healthy minds and positive mental health. This includes creating safe environments, teaching social and emotional learning and recognising the importance of families and carers. In committing to promoting healthy minds in children and young people, school communities are also helping to foster satisfaction, success and engagement in all aspects of their students' lives.
- Resilience: We aim to build student resilience and peer support practices to promote a student's ability to look after themselves, recognise and be aware of their need for support and care, and awareness of appropriate supports in school and in the community. Staff create environments conducive to positive mental health.



- Respectful Relationships: Helping students to challenge negative attitudes such as discrimination and harassment that can lead to violence, often against women.
- Social and Emotional Learning: Students having opportunities to learn and practice social skills such as cooperation, managing conflict, making friends, coping, being resilient and recognising and managing their own feelings.
- Sexuality Education: Sexuality Education has been identified as an essential curriculum component by the Department of Education. Sexuality Education responds to a developmental process relevant to every age and stage of life, with corresponding information and skills related to sexual development, bodies, reproduction, respectful relationships, and gender.
 - Students are taught to;
 - Name the parts of the body and understand how they work
 - Practise talking and asking for help about feelings, relationships and their bodies
 - Be prepared for puberty
 - Understand the importance of respect in relationships
 - Understand how babies are conceived and born
 - Learning and teaching in sexuality education is developmentally appropriate.

Feeling Safe at School

What are your rights? Everyone has the right to feel safe and be protected. No one is allowed to threaten you, hurt you or touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. No one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid, including anyone in your family, anyone at school or anywhere else in the community

Examples of what students are taught include:

How do I know if something is wrong? Every relationship should be respectful. It is wrong for anyone to hurt you or make you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or afraid. Remember a person doesn't have to physically hurt or touch you to be doing the wrong thing. Even if you are not sure, if something doesn't feel right you should tell an adult who can help you. What should I do if I feel unsafe? Tell an adult you trust – telling someone won't get you in trouble. If you feel threatened, unsafe, or if you feel uncomfortable about how someone is touching you, talking to you, or treating you, you should tell a trusted adult. You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school. They will be able to help you. You can also tell your parent, carer, or any family member or adult you trust. Even if the person who is making you feel like this has asked you not to tell anyone, you should still talk to an adult.



Child Protection Reporting Policy

North Melbourne Primary School records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*, the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)* and the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report. Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

The policy outlines clear procedures when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance on how to make a report.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- Identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- Make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Child Safety – Education and Training for School Staff

North Melbourne Primary School provides employees and volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to, and ability to address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

Recruitment

North Melbourne Primary School has procedures in place to ensure that it employs skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements that clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. We understand that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We invite applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities.



North Melbourne Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and early identification of risks and risk minimisation. Our human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers support child safety. We regularly train and educate our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

All members of our community are supported and respected. We are committed to the safety of Aboriginal children, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with disabilities.

When recruiting new staff or volunteers we consider the applicants’:

- Motivation to work with children (personal or professional)
- Relevant and verifiable child-related work experience
- Understanding of professional boundaries
- Communication skills.

North Melbourne Primary School understands that each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:

- The job’s requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety
- The job’s essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.

All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about our school’s child safety practices (including the code of conduct).

In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, our school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:

- Working with Children Check status, or similar check
- Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- The person’s history of work involving children
- References that address the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.

Training and Induction

Child safety is everyone’s responsibility. Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff at North Melbourne Primary School receive induction and ongoing training. New staff receive support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff are given opportunities to develop new skills and



knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options. Training and support ensures that appropriate standards of care are met by employees and volunteers to ensure that the school meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

All staff commit to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by agreeing to the North Melbourne Primary School Code of Conduct. Professional learning is focused on enhancing the skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers, in order to reduce exposure to risks.

Staff and volunteers receive training in the following areas:

- Identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- School policies and procedures
- 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 our organisation's reporting guidelines
- Cultural awareness training

Supervision of Child Activities

Where practical, two staff members should be present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision. New staff and volunteers are routinely supervised to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs are reported to the Principal/leadership, the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.



- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so. Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Risk Management

At North Melbourne Primary School we are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect, above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, social media).

Breach of Policy

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, North Melbourne Primary School may start the process under Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance guidelines for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the principal is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the Regional Director. Relevant notification should also be made to the Department of Education and Training.

Where any other member of the school community is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action and/or contact the Department of Education (Conduct and Ethics Branch and Legal Branch) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Review of this Child Safety Policy

At North Melbourne Primary School we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.



APPENDIX 1 – Code of Conduct

North Melbourne Primary School

Child Safety

Code of Conduct

Approval date: 9/9/2016

Renewal Date: 9/9/2019

North Melbourne Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment. Our conduct respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of North Melbourne Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of North Melbourne Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in **child-connected work** are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations and environments, including school camps and also, in the use of digital technology and social media.



Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
Include adhering to the School Child Safety Policy
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse
- Treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or wellbeing officer
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm



1. Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Exhibit or initiate behaviours with children that may be construed as unnecessary physical contact
- Have deliberate contact with a child outside of the school without the school's leadership knowledge or consent of school council
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs delivering the education curriculum
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- Photograph or video a child (*Exemption only for school use in accordance to school policy and only with written permission from parent or guardian*)
- In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances (*Exemption only for the consumption of alcohol at school events where the sale of alcohol has been approved by school council*)
- Work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs