

Child Safe Environment Policy

1. Purpose of Policy-

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 of Policy-

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers, contractors and school community members.

It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council-run events, activities and services outside of regular school hours and online.

3. Statement of Commitment and Principles-

Pakenham Springs 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.

Pakenham Springs Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Pakenham Springs Primary 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.

Every person involved in Pakenham Springs 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.

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Pakenham Springs Primary 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. Policy and Procedures-

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

Further information regarding any of the elements of this policy can be obtained by speaking to Kerryn Baillie (Principal of Pakenham Springs Primary School).

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.

Staff at Pakenham Springs Primary School regularly undertake online training regarding their role and responsibilities in the identification and reporting of suspected abuse of students.

Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities

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. A copy of this is available to all staff members through the shared network drive.

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.

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. Detailed procedures for responding and reporting concerns or complaints can be found in the Pakenham Springs *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy*.

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.

Further information regarding the reduction and management of risks to children at Pakenham Springs Primary School can be found in the *Visitors Policy*, *Volunteers Policy* and the *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy*.

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.

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 *School Privacy Policy*.

5. Evaluation-

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.

This Policy was last reviewed on 10th June, 2019 and approved at the School Council Meeting on 23rd July, 2019. This policy is scheduled for review in July 2020.