



WILLOW GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE POLICY

A Culture of Child Safety

The Willow Grove Primary School Child Safe Policy demonstrates a strong commitment of the **Principal, School Council, staff and volunteers to Child Safety**. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and practices we have developed to keep all children, particularly children who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities, or Indigenous, cultural or linguistic background, safe from any harm, including abuse.

This policy was developed in collaboration with staff, volunteers, parents and students, and applies to **all school activities** including excursions, camps and Out of School Hours Care program.

All staff complete **Mandatory Reporting** training requirements and other **professional development** deemed necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.

The Willow Grove Primary School Child Safe policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies-

- Duty of Care
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Student Images, Privacy and Copyright
- Working with Children Check
- Mandatory Reporting
- Volunteers and Privacy in the School Community

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children (**those identified as vulnerable which includes but is not limited to: Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability**) at Willow Grove Primary School have a right to feel and be safe. The Principal and staff agree that the welfare of the children in our care is paramount. We have a **zero tolerance to child abuse** and are **committed** to acting in children's best interests, creating a **child safe** and child friendly environment. Ongoing professional conversations between staff at whole school meetings and weekly briefings ensure that children's safety is a number one priority.

Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we-

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with disabilities and their families and act to promote their participation
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Standard One - Strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school

The Willow Grove Primary school Council and staff share overall responsibility for ensuring a culture of child safety is embedded at the school.

The following strategies are considered to be essential in developing and embedding a child safe culture in our school:

- The diverse needs of children in the school are to be recognised. It is important that our school is inclusive and culturally safe places for children and parents. Younger children, children with a disability, indigenous children and those other children from culturally diverse backgrounds may require greater levels of support and consideration.
- Include child safety as a standing item on the School Improvement Team and Staff Meeting agendas.
- Key people in the school are allocated to undertake child safety roles and responsibilities.
- Communicate the school's stand on Child Safety that informs all people in the school community of the school's Child Safe Policy based on Ministerial Order 870. Communicate broadly and with a mix of tools: website, Facebook, handbooks, induction documents, staff meetings, parent meetings etc.

Leadership in a child safe environment

Willow Grove Primary School will protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

A Child Safe leader has the responsibility of working with School Council and staff to build and maintain a culture of transparency, inclusiveness and awareness. Key responsibilities of the Child Safe leader include:

- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to School Council, staff, students and parents;
- Liaising with other school leaders to ensure a unified approach to child safety;
- Leading the school's child safe culture by communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

Governance in a child safe environment

Overall, school council has the responsibility of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children at Willow Grove Primary School. Our policies, events and management practices will take into account the Child Safe standards. We will:

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately;
- Ensure school actions are reviewed to ensure effectiveness;
- Ensure the school's Child Safe Policy is reviewed at specified frequencies;
- Conduct staff briefing sessions to ensure awareness of The Standard's and the school's Child Safe Policy

Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Willow Grove Primary School applies the best practice and standards in the recruitment and screening of all staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require **police checks** and **Working with Children Checks** for relevant positions. Our commitment to **Child Safety** and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Willow Grove Primary School seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so everyone feels valued, respected and fairly treated. We follow our Volunteers and Privacy in the School Community Policy which provides guidance to our staff and volunteers. New staff members are allocated mentors to ensure they are aware of our Code of Conduct practices.

Standard Two – Commitment to Child Safety Policy

Willow Grove Primary School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and this is the primary focus of our care and decision making. The school is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

Every person involved in the school has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of everything they do and every decision they make.

Willow Grove will:

- Take a preventative and proactive approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions that impact their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all to disclose risks of harm to children;
- Respect diversity in cultures;
- Ensure children know who to talk to when they feel unsafe and they are comfortable and encouraged to raise issues

The school's culture encourages staff to raise and discuss concerns which make it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

- Willow Grove Primary School is committed to child safety.
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, young children and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Allegations, 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 safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and promptly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour. We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Standard Three – Child Safe Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is to guide staff in identifying their own behaviour and the behaviour of other school staff in order to protect children in the school environment.

Code of Conduct

Willow Grove Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of ensuring our school is a safe and supportive environment which respects the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, enabling them to thrive in their learning.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. 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 will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school and learning environment. The

Principal and school leaders 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 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, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media. All staff, volunteers and school council members of Willow Grove Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

Embedding the Code of Conduct

To ensure the Code is fully appreciated, understood and applied by all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents, the following actions will be taken:

- Ensure that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are aware of the code and how it applies;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of the induction for new staff;
- Inclusion of the Code in induction for all pre-service teachers;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of annual training for existing school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers);
- Discussion of the Code at staff meetings; communication of the Code through school communication channels including email, Compass, shared drive, team meetings and Consultative Committee meetings; as well as shared spaces including the staff room and office areas
- Informing parents/carers and other persons associated with the school of the expected behaviour for the school's leadership, staff, contractors and volunteers;
- Using the school's and the Department's reporting procedures should breaches of the Code be suspected or identified;
- Including the Code in employment advertisements and service contractors to ensure compliance;
- Communication to students in an appropriate way

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related 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, adhering to the school's child safe policy;
- 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
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young children
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or Child Safety Leader

- 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.

Unacceptable behaviours

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

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- 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 relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- 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 in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes. The school must obtain consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. Consent is sought at the beginning of each school year from parent/carers. This applies for excursions and school activities.
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Making a professional judgement

Adults at Willow Grove Primary School will:

- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a member of School Leadership or Child Safe Leader
- Be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others
- Not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of an inappropriate nature.

Physical Contact

Adults at Willow Grove Primary School will:

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities, never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary
- Seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable;
- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort;
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with School Leadership and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan
- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Transporting

Adults at Willow Grove Primary School will:

- Ensure requirements specific to seat belts and car seats are adhered to
- Not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of school leadership and been agreed with parents
- Ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive
- Record details of the journey in accordance with agreed DET procedures
- Ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance
- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned.

Excursions and Camps

Adults at Willow Grove Primary School will:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with by school leadership
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken
- Have parental consent to the activity
- Never share beds with children
- Not share bedrooms unless it is a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been agreed with a school leadership, parents and children.

Standard Four – Human Resource Practices

At Willow Grove Primary School, we will provide opportunities for volunteers and employees to understand the importance of child safety along with the expectations and accountabilities of all staff and/or volunteers in ensuring child safe practice is embedded at our school.

Employment and Training of new and existing Willow Grove personnel

Volunteers

The Willow Grove Primary School Volunteers and Privacy in the School Community policy clearly states the roles and expectations of staff to ensure that a **child safe** environment is provided at our school. It clearly states the requirements of volunteers at Willow Grove Primary School and should be read in conjunction with our Working with Children Check policy.

Employees

During the interview process, **additional information** is sourced to ensure an understanding of the importance of providing a **Child Safe Environment** for all children. It is paramount that fair employment protocols are followed during this process. Additional information will include -

- motivation to work with children (personal and/or professional)
- relevant and verifiable experience
- understanding of children's physical and emotional needs
- understanding of professional boundaries
- communication skills
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- values and how they fit with our school values
- responses from referees

All staff members partake in professional development to maintain and develop skills and capabilities including **understanding the risk of harm to children, the different types of harm, how to identify child abuse and relevant legislative requirements**. These processes and requirements are regularly addressed through meetings and professional development to ensure that all staff and volunteers are well informed of the **Mandatory Child Safe Standards**.

Standard Five – Responding to allegations of suspected child abuse

At Willow Grove Primary School, procedures for responding to allegations of child abuse apply to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made in relation to a child, by school staff, visitors or any other person connected to our school environment. Whether a school staff member, visitor, maintenance person, contract staff member etc., each adult has a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under their care and/or supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable (this applies to ALL persons connected to the school environment). The question of what constitutes "**reasonable steps**" will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or agencies when the school staff member is unsure of what steps to take
- reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities such as the Victoria Police and DHHS Child Protection arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child providing on-going support to the child – this may include attending DHHS Child Protection Case Planning meetings, and convening regular Student Support Group meetings
- sharing information with other school-based staff who will also be responsible for monitoring and providing on-going support to the child. It is particularly important for visitors and/or others associated with the school such as contractors, maintenance personnel etc. to seek out school personnel who can assist and advise regarding further steps that need to be taken.

Different types of abuse and recognising the possible physical and behavioural indicators of:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- grooming
- emotional or physiological harm
- neglect
- family violence

When identifying child abuse, it is critical to remember that:

- the trauma associated with child abuse can significantly impact upon the wellbeing and development of a child
- all concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, or the conduct of a staff member, contractor or volunteer must be acted upon as soon as practicable.

What is physical child abuse?

Physical child abuse can consist of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. Examples of physical abuse may include beating, shaking or burning, assault with implements.

PHYSICAL indicators of physical child abuse include (but are not limited to):

- bruises or welts on facial areas and other areas of the body, e.g. back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs
- bruises or welts in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury, e.g. fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth
- burns from boiling water, oil or flames or burns that show the shape of the object used to make them, e.g. iron, grill, cigarette
- fractures of the skull, jaw, nose and limbs (especially those not consistent with the explanation offered, or the type of injury possible at the child's age of development)
- cuts and grazes to the mouth, lips, gums, eye area, ears and external genitalia
- bald patches where hair has been pulled out
- multiple injuries, old and new
- effects of poisoning
- internal injuries.

Behavioural indicators of physical child abuse:

- disclosure of an injury inflicted by someone else (parent, carer or guardian), or an inconsistent or unlikely explanation or inability to remember the cause of injury
- unusual fear of physical contact with adults

- aggressive behaviour
- disproportionate reaction to events
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- wariness or fear of a parent, carer or guardian
- reluctance to go home
- no reaction or little emotion displayed when being hurt or threatened
- habitual absences from school without reasonable explanation
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative
- unusually nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive and destructive to self-and/or others
- poor sleeping patterns, fear of the dark or nightmares and regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting
- drug or alcohol misuse, suicide or self-harm.

What is child sexual abuse?

Child sexual abuse:

- is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity
- Child sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact (e.g. kissing or fondling a child in a sexual way, masturbation, oral sex or penetration) and can also include non-contact offences, for example:
 - talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
 - sending sexual messages or emails to a child
 - exposing a sexual body part to a child
 - forcing a child to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to a child)
 - having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation).

PHYSICAL indicators of sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- injury to the genital or rectal area, e.g. bruising, bleeding, discharge, inflammation or infection
- injury to areas of the body such as breasts, buttocks or upper thighs
- discomfort in urinating or defecating
- presence of foreign bodies in the vagina and/or rectum
- sexually-transmitted diseases
- frequent urinary tract infections
- pregnancy, especially in very young adolescents
- anxiety-related illnesses, e.g. anorexia or bulimia.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of sexual abuse include (but are not limited to):

- disclosure of sexual abuse, either directly (from the alleged victim) or indirectly (by a third person or allusion)
- persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity, e.g. excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults
- drawings or descriptions in stories that are sexually explicit and not age-appropriate
- fear of home, specific places or particular adults
- poor/deteriorating relationships with adults and peers
- poor self-care or personal hygiene.
- complaining of headaches, stomach pains or nausea without physiological basis
- sleeping difficulties
- regressive behaviour, e.g. bed-wetting or speech loss

- depression, self-harm, drug or alcohol abuse, prostitution or attempted suicide
- sudden decline in academic performance, poor memory and concentration
- promiscuity
- wearing layers of clothing to hide injuries and bruises.

What is emotional abuse?

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person, to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health. Emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

PHYSICAL indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to):

- speech disorders such as language delay, stuttering or selectively being mute (only speaking with certain people or in certain situations)
- delays in emotional, mental or physical development.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of emotional abuse include (but are not limited to):

- overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour
- extremely demanding, aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour or anti-social and destructive behaviour
- low tolerance or frustration
- poor self-image and low self-esteem
- unexplained mood swings, depression, self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- behaviours that are not age-appropriate, e.g. overly adult, or overly infantile
- fear of failure, overly high standards, and excessive neatness
- poor social and interpersonal skills
- violent drawings or writing
- lack of positive social contact with other children.

What is neglect?

Neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health or physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk.

In some circumstances the neglect of a child:

- can place the child's immediate safety and development at serious risk
- may not immediately compromise the safety of the child, but is likely to result in longer term cumulative harm.

PHYSICAL indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- appearing consistently dirty and unwashed
- being consistently inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- being at risk of injury or harm due to consistent lack of adequate supervision from parents
- being consistently hungry, tired and listless
- having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care
- having inadequate shelter and unsafe or unsanitary conditions.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of neglect include (but are not limited to):

- gorging when food is available or inability to eat when extremely hungry
- begging for or stealing food
- appearing withdrawn, listless, pale and weak
- aggressive behaviour, irritability

- involvement in criminal activity
- little positive interaction with parent, carer or guardian
- poor socialising habits
- excessive friendliness towards strangers
- indiscriminate acts of affection
- poor, irregular or non-attendance at school
- staying at school for long hours and refusing or being reluctant to go home
- self-destructive behaviour
- taking on an adult role of caring for parent.

What is family violence?

Family violence can include physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional and physical abuse, sexual abuse and financial and social abuse.

A child's exposure to family violence constitutes child abuse. This exposure can be very harmful and may result in long-term physical, psychological and emotional trauma. Action must be taken to protect the child, and to mitigate or limit their trauma.

PHYSICAL indicators of family violence include (but are not limited to):

- speech disorders
- delays in physical development
- failure to thrive (without an organic cause)
- bruises, cuts or welts on facial areas, and other parts of the body including back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs
- any bruises or welts (old or new) in unusual configurations, or those that look like the object used to make the injury (such as fingerprints, handprints, buckles, iron or teeth)
- internal injuries.

BEHAVIOURAL indicators of family violence include (but are not limited to):

- violent/aggressive behaviour and language
- depression and anxiety and suicidal thoughts
- appearing nervous and withdrawn, including wariness of adults
- difficulty adjusting to change.
- psychosomatic illness
- bedwetting and sleeping disorders.
- 'acting out', such as cruelty to animals
- extremely demanding, attention-seeking behaviour
- participating in dangerous risk-taking behaviours to impress peers
- overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive and uncommunicative behaviour
- taking on a caretaker role prematurely, trying to protect other family members
- embarrassment about family
- demonstrated fear of parents, carers or guardians, and of going home
- disengagement from school and/or poor academic outcomes
- parent-child conflict.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

All staff have the responsibility to respond to any complaint made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints processes are outlined in our Mandatory Reporting Policy.

You should make a referral to **Child FIRST** if:

- you have a significant concern for a child's wellbeing

- your concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the child
- the child's immediate safety is not compromised
- you/your school has discussed the referral with the family and they are supportive of it.

You **must** contact **Victoria Police** if:

- there is any concern for a child's immediate safety and/or
- a child is partaking in any risk-taking activity that is illegal and extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the child.

You should contact **DHHS Child Protection** if:

- after consideration of all of available information you form a view that the child is in need of protection
- you believe that the child's parent/carers will not be open to support from family services to address their child's wellbeing.

If you are unsure whether to take action, or what action to take you should discuss this with the Principal and/or Child Safe Leader and make contact with authorities for further advice.

FAILURE TO PROTECT and FAILURE TO DISCLOSE OFFENCES

Any staff member or person associated with the school (e.g. visitor, contractor, maintenance worker etc.) who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 **must disclose that information to police.**

Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, unless a reasonable excuse has been formed such as:-

- information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.
- Fear for own or others' safety

The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. If an adult fails to take reasonable steps to protect a child from harm and/or fails to disclose, this may amount to a criminal offence. Refer to the Dept of Justice fact sheets on FAILURE to Protect and Failure to DISCLOSE for further information.

If you need to report a child in immediate risk or danger of a sexual offence please call Triple Zero (000).

Reducing or removing the risk of child sexual abuse posed by an adult associated with Willow Grove Primary School.

- If required, the principal (or assistant principal) may need to take reasonable steps to reduce or remove a known substantial risk that an adult associated with their organisation will commit a sexual offence against a child.

Action/notification to DHHS Child Protection must occur if a 'reasonable belief' has been formed. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused

- signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused

A report should be made to DHHS Child Protection in circumstances where, for example:

- the child is engaging in risk-taking behaviour
- female genital mutilation has occurred, or there is a risk of it occurring
- there is a risk to an unborn child
- a child or young person is exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours
- there are indications that a child is being groomed.

Responding to suspected child abuse: for Victorian schools

School staff use the template [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse](#) to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused.

Standard Six – Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Willow Grove Primary School will mitigate, remove or reduce the risks of child abuse. In taking into account the characteristics and needs of all children (including and especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse children and other vulnerable children), the School Council and principal will develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in a range of school related environments (eg. at school, on excursions and any school organised activities.) Willow Grove Primary School will:

- train and educate staff about their individual and collective responsibility for managing the risks of child abuse

Standard Seven - Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

At Willow Grove Primary School we will ensure delivery of appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- healthy and respectful relationships
- resilience

Willow Grove Primary School is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Building student confidence in knowing that they will be listened to, by an adult, when they have information to share, building personal resilience and a knowledge of knowing what to do and who can help will be areas continuously addressed by all teaching staff as a student journeys through our school.

The following programs/frameworks and will be delivered by the school and will be prefaced on the school' commitment to child safety. School staff will be supported in their professional learning to ensure the observance and delivery of a Child Safe environment through such programs, frameworks and Policy. Curriculum documents and resources will be easily accessible to school staff.

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)

Willow Grove Primary School promotes the SWPBS framework as central to the positive and safe culture of the school. It is an evidence-based framework for preventing and responding to student behaviour. It aims to create a positive school climate, culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for all community

members. A team of teaching staff has been professionally developed through the SWPBS resource.

Victorian Curriculum

The relevant domains of the Victorian Curriculum will be provided as part of the mandated curriculum delivery. Specifically, to address the Child Safe Standard 7, the following will support children to build resilience, healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality) and to gain insight into appropriate behaviour and what is not, hence being empowered to feel safe and to be safe.

The Personal and Social Capability curriculum aims to develop knowledge, understandings and skills to enable students to:

- recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions
- demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience
- develop empathy for and understanding of others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community
- understand how relationships are developed and use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships
- work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively

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

Ratification	Review Date	Date Produced
22 nd October 2019	October 2020	18 th October 2019