

# Yarra Junction Primary School

School Number: 3216



## CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

<b>Date Implemented</b>	August 2016
<b>Author</b>	Jacqueline Woodbridge, Assistant Principal
<b>Approved By</b>	School Council
<b>Approval Authority School Council President or Nominee: (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	_____/____/2016
<b>Approval Authority Principal: (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	_____/____/2016
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	Assistant Principal
<b>Review Date</b>	August 2017
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Child Safe Standards <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childsafes.aspx">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/childsafes.aspx</a></li><li>• Ministerial Order 870</li></ul>

## **RATIONALE**

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

## **SCOPE**

- All staff, volunteers and contractors regardless of the fact that they work in direct contact with children and young people.
- Across all school forums e.g. at school, on camps and online.

## **AIM**

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 aims to do the following:

- Develop a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/ carers.
- Encourage child and parent/carer involvement that informs safe school operations and builds that capability of children and parents/ carers to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Ensure the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- Have zero tolerance of child abuse
- Commit to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability
- Empower children as vital and active participants in the school
- Promote diversity and tolerance
- Train staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse
- Apply 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.
- Comply with legislative responsibilities
- Proactively manage risks of abuse to our children
- 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.

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES

The school's commitment to child safety is detailed below.

### YARRA JUNCTION PRIMARY SCHOOL

#### STAFF AND VOLUNTEER

#### Statement of commitment to child safety

Yarra Junction 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.

#### **Yarra Junction Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.**

*Yarra Junction 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 Yarra Junction 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 Yarra Junction 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."

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behavior 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.

### **YARRA JUNCTION PRIMARY SCHOOL**

#### **STAFF AND VOLUNTEER**

#### **Child safety code of conduct**

### **AUGUST 2016**

Yarra Junction 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 which 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 Yarra Junction 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 Yarra Junction 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-related 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, including school camps and 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-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 and adhering to the Yarra Junction Primary School 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
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's Principal and/ or Assistant Principal according to processes outlined in Yarra Junction Primary School Student Welfare Protocols for Teachers at Yarra Junction Primary School.
- 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<sup>1</sup>
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy<sup>2</sup> or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

<sup>2</sup> SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says

*This Code of Conduct was endorsed/approved by the Yarra Junction Primary School, School Council on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016 for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2018.*

**By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Principal.**

**If you believe a child s at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.**

**I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:**

**Name:** ..... **Signature:** .....

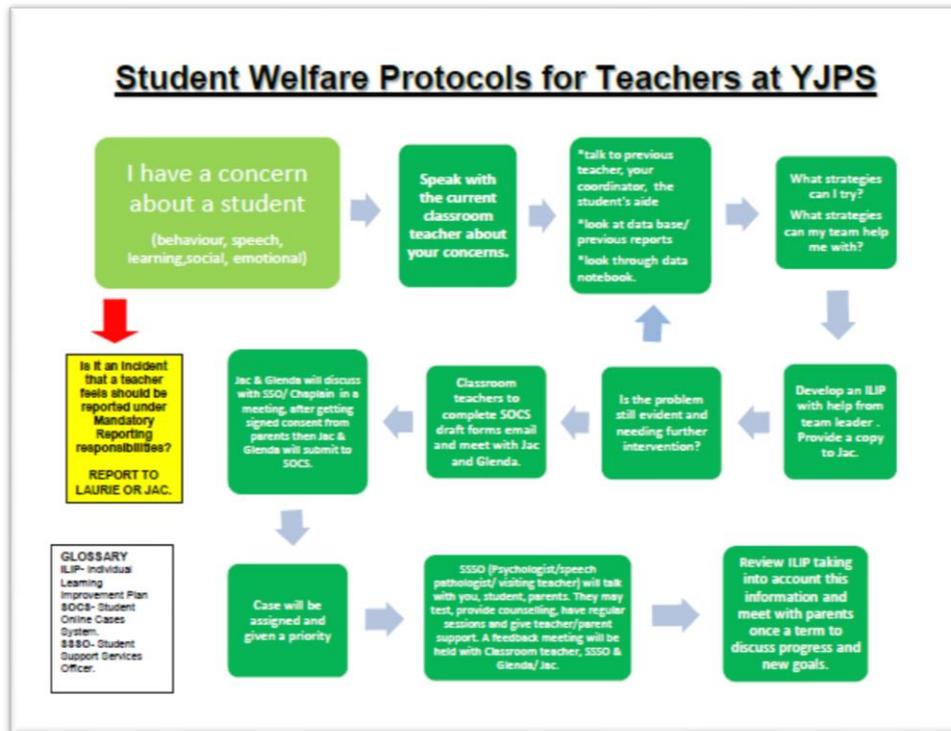
**Date:** .....

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## 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 some protection. When a 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 where appropriate) informed about progress. The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint is located below.



## EVALUATION

This procedure will also be reviewed as part of the school's regular policy and procedure review process to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement. The review will include input from students, parents/ carers and the school community.