



OFFICER SPECIALIST SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

The Child Safe Environment Policy: sets out Officer Specialist 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.

This policy will apply to all staff, volunteers, contractors and whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

This policy will apply across a range of school forums including the school environment, excursions, work placements, camps, online and outside of school hours.

This policy has been formulated to reflect the Officer Specialist School Commitment to Child Safety. This Document is attached.

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

POLICY

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

The school's plan for creating a child safe culture includes the development of:

A Child Safe Culture

The Officer Specialist School culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. The development of a Child Safe Culture is also facilitated by:

- The appointment of a Child Safety Officer (Assistant Principal, Helene Rowe) to lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety
- The development and implementation of school policies and procedures including:
 - A Child Safe Code of Conduct
 - A Child Safe Responding and Reporting Policy
 - A Statement of Commitment to Child Safety



Roles and responsibilities

The School leaders 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.

Recruitment and Screening of staff

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.

As part of the induction process at Officer Specialist School, all staff are required to complete the training in mandatory reporting and school based training in Child Safe Practices at Officer Specialist School.

Reporting a Child safety report 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.

To report a concern regarding any student staff will follow the Officer Specialist School A Child safe responding and Reporting Policy

- Discuss their concerns with school leaders who will support them through the process
- Follow recommended department procedure and use the PROTECT template to record details
Available following links below

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

[Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.](#)

Listening to Children

Officer Specialist 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.

We encourage every student to communicate openly with staff using their preferred mode of communication.

Officer Specialist School also understands that it has a special obligation to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist all students to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students



with disabilities through our Student Support Group processes in consultation with the student, their parents or carers, their teachers and if appropriate, their treating practitioners.

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 Victorian Education Department Privacy Policy

Review

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

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Officer Specialist School Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Officer Specialist School Bullying Policy
- A Child Safe Code of Conduct
- A Child safe responding and Reporting Policy
- A statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Approved by school council 4.3.19

Annually reviewed

Denise Munt (Principal)

Doug Baxter (School Council President)