



No 1844



RAYWOOD
PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Ministerial Order No. 870: Child Safe Standards

Managing the risk of child abuse in schools

The following document is Raywood Primary School's compliance with the Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards. The document is broken up into seven parts:

- Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- School staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child safe environment
- Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse
- Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

Raywood Primary School is committed to child safety and thus the following document is made accessible to our staff, volunteers and the entire community. This document is reviewed annually to ensure that it is efficient and adheres to the all current legislation.

Child Safety Standard 1:

Strategies to embed and organisational culture of child safety

Raywood Primary School employs an array of strategies to embed a culture of child safety at school. These strategies include:

- Ensuring the training of all staff members, volunteers and any other adult that visits our school in child safety within our school, knowing our child safe policy and our updated code of conduct. This includes teaching them about the signs to look for that may indicate a form of child abuse
- Respecting all children, staff and school volunteers
- Taking all allegations seriously and referring them to the appropriate avenues
- Reporting any allegation of child abuse if we have reasonable belief that an incident took place
- Teaching the kids about what types of behaviours are deemed appropriate /inappropriate at school so they know if they are a victim of child abuse and can report it to someone
- Understanding children and their living situations to allow the school to appropriately scan for signs of child abuse (including students from indigenous, culturally or linguistically diverse and disabled backgrounds)
- Carrying a zero tolerance for child abuse. This means that all allegations and concerns raised will be treated seriously and consistently in line with our policies and procedures. This includes taking all allegations to the school delegate
- Following our screening process for the recruitment of new staff members and volunteers
- Employing a feeling of comfort and understanding amongst the children at school thus making them feel willing to report any issues/concerns they have.
- Promoting child safety at school for all students including Indigenous, disabled and students with cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds

- Employing an organised supervision regimen to ensure adequate supervision of children. This allows us to screen the kids for any behavioural changes as a result of a form of child abuse and prevent any other forms from occurring
- Regularly reviewing our procedures, code of conduct and policy to ensure that it not only adheres to the current legislative recommendations but also encompasses the most effective elements of child safety

These strategies are reviewed annually

Child Safety Standard 2: Child Safety Policy

Outline...

- Raywood Primary School is committed to child safety. The aim of our school is to help the children feel safe, happy and empowered
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and school volunteers
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- Raywood Primary carries a zero tolerance for child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns raised will be treated seriously and consistently in line with our child safety policies and procedures
- Raywood Primary has both legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety
- We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, removing and reducing these risks
- Raywood Primary has specific screening procedures and recruitment practices in place for all staff and volunteers
- We are committed to the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, and to providing a safe environment for children with any form of disability
- Raywood Primary is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse, and have procedures in place to support both staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments

Our Children

The purpose of this policy is to empower children who are active members of Raywood Primary. They are involved with decision making, especially about matters that directly

affect them. We listen to their different views and both staff, volunteers and fellow peers respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance at Raywood Primary, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous Children
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on appropriate behaviour with children at Raywood Primary.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Supervision

The Raywood Primary School Culture aims for all staff and volunteers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns. Our staff and volunteers are trained to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from child abuse, promote cultural safety of all children including those from linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised to ensure they understand Raywood Primary School's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from child 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.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our children. We develop selection criteria which clearly advertise our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities.

We actively encourage applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

Raywood Primary Schools primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of children, however we also focus on being fair and just to our personnel.

The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and taking on disciplinary action will always be thorough and based on evidence.

At Raywood Primary all personnel are treated in a fair manner when dealing with arising situations despite their role/responsibilities within the school.

Privacy

All information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the people involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Legislative Responsibilities

Raywood Primary 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 the age of 16 have an obligation to report that information to police
- **Failure to Protect:** People of authority with Raywood Primary 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
- All personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties

Risk Management

Raywood Primary is required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children.

We have risk management strategies to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by both physical and online environments.

These risk management strategies are complied to not only by the staff of the school but all volunteers, parents and visiting community.

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and after any significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that all appropriate parties including both culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities as well as people with disabilities have the chance to contribute.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Raywood Primary takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. 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 see abuse take place 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
- 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

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Child Safety Standard 3: Code of Conduct

Outline...

Raywood Primary school aims to provide a caring and safe learning environment for all students, staff and volunteers. Members of the Raywood Primary School community have the responsibility to ensure children are safe in all school environments and school related activities.

A Child Safety Code of Conduct lists all behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides vital information about professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

All staff and volunteers within Raywood Primary are made know of our code of conduct and are expected to follow it at all times. This allows us to work as a team to provide the most nurturing environment possible and protect the children from harm.

Implementation

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the school environment. If a staff member breaches the code, Raywood Primary may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal. This code is revised annually.

Principles for adult's behaviour in undertaking child-connected work

At Raywood Primary we set out the following principles to guide appropriate adult/child behaviour:

- The adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- An adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be understanding of the child's age and vulnerability, and take into account the adults responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child
- An adult should not be alone with a child unless there is a line of sight to other adults
- An adult should not intimidate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school

Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours

Raywood Primary School has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students within our school community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, council members, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers and parents/carers.

Acceptable Behaviours:

- Adhere to the school's child safe policy
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treat everyone the school community with respect
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or if they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child

- Report any allegations of child abuse to the schools leadership
- Understand and comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting
- Report any child safety concerns to the school's leadership
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child/ren are safe
- Report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher

Unacceptable Behaviours:

- Do not ignore or disregard any suspected disclosed child abuse
- Do not develop any 'special' relationships with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- Do not put children at risk of abuse (eg, locking doors)
- Do not initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Do not engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- Do not use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Do not express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Do not discriminate against any child. Including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- Do not have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school leaderships knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval
- Do not use any personal communication channels such as a personal email

- Do not exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- Do not photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents/guardians
- Do not work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Do not consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children

Child Safety Standard 4:

School staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child safe environment

Raywood Primary School takes the selection, supervision and management of school staff extremely seriously and follows all legislative responsibilities to help ensure the school staff is able to effectively promote a child safe environment. This is done by:

- Implementing the practices for a child safe environment in accordance with the Education, Training and Reform Act (2006)
- Taking all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our children. This is done by clearly advertising our commitment to child safety to any person planning on applying for a position within our school. This includes giving them access to our code of conduct.
- We follow our social and legislative responsibilities when screening new potential staff. This is done by gathering verifying and recording the following information about a person who proposes to engage in child connected work at our school:
 - Working with Children Check status (including a Police Check)
 - Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - The persons history of work involving children
 - References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children
- Setting out each job category within the school their own set of requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety
- Making sure that each staff member has the essential qualifications, experience and attributes to effectively monitor child safety whilst within their care
- Supervising new employees and volunteers to ensure they understand our commitment to child safety

- Providing extra training and assistance for staff that require it to make sure they can adequately screen and act upon any form of child abuse
- Holding regular meetings to discuss child abuse procedures within the school as a form of training for the new staff members and also as a possible preventative of future child abuse

Child Safety Standard 5:

Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

Raywood Primary School has a specific procedure for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse. This procedure is based around our responsibility to either make a mandatory report or contact police based on the seriousness of the allegation. Raywood Staff are annually trained in Mandatory Reporting and are aware of their responsibilities in regards to child safe procedures. The following is our procedure for mandatory reporting:

Statement

A broad range of professional groups are identified in the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) as mandatory reporters. Mandated staff members must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

The following professionals are prescribed as mandatory reporters under section 182 of the CYFA:

- Primary and secondary school teachers and principals (including students in training to become teachers)
- Registered medical practitioners (including psychiatrists)
- Nurses (including school nurses)
- Police.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members, for example a teacher and a principal, have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to make a report. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made and that all of the grounds for their own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

Non-mandated staff members

Section 183 of the CYFA states that **any person**, who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, may report their concerns to Child Protection. This means that any person, including non-mandated school staff, is able to make a report to Child Protection when they believe that a child or young person is at risk of harm and in need of protection, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- A child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- A child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- Someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused
- A child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused.

- The staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development
- The staff member observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- A child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

Reporting a belief

Staff members, whether or not mandated, need to report their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

“If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report to Child Protection.”

Protecting the identity of the reporter

Confidentiality is provided for reporters under the CYFA. The CYFA prevents disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with legislation, except in specific circumstances.

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential unless:

- The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family of the report
- The reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- A court or tribunal decides that it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- A court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

Information provided during a protective investigation may be used in a court report if the risks to the child or young person require the case to proceed to court. In these circumstances, the source of the information may be required to provide evidence to the court.

If Child Protection decides that the report is about a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, they may refer the report to a community-based child and family service and disclose the identity of the reporter to that service. However, the CYFA provides that neither Child Protection nor the community-based child and family service may disclose the reporter's identity to any other person without the reporter's consent.

Professional protection for reporters

If a report is made in good faith:

- It does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter
- The reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

This means that a person who makes a report in accordance with the legislation will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation of the report.

Failure to report

A failure by mandated professionals and staff members to report a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse may result in the person being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine under the CYFA.

Making a report to Child Protection

The CYFA allows for two types of reports to be made in relation to significant concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child – a report to Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST.

A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after taking into account all of the available information, the staff member forms a view that the child or young person is in need of protection because:

- The harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development
- The harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development
- The child's parents cannot or will not protect the child or young person from harm.

Where during the course of carrying out their normal duties, a school staff member forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, the staff member must make a report to Child Protection regarding this belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable.

Staff members may form a professional judgement or belief, in the course of undertaking their professional duties based on:

- warning signs or indicators of harm that have been observed or inferred from information about the child
- legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting
- knowledge of child and adolescent development
- consultation with colleagues and other professionals
- professional obligations and duty-of-care responsibilities
- established protocols
- internal policies and procedures in an individual licensed children's service or school.

Upon receipt of a report, Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required.

In most circumstances, Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report. When the report is classified by Child Protection as a Wellbeing Report, Child Protection will, in turn, make a referral to Child FIRST.

Any person who is registered as a teacher under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, including principals, is mandated to make a report to Child Protection. In the course of undertaking their professional duties, mandated staff members are required to report their belief, when the belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual abuse or physical injury.

School policy and procedures stipulate how teaching staff fulfil their duty of care towards children and young people in their school.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the principal or a member of the school leadership team. If a principal or member of the leadership team does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the

teacher's obligation to do so if they have formed a reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. If the teacher's concerns continue, even after consultation with the principal or member of the leadership team, that teacher is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of their concerns.

Information about the identity of a person making a report to Child Protection must be kept confidential unless the reporter consents to the disclosure of their identity. If the staff member wishes to remain anonymous, this information should be conveyed at the time that the reporter makes the mandatory report.

The role of school staff

School staff has a duty of care to protect and preserve the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care and staff must always act in the best interests of those children and young people. If a staff member has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person it is important to take immediate action.

Note: the role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child

Protection and/or Victoria Police.

The roles and responsibilities of staff in supporting children and young people who are involved with Child Protection may include acting as a support person for students, attending Child Protection case plan meetings, observing and monitoring students' behaviour, and liaising with professionals.

Confidentiality

Staff must respect confidentiality when dealing with a case of suspected child abuse and neglect, and may discuss case details and the identity of the child or the young person and their family only with those involved in managing the situation.

When a child or young person has moved to another school, professional judgement should be exercised as to what information needs to be passed on. This will be guided by usual procedures for passing on information about a child's general wellbeing or special needs, and the role of the school in any ongoing care plans.

Interviews at Victorian schools

Child Protection may conduct interviews of children and young people at school without parental knowledge or consent. However, a child will be interviewed at a Victorian school only in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the child's best interests to proceed in this manner. Child Protection will notify the school of any intention to interview a child or young person. This may occur regardless of whether the school is the source of the report to Child Protection.

When Child Protection practitioners arrive at the school, the principal or their nominee should ask to see their identification before allowing Child Protection to have access to the child or young person.

Support persons

Children and young people should be advised of their right to have a supportive adult present during interviews. If a child is too young to understand the significance of the interview, a staff member should make arrangements for a supportive adult to attend with the child.

A staff member may be identified as a support person for the child or young person during the interview. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the Child Protection practitioner should always authorise the staff member to receive information regarding Child Protection's investigation. This may occur verbally or in writing using the relevant Child Protection proforma.

Independent persons must refrain from providing their opinions or accounts of events during interviews. A principal or their delegate may act as an independent person when the child or young person is to be interviewed, unless they believe that doing so will create a conflict of interest.

Advising parents, carers or guardians

Staff **do not require** the permission of parents, carers or guardians to make a report to Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents, carers or guardians that they have done so.

It is the responsibility of Child Protection to advise the parents, carers or guardians of the interview at the earliest possible opportunity. This should occur either before, or by the time the child arrives home

Ensuring that a Child Protection interview takes place

The school does not have the power to prevent parents, carers or guardians from removing their children from the school and should not attempt to prevent the parents, carers or guardians from collecting the child. If a parent/carer or guardian removes a child before a planned interview has taken place, the principal and/or their nominee should contact Child Protection or Victoria Police immediately.

Staff Training

Staff will be informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements as part of their initial induction to the school and will be provided with supporting documentation in their staff handbook.

Updates will take place annually as part of the Performance and Development/Staff meeting rotation.

Child Safety Standard 6:

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Raywood Primary School has a range of appropriate risk management strategies to help reduce or remove risks of child abuse. These include:

- Maintaining consistent training for all staff so they can act upon and reduce the risks of child abuse
- Following the potential signs of child abuse described by the mandatory reporting document
- Following the correct procedure when a child is suspected of being abused so that it can be resolved and prevented from reoccurring. This includes making a mandatory report, contacting police or speaking to a child safe delegate within the school
- Employing staff members appropriate for the role within our school by following our recruitment policy
- Supervising new staff members to ensure they can comply to the schools child safe policy
- Working with our families to help them provide the best environment possible for their children
- Taking an active interest in the children's lives so that behavioural changes and other signs of child abuse are easily detected
- Committing to the safety
- Understanding the cultural and linguistic background of the children when dealing with a suspected case of child abuse. We also take into account children with from varied backgrounds and children with disabilities
- Perform activities with the children that allow for equal success

Child Safety Standard 7:

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

Raywood Primary School has a range of strategies to deliver education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality
- Resilience; and
- Child abuse awareness and prevention

At the beginning of each school year, all children collectively take part in a series of sessions where they develop a set of rules and expectations for all children to follow. It is done as a part of our integral Integrated Studies subject. These rules become the official school rules. When developing the rules, the children are taught about why the rule exists. The idea behind this is to teach the children about the consequences of their behaviour not just on themselves, but whomever their behaviour is aimed at. The children are taught how to interact to one another, how to play fair and about how everyone in the school should be able to get along with everyone. Once completed, the children work together to make visual representations of the rules so that they are accessible to everyone at any time and can be re discussed during everyday activities.

The children are taught about healthy and respectful relationships both between friends, boys and girls, and teachers and children. The children learn about the schools code of conduct and how it relates to them.

Child abuse is also discussed with the children regularly to deliver the message that any form of abuse from anyone is completely unacceptable.