

Child Safe Policy

Rationale

Jennings Street School strives to embed a culture underpinned by respect for students. The school's "Child Safe Policy" promotes zero tolerance of child abuse in the school. The school will outline the roles, policy frameworks and procedures in place to uphold to the highest standard this commitment.

Please also refer to Jennings Street School "Inclusion & Diversity Policy".

Refer also to following hyperlink which outlines DET Policy relating to Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislative requirement:

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/EDRMS/KEYPROCESS/CP/SITEPAGES/SCHOOLPOLICIESDET/AIL.ASPX?CLD=84>

Aims

To develop, implement and communicate Child Safe policy and practices in line with the Ministerial Orders and legislative requirements.

To embed understandings of the Jennings Street School "Child Safe Policy" throughout the school community.

To increase staff awareness of our students' "increased risk" of abuse due to their disability or ethnicity.

Implementation

- Jennings Street School will provide staff with an understanding of child abuse and the acts committed against a child.

Child abuse includes;-

- (a) Any act committed against a child involving –
 - (1) A sexual offence; or
 - (2) An offence under section 49(B) of the Crimes Act 1958(grooming) and
- (b) The infliction, on a child, of –
 - (1) Physical violence; or
 - (2) Serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) serious neglect of a child

- In creating and maintaining a child safe organisation, Jennings Street School will implement policies and practices to comprehensively reflect the 7 identified Child Safe Standards.
- When developing policy frameworks and practices Jennings Street School will actively assess the need to protect students from the risk of child abuse, manage the risk of child abuse and provide support to students at greater risk of child abuse.
- Jennings Street School will appoint a School Child Safety Officer to implement the role and responsibilities in line with DET policy requirements.



- The Jennings Street School Positive Behaviour Support policy and school wide practices and values reflect the school’s commitment to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.
- When planning for swimming programs, excursions, camps, child minding, staffing considerations will be made to reduce the risk of child abuse.
- The school’s electronic device policies will be implemented in line with DET policy guidelines to reduce the potential risk presented by “online environments”.
- Professional Learning and staff training will support the school to embed a culture of child safety.
- The school will exercise vigilance in monitoring and approving staff, contractors and volunteers working with JSS students, including appropriate documentation and training in working with children, Working with Children’s Check, VIT.
- Team Leaders have responsibility for leading the communication, implementation and monitoring of child safe practices within the Jennings Street School Policy and procedural framework and specifically the Positive Behaviour Support Policy and program framework.
- In Term 1 Staff at Jennings Street school will undertake training in Mandatory Reporting and will be conversant with their responsibilities and the processes involved.

Child Protection – Reporting Obligations

To ensure school staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and are able to:

- understand their various legal obligations to report and take other reasonable steps to discharge the duty of care that may be owed to the child or young person
- identify indicators that a child or young person has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused
- make a report about a child, or young person who has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused.

For information on how to make a report, see: [Child Protection - Making a Report](#).

Reporting obligations

The following table summarises the mandatory and other reporting obligations where there is a concern that a child or young person has been, is being, or is at risk of child abuse as defined in the ETRA.

Type of reporting	Obligation
<p>Mandatory reporting</p> <p>Note: the following professionals are considered mandatory reporters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers registered to teach or who have permission to teach 	<p>Mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (Child Protection) as soon as practicable if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child’s parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child from that abuse.</p> <p>A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with these reporting obligations may be committing a criminal offence.</p>

<p>pursuant to the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals of government and non-government schools • Registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force • School councillors • Registered Psychologists 	
<p>Failure to disclose</p>	<p>All adults, not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. Failure to disclose the information may amount to a criminal offence unless you have a “reasonable excuse” or have an “exemption” from doing so.</p> <p>To read more information about the ‘failure to disclose’ offence, see: Department of Justice and Regulation – Failure to disclose offence</p>
<p>Failure to Protect</p>	<p>Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.</p> <p>The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation. In a school context, this may include Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals. To read more information about the 'failure to protect offence', see: Department of Justice and Regulations – Failure to protect offence.</p> <p>For more information about managing and responding to the risk of abuse see: Responding to Student Sexual Offending and Risk Management under Department resources below. See also, the Four Critical Actions on the PROTECT portal.</p>

The table below describes other reporting obligations.

Type of reporting	Obligation
Child in need of protection	<p>Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical injury and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child • sexual abuse and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child • emotional or psychological harm and their parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. • the child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • the child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child. • the child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care. <p>Department policy requires all staff who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police. In the case of school staff, they must also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.</p>
Child in need of therapeutic treatment	<p>Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child over 10 but under 15 years of age has been exhibiting sexually abusive behaviours and may be in need of therapeutic treatment should make a report to DHHS Child Protection.</p> <p>Sexually abusive behaviours can be exhibited when a child uses their power, authority or status to engage another person in sexual activity that is unwanted, or where the other party is incapable of giving informed consent (such as other children who are younger or who have cognitive impairments).</p> <p>In the case of student sexual offending, Department policy requires staff to also report to the Victoria Police. In the case of school staff, they must also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.</p>
Significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child	<p>Any person who has a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child should report these concerns to DHHS Child Protection, or refer the child and their family to Child FIRST.</p>

	<p>A significant concern for the wellbeing of a child may arise, for instance, where any of the following factors may have a significant adverse impact on a child’s care, welfare or development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant parenting problems • family conflict or family breakdown • pressure due to a family member’s physical/mental illness, substance abuse, or disability • vulnerability due to youth, isolation or lack of support • significant social or economic disadvantage. In the case of school staff, they must also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team. <p>For more information, see PROTECT - Responding to other concerns about the wellbeing of a child</p>
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Additional legal obligations

In addition to the mandatory reporting and other reporting obligations mentioned above, all school staff have duty of care obligations and obligations arising out of the Child Safe Standards. The table below contains information about these obligations.

Obligation	Description
Duty of care	<p>All school staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable injury to children and young people under their care. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect their safety, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, reasonable steps may include (but are not necessarily limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Victoria Police and DHHS Child Protection • arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child • providing ongoing support to the child and young person – 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 ongoing support to the child or young person.



	For more information on responding to all forms of child abuse, see PROTECT: Four Critical Actions
Child Safe Standards	<p>The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian early childhood services and schools to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect. The Standards support all Victorian early childhood services and schools to embed a culture of no tolerance for child abuse but, where necessary, to respond appropriately to actual or suspected abuse.</p> <p>See: School Policy & Advisory Guide - Child Safe Standards</p>

Training obligations

School staff play a vital role in protecting children from harm and are well placed to observe signs or behaviours that may indicate risks of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

The [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning module](#) (the module) is an essential professional learning resource that assists schools to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The module provides detailed information for identifying and responding to child abuse, and includes case studies and practical scenarios to assist staff fulfil their reporting obligations.

Requirements - school staff

Staff in schools who are:

- mandated reporters must undertake the training once per calendar year
- not mandated reporters are strongly encouraged to undertake the training once per calendar year.

The module takes approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Participants receive a certificate of completion upon successful completion of a short assessment. A 12-month alert is also provided to remind participants to complete the module the following year.

To achieve the best results from training, staff are strongly encouraged to participate in discussions around the content, with a focus on the importance of their role in protecting children and young people.

Principals can contact the Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Division to obtain a list of staff who have completed the module, by email to: student.engagement@education.vic.gov.au

Related policies

- [Duty of care](#)
- [Police and DHS Interviews](#)
- [Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Requests for Information about Students](#)
- [Risk Management](#)
- [Subpoenas and Witness Summonses](#)

Related legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Crimes Act 1958*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001*

Department resources

- [PROTECT](#)
- *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*

- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - eLearning module log-in

Other resources

- Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum:
 - Government schools, see: FUSE (eduMail password is required before searching [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum](#))
 - Non-government schools, see: [Scootle](#)
 - Parents, see: [Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum Parent Guides - Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment](#).
- Department of Health and Human Services:
 - [Child Protection](#)
 - [Child FIRST](#)
- [Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams \(SOCT\)](#)
- Department of Justice and Regulation:
 - [Failure to disclose offence](#)
 - [Failure to protect offence](#)
 - [Grooming offence](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Date Implemented	August 16 th 2016
Author	Rosemary Hayes
Approved By	Jennings Street School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
Date Reviewed	18.08.2021
Responsible for Review	Policy Subcommittee of School Council
Review Date	August 2023
References	

16.08.2016 – v0 – date of implementation

25.10.2016 – v1 – reviewed; footer update; reformat.

Oct 2018 – v2 – reviewed, no changes

Aug 2019 – v3 – reference to “Inclusion & Diversity Policy” and inclusion of hyperlinks. Merged “Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy”

V 18.08.2021 add that school councillors and registered psychologists are mandatory reports, update website from edumail to education, grammar edits, update footer and evaluation box

Ministerial Order No 870

- All Registered schools have a commitment to child safety.
- Schools are to develop a Child Safety Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. This must form the school's procedures, practices, decision making processes and culture with respect to child safety.
- The policy must detail;
The values and principles that will guide the school in developing policies and practices to create and maintain a child safe environment.
The actions the school proposes to take to:
 - *Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy or statement of commitment*
 - *Support, encourage and enable school staff parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters, and*
 - *Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.*
- The policy should identify a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse.
- Embedding a culture of child safety and zero tolerance must be led by the school governing authority and be openly and transparently shared throughout the school community.
- The child safe policy must be accessible, publicly available and understood by the school community.

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements
2. A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
3. A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.