

# Meadow Heights Primary School

A safe and happy school where children enjoy learning.  
*School Values: Pride, Respect, Responsibility & Excellence*



## **CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

### **Child Safe Standard 3**

#### **Rationale**

Meadow Heights 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 an 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, DET 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 Meadow Heights Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school. The Principal and school leaders also will 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.

#### **Purpose**

- To ensure Meadow Heights Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of MO 870.
- To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
- To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
- To provide guidance to staff and volunteers on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.
- To ensure the school develops and publishes a code of conduct that is compliant with Child Safe Standard 3.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards students.

#### **Implementation**

- The safety and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for Meadow Heights Primary School.
- This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.
- It is binding all staff members, volunteers and external providers working with children on-site or off-site.
- Staff, volunteers and external providers are expected to signify that they have read and understood this Code of Conduct by completing the attached statement which will be recorded and filed appropriately.
- The school will know it has successfully implemented Standard 3 when:
  - appropriate behaviour with children is clearly defined, accessible and understood by staff, volunteers, families and children
  - steps staff should take if they identify child safety risks are clearly outlined
  - staff, volunteers, families and children understand culturally safe behaviour and relationships with Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - staff, volunteers, families and children understand safe behaviour and relationships with children with a disability
  - children and families from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds can access and understand the Code of Conduct
  - efforts have been made to make the code of conduct accessible to children with a disability

- All staff, volunteers and members of School Council at this school are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.
- All personnel are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:
  - upholding the Meadow Heights Primary School Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times and adhering to Meadow Heights 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 (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
  - promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with Culturally And/or Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
  - promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
  - ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a student
  - reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership and/or Child Safety Officer

#### **Acceptable Behaviour**

- 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
- encouraging all students to "have a say" and participate in all relevant school activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

#### **Unacceptable Behaviour**

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, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be construed as abusive and not justified
- 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
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances
- All staff should be aware that unsatisfactory performance procedures in relation to the Child Safe Code of Conduct may be applied as per the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2013, Schedule 5.
- If a volunteer or external provider does not comply with the expected standard of behaviour, the Principal will discuss their behaviour with them. Noncompliance can lead to disciplinary action being taken, which may result in the person being asked to leave the organisation.
- The school will ensure that procedures for raising and managing complaints and consequences for breaching of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, are known and understood by everyone. For specific procedures, please refer to the school's Complaints & Concerns, Parents Policy.

- For particularly high-risk activities, such as overnight camps, the school will determine whether or not a specific Code of Conduct is required. This could outline additional topics such as sleeping arrangements, personal care, leaving the site, no drugs or alcohol on site, staff-to-child ratio requirements, etc.
- By observing these behaviours all staff, volunteers and members of School Council of Meadow Heights Primary School acknowledge their responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the School Child Safety Officer or to the Principal Class.  

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000 and ask for the police.**
- Induction procedures or manuals for new staff, volunteers and external providers will include information about the Child Safe Code of Conduct. Other communication strategies for informing these groups are enumerated in the school's *Informing the School Community Policy*.

### **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed every two years as per the Child Safe Standards review requirements or earlier if there are legislative or other changes required in the interim. This Policy will be available on the school website.

This policy was ratified by School Council on 11/02/2020. **Review 11/02/2022**

References:  
 Creating a Child Safe Organisation Guide  
 Child Safe Standards Toolkit  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/safety/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/safety/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx)  
 and  
 Protect – Identifying All Forms of Child Abuse in Victorian Schools 2016  
[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/child-safe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/child-safe)