

Introduction

At Timboon P-12 School we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from our school values which state that; 'Timboon P-12 School is a school where relationships are based on trust and mutual respect: Where the contributions of all are valued and acknowledged. These values are underpinned by the school motto: "Strength through Understanding" and the core belief that everyone can experience success'.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Timboon P-12 School to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm.

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

This policy applies to school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

Principles

State schools have a moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe.

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at Timboon P-12 School

All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Our school works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.

All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.

All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors as well as the broader school community have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.

The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.

Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with governments, the police and human services agencies.

All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

Staff, volunteers, contractors, parents/guardians and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at Timboon P-12 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 students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows

The Leadership Team is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety and does so by ensuring the following:

1. Identifying and assessing potential risk of abuse to students and young people.
2. Creating an environment for students and young people to be safe and to feel safe.
3. Upholding high principles and standards for all staff members, CRTs, volunteers, and contractors.
4. Promoting models of behaviour between adults, students and young people based on mutual respect and consideration.
5. Developing and communicating child safe policies and procedures outlining the School's commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.
6. Developing and communicating codes of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children.
7. Appointing a 'Child Safety Officer' to promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand, meet and exceed their Child Safety obligations.
8. Ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment and screening of all staff, , CRTs, volunteers and contractors.
9. Ensuring that staff and other members of the school community have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters.
10. Promoting inclusion of all children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities.
11. Empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety and then incorporate this feedback to improve your policies and practices.
12. Immediately respond to any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct or suspected abuse in accordance with its reporting requirements.
13. Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policies and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing.
14. Ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

Staff Members, CRTs, Volunteers and Contractors are responsible for:

1. Treating students and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care.
2. Understanding and complying with legislative requirements and internal school processes in the course of their work.

3. Demonstrating a commitment to displaying appropriate behaviours in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
4. Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured.
5. Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of students and young people.
6. Immediately report any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct or suspected abuse to the school's Child Safety Officer or a member of the school Leadership Team.
7. Assist the Leadership Team in empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety.
8. Assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse.
9. Following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct

Student Safety and Participation

At Timboon P-12 School, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Timboon P-12 School is a KidsMatter school. As such the kids matter principles and programs operate across the school.

The program promotes:

- social and emotional learning (including evidence-based social and emotional learning programs)
- working authentically with parents, carers and families
- support for students who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

Reporting and Responding

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Our school has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Student Engagement Policy

Child Safety Policy Policy Approved:

Duty of Care Policy

Communication Plan

Creating a respectful and safe school community document

Promoting Healthy, safe and respectful school communities' values brochure

Four Critical Actions-Child Abuse

Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

Timboon P-12 School will take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our children. When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

Child Safety – Education and Training for School Staff

Timboon P-12 School provides employees and volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes an:

- An induction program for all new and returning staff
- Ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect
- Time to complete the DET Mandatory Reporting module at:
<http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren>
- All staff are provided with the link to the VRQA Child Safe Standards website for ongoing reference.
<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafepages/default.html>
- Time is allocated during Teaching and Learning meetings for professional learning in the area and to ensure that all staff are aware of their legal obligations.

Risk Management

At Timboon P-12 School we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise. (Child Safety Risk Management document)

Relevant Legislation

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

Failure to disclose offence: Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

Failure to protect offence: The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Grooming offence: This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

Related Policies

Department of Education Policies

School Policy and Advisory Guide DET

School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations

School Policy and Advisory Guide: Police and DHHS Interview Protocols

Human resources A – Z topic Human Resources A - Z Topic Index

Ministerial Order 199

School Policies

Supporting Curriculum Support Program Policies:

Camps

Cultural Experiences

Drug Education

PAWS

Supporting Students with Disabilities and Special needs.

Supporting Policies

Attendance Policy

Bullying

Code of Conduct

Community Involvement

Computer User Agreement

Duty of Care

E-learning

Gender Equity

Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure

Nutrition

Offensive Materials

Privacy

Procedures for dealing with disruptive Primary Students

Procedures to maintain registers

Rights and Responsibilities

School Leaders

Sexual Harassment

Social Justice

Staff Code of Conduct

- Student Engagement
- Student Leaders
- Student Recognition
- Child Safety Documentation
- A summary of the Child Safety Standards
- Commitment to Child Safety Statement
- Child safety code of conduct
- Child Safety definitions

Breach of Policy

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, Timboon P-12 School may start the process under Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance guidelines for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the principal is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the Regional Director. Relevant notification should also be made to the Department of Education and Training.

Where any other member of the school community is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with: Mandatory Reporting Policy, Child Protection – Reporting Obligations, Complaints Resolution Policy and/or contact Department of Education (Conduct and Ethics Branch and Legal Branch) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Review of this Child Safety Policy

At Timboon P-12 School we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

We will maintain a history of updates to the policy.

History of Updates to Policy

Date	Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)

References

- Responding to allegations of student sexual assault
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/sexualassault.aspx>
- Government Schools Website: [DET PROTECT resources](#)
- Safe Schools Hub 2014, *National Safe Schools Framework Glossary*, Australian Government Department of Education and Training.
- State of Victoria 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order No. 870*, Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2.
- Victorian Government Department of Justice 2016, *Betrayal of Trust Implementation*
- [VRQA Child Safe website](#)
- [DHHS Child Safe Resources](#)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching: www.vit.edu.au