

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Background

The Victorian Government is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in our community, there is a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by the new **PROTECT Child Safe Standards**.

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. (reference Department of Education 2016)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx>

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

- Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

TCPS: An Organisational Culture of Student Safety and Well Being

Torquay Coast 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 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.

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity while keeping child safety paramount. We ensure that the children and young people at our school feel empowered and have every opportunity to have their voice heard in decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention is paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. The TCPS community is a diverse and eclectic community and respect is given to the cultural diversity of child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.

Torquay Coast Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Every person involved in Torquay Coast Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play, individually and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. The TCPS Leadership Team leads the community in regards to child safety at school. The Principal acts as the Child Safety Leader.

We value the input of families and carers in regards to child safety and the importance of ensuring all lines of communication are open at all times. To support the community, the TCPS Leadership Team will ensure there is written guidance available on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.

The TCPS community takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety. We work together to empower the children at our school to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We foster a culture of openness that supports everyone to safely disclose risks of harm to children and where children feel comfortable to raise any issues.

All staff will complete Mandatory Reporting training each year so that they feel able to report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly.

The school aims to ensure only the most suitable people will work with children, including teaching staff,

ES staff, administrative staff and other employees, and parent/community volunteers.

The TCPS Administration Team ensures that volunteers, including parents, have a Working With Children Check (exceptions include when parents are volunteering at events such as working bees, school fete, special friends' stalls) and that the Working With Children Check register is maintained. As a community, our actions will ensure that all the children in our care feel safe. We will support all members of the TCPS community to feel empowered to report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities. Where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk, we will share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations as required.

PROTECT

