



Child Safety Policy

1. Purpose:

Karoo Primary School is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment that encourages curiosity, promotes learning, personal growth and wellbeing for all students. We strive to develop adaptability and resilience so students can become valued members of the local and global communities and be prepared for future life experiences.

At Karoo Primary School, child safety is a top priority. We are committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Karoo Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be 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.

Every person involved in Karoo 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 children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Karoo Primary School is committed to child safety. The school:

- Ensures that students are safe, happy and empowered. Supports and respects all students, as well as staff and volunteers
- Is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all students
- Has zero tolerance of child abuse, racial, religious and cultural discrimination and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistently with robust policies and procedures
- Has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when worried about a child's safety, which is followed rigorously
- Is committed to preventing child abuse and identifies risks early, and removes and reduces these risks. The school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers and regularly trains and educates staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
- Supports and respects all students, as well as staff and volunteers. The school is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal students, students from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and provides a safe environment for students with a disability
- Has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

2. Implementation

Staff and Volunteers

This policy guides our staff, parent helpers and volunteers on how to behave with students at Karoo Primary School. All staff, parent helpers and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with students. All staff, students and members of the wider community are given the opportunity to contribute to the code of conduct.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Karoo Primary School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Students

The students at Karoo Primary School are empowered, vital and active participants. They are involved when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. The school listens to their views and respects what they have to say.

Karoo Primary School promotes diversity and acceptance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

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

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in Karoo Primary School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our culture aims for all staff, students and wider members of our community to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We support our staff through ongoing supervision and professional learning to protect students from abuse and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal students, the cultural safety of students from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of students with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure that they understand Karoo Primary School's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting students from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards students 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

Karoo Primary School takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with students. Selection criteria is developed and advertisements which clearly demonstrate the school's commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Karoo Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

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

All people engaged by Karoo Primary School, including volunteers and tradespeople, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check.

Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information.

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

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of students is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action are thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

Records of allegations of abuse and safety concerns using the incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to students and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or students, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Karoo Primary School 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 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police

- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in Karoo Primary School 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.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect students when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to students.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a student on social media).

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Karoo Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all students, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse 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 (see information about failure to disclose above).

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 (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- 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.

3. Resources

This Policy should be read in conjunction with and is underpinned by the:

- a) Child Safety Code of Conduct
- b) Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- c) Child Safety Responding and Reporting including Mandatory reporting Policy
- d) Behaviour Management Policy
- e) Bullying, Cyber-bullying and Harassment Policy
- f) Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- g) Student Welfare Policy
- h) Community Code of Conduct
- i) On-site Supervision of Students Policy
- j) Critical Incidents Policy
- k) Duty of Care Policy
- l) Integration Policy
- m) UV (Sunsmart) Policy
- n) Excursions Policy
- o) Incursion and Excursion (when learning from an external provider) Policy
- p) Agreed emailing protocols

Relevant Documents / Links

Ministerial Order No. 870

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>.

Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, [An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](#), has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/___data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>

Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au

Early childhood services operating under the *National Quality Framework or Children's Services Act 1996* should contact: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

4. Evaluation

The Education Sub Committee and Karoo staff will review the effectiveness of the school's Child Safe Policy on a cyclical basis in accordance with DET guidelines.

It will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and students have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Complying with the terms of this Code of Conduct is a condition of employment at this school.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I _____ have read, understood and agree to

Comply with the terms of this Code of Conduct.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

DEFINITIONS:

Child means a child enrolled as a student at the school

Child connected work means work authorised by the governing school authority (the Principal) and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present

Child abuse includes:

- (a) Any act committed against a child involving –
 - (i) A sexual offense or
 - (ii) An offense under section 49B of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)

- (b) The infliction on a child of –
 - (i) Physical violence; or
 - (ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm
 - (iii) Serious neglect of a child

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.