



Talbot Primary School

Child Safe Statement of Commitment

Date Approved: 22nd August 2019

PURPOSE OR RATIONALE

Talbot Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and to protect them from any form of abuse or neglect.

This policy has been written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the whole school community of Talbot Primary School to child safety. This community comprises of school leaders, staff, volunteers, contractors, students and their families. The policies that have been developed in order to ensure children in our community are safe at all times, from all forms of abuse include:

- Failure to disclose.
- Failure to protect.
- Mandatory reporting.
- Grooming.
- Working with Children Check.

Wellbeing:

Our school's desire to assist each student to develop as a happy and healthy human being. Our approach is based on best contemporary research. It has moved beyond intervention alone to a rich approach to learning and teaching in order to develop socially and culturally capable global citizens.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All students enrolled, and any child visiting Talbot Primary School, have a right to feel safe and be safe at all times. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse and any inappropriate behaviour directed towards children. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety, providing them with the best opportunity to flourish as human beings.

Staff commitment:

Each staff member of a school performs an essential personal role in the teaching of children, not only educating them academically, but with social and wellbeing skills.

Therefore, within her/his particular responsibilities, the staff member undertakes to:

- exercise a duty of care towards all students, consistent with school policies and Victorian Education Department guidelines.
- recognise, value and protect the uniqueness, potential and dignity of each student;
- be sensitive to each student's religious, social and cultural background and affirms the richness of this diversity;
- foster the development of each student's self-concept and their ability to interact harmoniously and productively with others;
- support students in developing increased responsibility for personal decision-making and action;
- be committed to justice and equity for all students, in all interactions, educational opportunities and outcomes;
- use agreed instructional and behavioural practices and interventions;
- support and actively promote a safe and positive school environment;
- foster relationships with students which are based on trust, honesty and integrity.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION

The staff and volunteers of Talbot Primary School encourage students to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all students to openly

express their views without harming others 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. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Talbot Primary School's commitment to student rights and responsibilities are detailed in our Student Wellbeing Policy and this policy ensures that the students within our community are afforded the opportunities and rights that they deserve.

VALUING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At Talbot Primary School we value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families.
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.
- promote the personal safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life, providing opportunity for students with disabilities to thrive.

RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Talbot Primary School will apply the most thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working With Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff and volunteers who will be in contact with students.

Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all discernment for staff and volunteer positions at the school.

The extract below from our **Camp/ Excursion Policy** details the rigour around volunteer selection:

Our Responsibilities

- Staffing ratios provide the minimum requirements for school excursions. It is our responsibility to ensure that sufficient staff are present on excursions and camps to provide adequate supervision for students during the excursion and for each activity undertaken;
- All parents and volunteers that attend camp or excursion with staff and students are required to have a current and valid WWCC. They are also briefed prior to attending to ensure they understand their responsibilities towards the students in their care and the code of conduct for volunteering at Talbot Primary School. All of these volunteers are signed off by the Principal to ensure their suitability to attend.

SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Talbot Primary School provides support and supervision to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated. We have a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code prior to commencement of duties.

Talbot Primary School Code of Conduct:

All staff and volunteers of Talbot Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS:

All staff, volunteers and school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to Talbot Primary School Child Safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, 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 children (eg: never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (eg: by having zero tolerance of discrimination)
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (eg: during personal care activities)
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with children and that doors are open when appropriate
- Reporting any allegation of child abuse to the school's Principal
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to Mandatory Reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the school's Principal
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/ children are safe

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS:

All staff and volunteers must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (eg: the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (eg: inappropriate sitting on laps)
- Put children at risk of abuse (eg: by locking doors)
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (eg: personal social activities)
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the Principal's knowledge or consent to perform unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/ other lessons or sport coaching.
- Have any online contact with a child (including social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family (unless necessary eg: providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- Use any personal communication channels/ device such as a personal email account
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardian
- Work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct, and store the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the **Mandatory reporting policy**:

Managing disclosure protocol is detailed below:

MANAGING A DISCLOSURE

If a child or young person makes a disclosure to you, it is important you respond in an appropriate and supportive manner. It is also important to inform the child that there are some things you cannot keep a secret or **confidential**.

When managing a disclosure, you should:

- stay calm and not display expressions of panic or shock
- state clearly that the abuse is not the child's fault, no matter what the circumstances are
- listen to the child
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace
- use the child's language and vocabulary
- not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to
- reassure the child you believe them and that disclosing the matter was the right thing to do
- avoid going over the information time and time again; you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority
- remember that you are not investigating the allegation. It is the role of the relevant authority to investigate the allegation once it is reported to them
- tell the child you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse.

Talbot Primary School's commitment to a safe environment for children: (Extract from Mandatory Reporting Policy).

Talbot Primary School is committed to the creation of a safe, just and respectful environment that supports wellness for all members of the school community. In this, there is a moral obligation and shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of the community. Talbot Primary School believes that, while protecting children and young people against sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility, schools have particular moral and legal responsibilities to ensure children and young people are safe in their care and to actively and intentionally work to eliminate all forms of abusive behaviours towards children.

Complaints Procedure

- Any complaint and/ or concern that a member of the community or staff may have is to be communicated to the Principal as is stated in the Mandatory Reporting policy.
- All complaints and concerns will be treated seriously and acted upon appropriately.
- These concerns or complaints are made to the Principal. In the event that the complaint/ concern are made to another member of staff, they will forward this on to the Principal.

Disclosure of Abuse or Harm Procedure:

- Any disclosure of abuse or harm from a student at Talbot Primary School is treated very seriously. Once reasonable belief is formed, the member of staff or parent must speak to the Principal and a report will be made. In the event that the child is believed to be in immediate danger, the police must be contacted (000).
- The Principal has been appointed as Child Safety Officer with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to Child Safety. Details and procedures for staff to follow in the event that they have a complaint to report are located in the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Talbot primary School is committed to ensuring all children within the community are safe and have taken steps to ensure that all foreseeable risks are assessed and wherever possible, mitigated.

A risk management plan has been developed and details all foreseeable risks and minimisation strategies to the children within our community.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is reviewed at Talbot Primary School every two years and we undertake to seek feedback from students, parents, carers, staff and volunteers.

Chrissy Drummond
PRINCIPAL

Amanda Conn
SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT