

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

At Southmoor, we believe that children have the right to feel safe and be kept safe from harm and abuse, where abuse includes any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence; or an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming) as well as; the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect of a child. We understand that it is our duty to put in place policies, strategies and procedures that expressly aim to protect children from such abuse, manage the risk of such abuse as well as respond to and report such abuse when it occurs or is suspected to have occurred.

Our School will:

- Remain committed to child safety and use this commitment as an underpinning principle in the forming of school policy and procedures now and into the future.
- Demonstrate this commitment and monitor Southmoor's adherence to this and related policies.
- Support, encourage and engage school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.
- Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- Promote and facilitate an overall culture of Child Safety and **zero tolerance for child abuse** for all staff, volunteers, contractors and the wider school community.

Implementation:

Protection Strategies

In order to promote a culture of child safety and the active protection of children through prevention, response to and reporting of child abuse in all its forms we will do the following:

- All staff will agree to abide by the **Child Safety Code of Conduct**.
- Information will be provided to parents and displayed centrally, including pamphlets for services such as Child First, OnPsych, CAMHS, etc.
- School staff will complete professional development as required such as the Mandatory Reporting Modules.
- School staff will complete Child Safety Policy and Procedures internal professional development at a minimum of each year, preferably at the beginning of the year at a minimum.
- Child Safety Policy and Procedures will be part of the induction process for new staff.

- All volunteers to the school will require a Working With Children Check and will need to provide a copy of this to the office before commencing volunteer work. Please see *Working With Children Check Policy*.
- Child Safety will be discussed regularly within staff teams (e.g. Level meetings, coordinators and leadership meetings) and staff will be encouraged to discuss any concerns with the relevant staff (such as their level coordinator, Child Safety Officer, other members of the Welfare team) whenever they feel is necessary.
- Child Safety will underpin and be considered when at all times when planning and developing policies, initiatives, programs and special events.
- All court order and protection orders in place will be followed by school, with the relevant staff being informed of duties/restrictions (e.g. classroom teacher). Where an order has expired, school leadership or Welfare staff will follow up.

Risk Management Strategies

- When a child is identified as at risk of potential abuse, the Welfare team will refer to the appropriate support services, such as Child First.
- The welfare team or relevant school staff will document that a referral or recommendation of services has been provided to the family/carers of a child.
- Child safety will form part of the risk assessment completed for all camps. See *Camping Policy*
- Appropriate supervision will be employed on all external excursions as well as incursions or within school programs see *Supervision Policy, Excursion Policy*.
- Where a child is at a greater risk (e.g. likely to abscond or wander off) in an external school activity (such as Athletics Carnival, Excursion), supervision will be increased for that child, for example via the accompaniment of a parent or additional ES staff member.
- Sign in and induction processes will be applied to external specialists and contractors who enter the school.
- DEECD colour-coded alerts will be communicated to all staff when they arise and the school community when applicable.
- All contractors and visitors to the school will sign in at the office.
- Following a report or incident of child abuse for a student (including if the report was not made by school staff), a **Risk Management Plan and Assessment** must be completed.

Response Strategies

- School staff will report suspected child abuse as per the *Mandatory Reporting Policy*. They do not need to speak to the Child Safety Officer prior to making the report, but do need to ensure that the Child Safety Officer is notified that a report has been made.
- School staff who make a report will complete the Child Safety Incident Form when reporting suspected or alleged child abuse.
- School staff will document that a report has been made.

- The Child Safety Officer will work with the reporter to ascertain which other agencies or professionals need to be made aware of the report and make and document this communication as appropriate.
- Court orders and temporary custody arrangements will be followed and supported by the school as appropriate.
- The Child Safety Officer will follow up with the case worker to whom the report is made to in order to ascertain further action to be taken, and will update and add to the Child Safety Incident Form. Further information needing to be communicated to the relevant school staff will be passed on (for example, the child's classroom teacher, the reporter).
- Whilst an allegation is being investigated/following an incident, supports will be put in place to protect the child, a Child Safety Support Plan will be completed by the relevant staff, which may involve but is not limited to a Welfare staff member (e.g. The PSD coordinator, Assistant Principal), the Child Safety Officer, Principal, Classroom Teacher, support staff or other professionals working with the child.
- Risk Assessment will be reviewed yearly, or more often if needed (such as in response to an incident or advice from DET).

Support Strategies

- School staff will ascertain who, if any, other students or staff require support following a report, for example, siblings who are also students, staff working with the student such as ES staff, parents/guardians, etc.
- Staff and the Welfare team as is applicable will communicate with services or agencies involved with the child, including but not necessarily limited to social workers, psychologists, paediatricians, case workers and carers.
- A **Child Safety Support Plan** for the child will be put in place will be documented and remain in place for as long as is reasonable and or necessary.
- School staff will liaise with the Welfare team to develop a **Child Safety Support Plan** which will include relevant services and supports, for example, referrals to OnPsych or other mental health services, safe places for the child such as supervised indoor play or a buddy system, safe adults to talk to, etc. These supports will be tailored for the individual situation and will take into account factors such as disability or other additional needs of the student (such as cultural or language factors).
- Where necessary, DEECD Student Services will be contacted for involvement.
- Where deemed necessary, a Student Support Group will be convened. If an SSG is already in place, a meeting will be conducted as soon as is possible.
- Where a child who has been the victim of abuse transitions to a new class, handover will occur at the earliest convenience.

Further Relevant Strategies

- The Child Safety Policy and all related policies and procedures will be considered when further initiatives, programs or policies are being developed or implemented.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the School Evaluation Cycle at the end of the period for the Strategic Plan, **and/or** as needed in relation to Departmental orders when applicable.

Key References:

- Ministerial Order No. 870
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Camping Policy
- Yard Supervision Policy
- Onsite Supervision Policy
- Excursion/Incursion Policy
- Student Engagement Policy
- Working With Children Check Policy
- Esmart Policy
- Welfare Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

Key Resources

- Child Safety Incident Form (see attached example)
- Child Safety Support Plan Template (see attached example)
- Reporting Suspected Abuse STEPS and TIPS
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Risk Management Plan and Assessment (for student risk assessment following incidents)
- Child Safety Risk Assessment- Southmoor Primary School (school risk assessment)
- Four Critical Actions for Schools

This policy will be reviewed as per review cycle process and was last ratified in August 2016.

