



## CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

### Victorian Registration Qualifications Authority (VRQA)

Victorian schools are required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

The following school's VRQA policies and procedures should be read in conjunction with all the Child Safe Standards documented in this folder.

- Mandatory Reporting
- Child Safety Reporting Obligation Policy and Processes
- Anti-Bullying & Anti-Cyber Bullying
- Excursions
- Incursions
- Camp
- External Providers
- Duty of Care
- On-site Supervision
- Internet
- Working With Children Check

#### THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out the specific actions that schools need to take to meet the child safe standards. The introduction of child safe standards form part of the Victorian Government's response to the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in schools.

The standards will promote cultures where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice in organisations.

The Child Safe Standards set out to create safe places for children to fully and actively participate in the life of the community benefiting everyone. Sebastopol Primary School will ensure that the children in its care are protected to the best of its ability and in line with their duty of care and the compulsory child safe standards.

## THE STANDARDS

To create and maintain a child safe school, we will comply with the following standards.

**Standard 1 - Good leadership & governance in child safe school** - strategies to embed a school culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

**Standard 2 - Commitment to Child Safety Policy** - a child safe statement of commitment to child safety

**Standard 3 – Code of Conduct** - a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

**Standard 4 – Human Resources Practices** - screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

**Standard 5 – Reporting Child Abuse** - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

**Standard 6 – Identifying and Reducing Risks** - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

**Standard 7 – Empowering Children** - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

**Ministerial Order No. 870** has set out the specific actions for schools to take to meet these requirements – *these are included in this folder.*

In complying with the child safe standards above, we will be mindful of the diversity of students and school communities and include the following **inclusion principles** as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability

*(See Glossary of Terms for definitions)*

A cornerstone of the development of universal child safe procedures is the rights that are outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC). CROC specifically recognises that children have a right to be protected from physical and mental harm and neglect and be able to enjoy the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. An extract of the convention can be found below.

## UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

### Highlights of the convention

- Every child has the inherent right to life, and states shall ensure to the maximum child survival and development.
- Every child has the right to a name and nationality from birth.
- Children shall not be separated from their parents, except by competent authorities for their wellbeing.
- States shall facilitate reunification of families
- By permitting travel into, or out of, their territories.
- Parents have the primary responsibility for a child's upbringing, but states shall provide them with appropriate assistance and develop child care institutions.
- States shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.
- States shall provide parentless children with suitable alternative care. The adoption process shall be carefully regulated and international agreements should be sought to provide safeguards and assure legal validity if and when adoptive parents intend to move a child from his or her country of birth.
- Disabled children shall have the right to special treatment, education and care.
- Children are entitled to the highest attainable standard of health. States shall ensure that health care is provided to all children, placing emphasis on preventive measures, health education and reduction of infant mortality.
- Primary education shall be free and compulsory. Discipline in schools shall respect the child's dignity. Education should prepare the child for life in a spirit of understanding, peace and tolerance.
- Children shall have time to rest and play and equal opportunities for cultural and artistic activities.
- States shall protect children from economic exploitation and from work that may interfere with their education or be harmful to their health or wellbeing.
- States shall protect children from the illegal use of drugs and involvement in drug production or trafficking.
- All efforts shall be made to eliminate the abduction and trafficking of children.
- Capital punishment or life imprisonment shall not be imposed for crimes committed before the age of 18.
- Children in detention shall be separated from adults; they must not be tortured or suffer cruel or

degrading treatment.

- No child under 15 shall take any part in hostilities; children exposed to armed conflict shall receive special protection.
- Children of minority and indigenous populations shall freely enjoy their own culture, religion and language.
- Children who have suffered mistreatment, neglect or exploitation shall receive appropriate treatment or training for recovery and rehabilitation.
- Children involved in infringements of the penal law shall be treated in a way that promotes their sense of dignity and worth and aims at reintegrating them into society.
- States shall make the rights set out in the convention widely known to both adults and children.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>The Act</b>	<i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i>
<b>Aboriginal child</b>	A person under the age of 18 who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</li><li>• identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and</li><li>• is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community</li></ul>
<b>Child abuse</b>	For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• physical violence</li><li>• sexual offences</li><li>• serious emotional or psychological abuse</li><li>• serious neglect</li></ul> Further explanation of these types of abuse is provided in the section 'What is child abuse?'
<b>Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.
<b>Child</b>	A person who is under the age of 18 years.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Child safety</b>	In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.
<b>Child safe organisation</b>	In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
<b>Cultural competency</b>	A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
<b>Cultural abuse</b>	Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.
<b>Cultural safety for Aboriginal children</b>	<p>The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.</p> <p>A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity. Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning</li> <li>• have an education that strengthens their culture and identity</li> <li>• maintain connections to their land and country</li> <li>• maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations</li> <li>• be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders</li> <li>• receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner</li> <li>• be involved in services that are culturally respectful.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages.
<b>Children with a disability</b>	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.

Term	Definition
<b>Organisation</b>	<p>The <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i> (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• an incorporated body or association</li><li>• an unincorporated body or association (however structured)</li><li>• an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities</li></ul>