

PRESTON HIGH SCHOOL

Child Safe Standards Policy

Commitment to Child Safety Policy

Purpose

The child safe policy sets out the Preston High School's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope and Audience

The policy covers all staff, volunteers, contractors (whether they come into contact with children and applies to all school related activities including those beyond the school environment i.e. camps, excursions, outside hours care, holiday programs.

Our commitment to child safety

Preston High School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. The school has zero tolerance for child abuse. The 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 cultural safety of Aboriginal children, young children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in the school has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role s/he 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.

In its planning, decision making and operations Preston High School will:

- take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children. This will be supported by all staff understanding their child safety role, being mindful of and building respectful and safe relationships between children and their teachers and other school staff;
- respect diversity in cultures and child rearing 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 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 issues. Our school is structured such that all children will be able to forge strong and respectful relationships in their learning spaces with multiple teachers thereby giving them opportunities to seek support from a number of significant others in their immediate day to day learning environment.

A Child Safe Culture

The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinize concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

- Preston High School is committed to child safety.

- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, young children and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

SEE APPENDIX 1: Preston High School has developed strategies to embed an organisational culture of Child Safety

Our children

Our policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

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

Our Code of Conduct

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Preston High School Assistant Principal will ensure each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.

The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

The school's plan for creating a child safe culture and code of conduct can be found on the school's website and in other written documentation available from the school.

SEE APPENDIX 2: Preston High School has developed a code of conduct.

Human Resources, Practices and Training

Preston High School applies best practice and standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children.

Preston High School will:

- follow the Departments recruitment policy available on HR Web to ensure all selection criteria and advertisement clearly demonstrates our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities
- ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.
- ensure all prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working With Children Check.
- take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children.
- carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Preston High School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) 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 also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this school's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). 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.

Allegations, Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Preston High School has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or

a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the school's website along with all other school policies.

Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and promptly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, 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 APPENDIX 3: Preston High School has developed Child Safety reporting obligations and school policy.

Risk Reduction and Management

Preston High School will mitigate, remove or reduce the risks of child abuse. In taking into account the characteristics and needs of all children (including and especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse children and other vulnerable children), the School Council and principal will develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in a range of school related environments (eg. at school, on excursions and any school organised activities.)

Preston High school will provide School Council and Staff with training and education about their individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing risks of child abuse.

SEE APPENDIX 4: Preston High School has developed Child Safety risk assessment document.

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

Child Safe Standard 7 requires the delivery of appropriate education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- Resilience
- Child abuse awareness and prevention

Preston High School is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Building student confidence in knowing that they will be listened to, by an adult, when they have information to share, building personal resilience and a knowledge of knowing what to do and who can help will be areas continuously addressed by all teaching staff as a student journeys through our school.

The following programs/frameworks and Policy will be delivered by the school and will be prefaced on the school' commitment to child safety. School staff will be supported in their professional

learning to ensure the observance and delivery of a Child Safe environment through such programs, frameworks and Policy. Curriculum documents and resources will be easily accessible to school staff.

Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

The school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy provides the basis on which it develops and maintains a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment. The policy articulates the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour. The Policy also references the Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct

Philosophy for Children

The school's Philosophy program explicitly teaches pro-social skills around respect, valuing opinions, listening and turn-taking while helping children to develop an ethical framework.

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS)

As a new school, the school intends to make central to the positive and safe culture of the school, the SWPBS framework. It is an evidence-based framework for preventing and responding to student behaviour. It aims to create a positive school climate, culture of student competence and an open, responsive management system for all community members. A team of teaching staff will be professionally developed through the SWPBS resource as a priority.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/wholeschoolengage.aspx>

Victorian Curriculum

The relevant domains of the Victorian Curriculum will be provided as part of the mandated curriculum delivery. Specifically, to address the Child Safe Standard 7, the following will support children at to build resilience, healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality) and to gain insight into appropriate behaviour and what is not, hence being empowered to feel safe and to be safe.

The Personal and Social Capability curriculum aims to develop knowledge, understandings and skills to enable students to:

- recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions
- demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience
- develop empathy for and understanding of others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community
- understand how relationships are developed and use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships
- work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively.

SEE: Preston High School School Curriculum Plan

Communication Approaches for Volunteers and Contractors

Volunteers and contractors may be engaged in work at a school regularly or occasionally, for long or short periods of time. Volunteers and contractors need to understand their responsibilities for child safety and Preston High School's arrangements under standard one and standard two.

These approaches include:

- providing advice on the website about what to expect if working in or volunteering at the school e.g. that volunteers are required to adhere to the child safety code of conduct
- clear notices about contractor and volunteer provided when they sign-in at the Compass kiosk located at Reception.
- provision of relevant child safety information in tendering and contracting information packages and volunteer induction kits / sessions.

Communication with Families

Preston High School has a number of measures in place to communicate with families of children enrolled at the school. These measures include the school's website and Compass (online communication portal) for individual and group messages, school assemblies and information evenings to share information.

Communications strategies to inform families of the school's arrangements can include:

- asking families to acknowledge they have read information sent to them with either a reply email
- Inclusion of information about Child Safe standards in parent information evenings i.e. transition parent evenings and orientation events for new students and families.
- providing translations of key messages from the standards for families into one or more languages other than English, depending on the school's community.

Communicating Child Safe Expectations to Visitors

Visitors to Preston High School form part of the school's community. Communication approaches include:

- providing clear notices about visitor and volunteer responsibilities when they sign in at Reception using the Compass Kiosk.

Confidentiality and Privacy

The school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, 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.

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes.

Child 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)

- the infliction, on a child, of—
 - physical violence or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

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

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.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff means:

in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

School governing authority means:

- The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
- The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
- The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

APPENDIX 1: STRATEGY TO EMBED A CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY

Purpose

Preston High School’s approach to embedding a culture of child safety is outlined below. The School Council will be responsible for implementing, communicating and periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the strategies.

Standards	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
Principles of inclusion	Identify significant cultural celebrations to be celebrated as a school community	Wellbeing Team in consultation with the Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Assessment of Child Safe practices to ensure information is provided to students and families from diverse background.	Wellbeing Team in consultation with the Assistant Principal	Term 2, 2019
	Review of Child Safe Policies to ensure the policies are inclusive and best represent the diversity and vulnerability of students at Preston High School	Assistant Principal / School Council	November 2019
	Review of Child Safe Risk Management template to ensure risks associated with the diversity of Preston High School students has been assessed and mitigated	Assistant Principal / School Council	July 2019
Strategies to embed an organisational culture of Child Safety	Strategies to embed a culture of child safety action plan (this document) evaluated and reviewed at school council.	Assistant Principal / School Council	July 2019 – November 2019
	Communicate the strategies to embed a culture of child safety action plan (this document) to the school community through the website.	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Communicate the strategies to school staff at initial induction day and Mid-year professional development day.	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019 and July 2019
	Allocate Child Safe standard Champions to support the assistant principal in implementing the strategies	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Add Child Safety Issues to the Staff Meeting Agenda	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
A child safe policy or a statement of	Child Safe Policy evaluated and reviewed at school council	Assistant Principal / School Council	Term 4, 2019
	Communicate the Child Safe Policy to the school community through the website.	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019

commitment to child safety	Communicate the strategies to school staff at initial induction day and Mid-year professional development day.	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Make available the Child Safe Policy at school reception and sign in.	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Include Child Safe PROTECT Posters in key staff areas and student areas	Child Safe Champions	Term 1, 2019
A child safe code of conduct	Ensure that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are aware of the code and how it applies	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Inclusion of the Code as part of the induction for new staff	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Inclusion of the Code in induction for all pre-service teachers	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Inclusion of the Code as part of annual training for existing school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers)	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Discussion of the Code at staff meetings;	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Informing parents/carers and other persons associated with the school of the expected behaviour for the school's leadership, staff, contractors and volunteers;	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Using the school's and the Department's reporting procedures should breaches of the Code be suspected or identified;	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Including the Code in employment information and service contracts to ensure compliance;	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Discussion of the Code of Conduct as part of the Professional Development Plans and staff supervision.	Assistant Principal	Term 2, 2019
School staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child safe environment	Use Child Safety Recruitment Checklist with all new staff and volunteers.		
	Staff Induction Packs include a copy the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	All new staff appointed a Mentor/Buddy.	Assistant Principal	Ongoing
	All new staff complete online Mandatory Reporting module.	Assistant Principal	Ongoing
	Child Safety included in staff Performance and Development Plans.	Assistant Principal	Ongoing
	All staff to complete online Mandatory Reporting module	All Staff	Annually
Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations	Child Safe responding and reporting policy to be evaluated and reviewed at school council	Assistant Principal	Term 4, 2019
	All staff to complete online Mandatory Reporting module	All Staff	Annually

of suspected child abuse	Inclusion of the Code as part of annual training for existing school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers)	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Ensure that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are aware of the procedures for responding to and reporting allegations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish on website • Communicate in newsletter 	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019 bi- annually
	Include 4 critical action posters in Staff rooms, front office and noticeboards for staff	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019
	Develop with student council a child friendly procedure for understanding Preston High Schools reporting obligations	Assistant Principal	Term 1 and Term 2, 2019
	Review of the policy after incident	Assistant Principal	As required
Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risk of child abuse	Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risk of child abuse to be agreed at school council meeting.	Assistant Principal	Annually
	Training for school council members on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse • Child abuse risks in the school environment • Preston High Schools Child Safe Standards Procedures 	Assistant Principal	Annually and with new staff
	Training for school staff on the collective responsibility and discussion of risks.	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019 and Mid-Year 2019
	The audit tool will be used reflectively, on an annual basis, and will be used to inform the continued focus and improvement of child safe practices within the school.	Assistant Principal	Term 1, 2019 and Mid-Year 2019
Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation	Strategies documented in the Child Safe Policy and reviewed and evaluated	Assistant Principal	Annually
	Year level coordinators and Health and Wellbeing curriculum reviewed on to ensure the requirements of Standard 7 are embedded in the annually curriculum planning.	Year Level Coordinators and Health and Wellbeing staff	Term 1, 2019
	Engage students to develop of Child Safe Standards information that is readily accessible, easy to understand and user-friendly for children as part of the curriculum.	Assistant Principal	Term 1 and Term 2, 2019

APPENDIX 2: CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

Rationale

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to guide school staff in identifying and regulating their own behaviour and the behaviour of other school staff, and to protect children from abuse in the school environment. Preston High School will, develop, adopt, review and maintain a Child Safety Code of Conduct and have this endorsed by the School Council.

The Code of Conduct is consistent with school policies related to student supervision, duty of care, volunteers, camps and excursions, anti-bullying policy and disciplinary procedures described in the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy.

Code of Conduct

Preston High 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.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Preston High School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Preston High School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, 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 students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's Principal
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Embedding the Code of Conduct

To ensure the Code is fully appreciated, understood and applied by all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and relevant community members the following actions will be taken:

- Ensure that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are aware of the code and how it applies;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of the induction for new staff;
- Inclusion of the Code in induction for all pre-service teachers;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of annual training for existing school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers);
- Discussion of the Code at staff meetings; communication of the Code through school communication channels and meetings.
- Informing parents/carers and other persons associated with the school of the expected behaviour for the school's leadership, staff, contractors and volunteers;
- Using the school's and the Department's reporting procedures should breaches of the Code be suspected or identified;

- Including the Code in employment information and service contracts to ensure compliance;
- Communication to students as appropriate

Review Cycle

Changes to this Code of Conduct that are not substantive may be made by the policy owner or the Principal from time-to-time (for example, correcting a grammatical error).

Substantive changes may be made by the Child Safety policy owner or Principal with immediate effect in response to amended policy guidance from DET. In these circumstances the amended policy will be tabled at the next Governance Committee and/or School Council.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change.

This code was ratified by School Council in September 2018 and amended by the policy owner in February 2019 to comply with changes to requirements.