

1. Policy Statement

Village School is committed to being a Child Safe organisation and embedding a child safe culture into our processes and procedures to ensure that all children who attend the school are safe at all times. All children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, sexual orientation, or family or social background have equal rights to protection from abuse. Village School is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct policy outlines a commitment by the school to ensure that all staff, volunteers and members of the School Board observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

Village School has zero tolerance for child abuse and all staff employed by Village School are responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and to report information about suspected child abuse.

2. Application

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all staff, volunteers and members of the School Board.

3. Definition of Terms

Aboriginal Child

A person under the age of 18 who:

- is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent,
- Identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and
- Is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community

Child Abuse

For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:

- Physical violence
- Sexual offences
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse
- Serious neglect

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	1 of 8

Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

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 parent’s identification on a similar basis

Child

A person who is under the age of 18 years

Child Safety

In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.

Child Safe Organisation

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.

Cultural Competency

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

Cultural Abuse

Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

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

4. Responsibility

All Village School staff, volunteers and members of the School Board must abide by the School’s Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	2 of 8

5. Child Safety Policy Statement

5.1 All staff, volunteers and School Board members of Village School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- ✓ Adhering to Village school's child safety policy at all times, and upholding Village school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- ✓ Taking all responsible steps to protect children from abuse
- ✓ Treating everyone 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 and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- ✓ Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification
- ✓ Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination
- ✓ Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability, for example, during personal care activities
- ✓ Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- ✓ Reporting any allegations of child abuse to one of the Village School's Child Safety Officers or the Principal, and ensure any allegation is reported to Police or child protection
- ✓ If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- ✓ Encouraging children to have a say and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	3 of 8

5.2 Staff and Volunteers **must not:**

- Develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism, for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children
- Exhibit behaviours with children that may be construed as unnecessarily physical, for example, inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example, while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area
- Expose children to inappropriate literature or online material.
- Put children at risk of abuse, for example, by locking doors
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussion of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children, for example, 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 culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or their family outside of Village School without the Child Safety Officer’s knowledge and/or consent, for example, no babysitting. This would exclude board/staff members such as parents, grandparents and other relatives who would have ongoing relationships, which would be expected and known by the community. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street is appropriate
- Have any online contact with a child or their family, unless necessary, for example, providing families with e-newsletters
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code of conduct to one of the Village School’s Child Safety Officers or the Principal

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

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	4 of 8

Acceptance of Child Safety Code of Conduct

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct and to report any Child Safety concerns to the Principal or a nominated Child Safety Officer

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Breach of Policy

Breach of this policy shall be considered, either misconduct, serious misconduct or gross misconduct, depending on the circumstances, and may result in disciplinary action which may lead to termination of employment.

If staff are aware of any potential breaches of policy they are advised to speak with the Principal

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	5 of 8

6. Reference Documents

Village School Policies	Agreements, Acts & Regulations
Child Safety Policy	Australian Professional standards for Teachers
	Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005
	Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe) Act 2015 (Vic)
	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
	Child and Wellbeing and Safety Amendment Act 2015 (Vic)
	Ministerial Order 870

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	6 of 8

APPENDIX

Added 26th August 2021

There are eleven new Child Safe Standards:

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued in complying with Child Safe Standard 1, an organisation must, at a minimum ensure:

- 1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported at Village School.
- 1.2 Strategies are embedded within our organisation which equip all members to acknowledge its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3 Measures are adopted by Village School to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4 Village School actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families
- 1.5 All of Village School's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families
- 2 CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture in complying with Child Safe Standard 2 Village School will ensure:
 - 2.1 Village School makes a public commitment to Child Safety
 - 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of Village school, eg. Students, staff, volunteers and parents.
 - 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	7 of 8

- 2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, Village School will at a minimum ensure:

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.

Policy 2.1	Version	Date Approved	Page Number
Child Safety Code of Conduct	1.0	August 2021	8 of 8