

TECOMA PRIMARY SCHOOL OSHC CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

PURPOSE

The Tecoma Primary School OSHC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

It informs our community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of children across all areas of our work.

SCOPE

This policy:

- applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children.
- applies in all physical and online environments used by children during the program.

CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

There are 7 standards plus a principle of inclusion:

- Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety
- Standard 2: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety
- Standard 3: A child safety code of conduct
- Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse
- Standard 5: Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Standard 7: Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment
- Principle of inclusion: Schools must take account of and make reasonable efforts to accommodate the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards, including (but not limited to) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Tecoma Primary School OSHC is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where children are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our environments.

We promote positive relationships between children and adults and between children and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to children in our environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal children, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other children experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting children based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our program, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school and program has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our children, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nominated Supervisors will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of families, children and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all children are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between children and adults, and between children
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school and program community including at staff and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, child wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

Staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's and programs child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- will need to have read the Child Safety Policy (this policy) and have read and signed and act in accordance with our school and program's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- ensure children's views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of children.

School Council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety – by using the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on PROTECT.
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy. When hiring school council employees, they will ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe.

Tecoma Primary School Principal is the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and children. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that children also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school and program.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour

MANAGING RISKS TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

At our school and program, we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and practices

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks.

ESTABLISHING A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

At Tecoma Primary School OSHC we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe program where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every child can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal children, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal children and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our planning, policies, and activities.

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

To support child safety and wellbeing at Tecoma Primary School OSHC, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages children and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between children are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the program to ensure a sense of belonging.

Tecoma Primary School including the OSHC program, inform students of their rights through a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure children know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Children and families can also access information on how to report concerns at by approaching the Principal or Assistant Principal/Wellbeing Coordinator for further support, guidance or information.

When the program is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the child and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our program's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

Opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and for them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement are encouraged.

This is done:

- through the school newsletters, other communications, school council, subcommittees of school council, student, staff, and Parent Network Meetings, and Parent/Community forums, etc.
- all of our child safety policies and procedures are available for students and parents on the school website, with hard copies available through the school office

- Newsletters and COMPASS will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our children, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

SUITABLE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

At Tecoma Primary School OSHC, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration (VIT)
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- Tecoma Primary School's Child Safety Code of Conduct (which will need to be read and signed by all staff)
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that the Principal or Nominated Supervisor considers appropriate to the nature of the role.
- All staff will need to annually complete the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations online learning

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

CHILD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND AWARENESS

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters. In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school and program environment.

School council training and education

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Tecoma Primary School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING PROCESSES

Tecoma Primary School OSH fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, children, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our programs Complaints Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows: the Four Critical Actions for Schools Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of child Abuse

COMMUNICATIONS

Tecoma Primary School OSHC is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure

- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in our school newsletter and on the school website
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Tecoma Primary School collects, uses and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: Schools' [Privacy Policy from The Department of Education and Training](#).

REVIEW OF CHILD SAFETY PRACTICES

At Tecoma Primary School OSHC, along with Tecoma Primary School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW

The Education Subcommittee, led by the Assistant Principal, is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the community.

This policy was approved by school council on **14th June, 2022** and is scheduled for review in **June 2024**.

Reviewed by: *Di Double, Rohan Thompson, Stuart McLean, Lisa Dell, Matt Ford, Lisa Hoskins-Faul, Chelsey Robins, after consultation with School Council.*

Tecoma Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct

Tecoma Primary 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.

At Tecoma Primary School we have a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse**. This is a commitment which is led by our School Council, School Leadership team, all staff and is shared openly and transparently with all members of our school community.

Purpose

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Tecoma Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

Acceptable behaviours

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

- upholding our school's commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal and/or the Assistant Principal/Welfare Coordinator.
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our child safety responding and reporting policy and procedures, and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#).
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As Tecoma Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors and member of our school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts)

- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- treat a child or student 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 schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy](#) or where required for duty of care purposes
- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Tecoma Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education and Training Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Tecoma Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal, Rohan Thompson, on 9754 2354.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact the Assistant Principal, Di Double, on 9754 2354.

