

PYALONG PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Pyalong Primary School's Commitment to Child Safety in accordance with the Victorian Governments Ministerial Order 870.

Rationale

In 2013, the Victorian Parliament held an inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse, resulting in the Betrayal of Trust Report. As a result the Victorian Government has mandated that all organisations who work with children, including schools, meet the Child Safe Standards.

Children have the right to be safe and protected, including at school. It is important that you feel confident that your child is safe and well in the care of their school.

At Pyalong Primary School, we are responsible for keeping our children safe. Schools have to meet legal requirements for the care, safety and welfare of students. From 1 August 2016, all schools are required to meet child safe standards to achieve a zero tolerance to child abuse.

Our Vision

Pyalong Primary School staff endeavor, in partnership with families, to develop independent learners through the provision of a wide range of learning choices for students to demonstrate their understandings.

We endeavor to nurture our students to become well-adjusted individuals, who will strive to reach their full potential and who understand the importance of becoming lifelong learners.

We promote a social responsibility through the use of the School Wide Positive Behavior Support Program which capably prepares our students for understanding the importance of working cooperatively with others.

Our School Values

Our school community worked to create values that we believe are central to the life our school. These values provide guidelines as to how all members of the school community should conduct themselves. These values are:

Be safe
Be kind
Be your best.

These values are used to support our students in becoming positive citizens within their community and the wider world.

In our community these values are demonstrated when:

- Students have the opportunity to learn in a positive, caring environment and are encouraged to become self-motivated lifelong learners
- Diversity is seen as enriching our school and is valued and respected
- Partnerships between students, staff, parents and the wider community are fostered and valued
- Students are encouraged to work cooperatively and collaboratively with their peers and other members of the school community, and to be active responsible citizens
- Students are expected to take responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- All community members are working towards a shared goal
- Students and staff work hard despite problems or obstacles.

In addition, Pyalong Primary School:

- Has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures
- Has a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously
- Is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks
- Has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
- Is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
- Supports and respects all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- Is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Provide a safe and inclusive environment for children with a disability
- Has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Our children

The children at Pyalong Primary School are empowered, vital and active participants. 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 and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of ATSI children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff, parent helpers and volunteers on how to behave with children. All of our staff, parent helpers and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Pyalong Primary School understands that child safety is everyone's collective responsibility.

Our culture aims for all staff, students and community members 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 support our staff through ongoing Professional Development to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of ATSI children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

We ensure all staff and volunteers understand Pyalong Primary 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.

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. ***Please refer to Code of Conduct - Appendix 1 for further information.**

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Pyalong Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from ATSI people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged by Pyalong Primary School, including volunteers and tradespeople, are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this.

We carry out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

Fair procedures for personnel

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, as well as including investigation updates.

Privacy

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.

Legislative responsibilities

Pyalong Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority at Pyalong Primary School will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above).

In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media as per Pyalong Primary School's Social Media Policy).

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local ATSI communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Pyalong Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff 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 information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)

- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Appendix:

Appendix 1 – Pyalong Primary School Code of Conduct

Key Links to this Policy:

- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Duty of Care Policy and Procedures
- Recruitment Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy
- Student Welfare Policy
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Internet Usage Policy and Acceptable Use of ICT Contract
- Visitors Policy
- Media Policy

<i>Date Implemented</i>	7 th December, 2016
<i>Approved By</i>	School Council
<i>Date Policy Ratified</i>	26th November, 2018
<i>Responsible for Review</i>	School Council
<i>Review Date</i>	November 2020

PYALONG PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD SAFETY - CODE OF CONDUCT 2019

Pyalong Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our students. 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 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 Staff of Pyalong Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal and Staff of Pyalong Primary 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 (ATSI) 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 leadership
- 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.

This Code of Conduct was endorsed and ratified by the Pyalong Primary School - School Council on 26th November, 2019.

Evaluation

A review of this Code of Conduct will occur if there are any legislative or other changes in the interim or no later than December 2020.

I have read, understand and am committed to ensuring that the Child Safety Code of Conduct is adhered to.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Role: _____