

## **Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy - June 2022**

(Child Safe Standard 2)

### **Purpose**

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy of Lalor East Primary School demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

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

### **Scope**

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – (refer to the related school policies section below)

### **Definitions**

#### **Child**

a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

#### **Child abuse**

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

#### **Child-connected work**

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

#### **Child safety**

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**

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

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

### **School staff**

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

### **School Governing Authority**

Governing body means the school council constituted in relation to that school.

### **Student**

Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school.

### **Volunteer**

Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school in the school environment.

### **Our commitment to child safety**

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

We are committed to providing environments where our students 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 school environments.

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

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school 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 students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students 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 students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school 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 students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.



Our mission at Lalor East Primary School is for every child to be Literate, Numerate, Happy and Healthy and to reflect our values through their individual actions and active participation in our local and global community.

At Lalor East Primary School, our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

- RESPECT:** We treat others the way we would like to be treated.  
We consider other people's feelings  
We understand that we all come from different backgrounds or have special or different qualities  
We behave in a safe and sensible manner  
We look after others property
- HONESTY:** We return items to the rightful owner  
We avoid lying, cheating or stealing
- CARING:** We look out for each other  
We look after the environment  
We help others who need our support  
We behave in a safe and sensible manner
- CO-OPERATION:** We do as we are asked straight away  
We return equipment  
We wait our turn to speak  
We behave and speak in a polite manner
- PERSONAL BEST:** We our our best each and every day  
We complete our work to the best of our ability  
We develop a love for learning

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse then call 000.**

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **School leadership team**

Our school leadership team (comprising the principal, assistant principal, leading teachers and learning specialists) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with *Ministerial Order 1359*.

Principals and assistant principals 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 students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student 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.



## School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedures including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' 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 students.

## 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  
[It is not necessary to discuss child safety at every school council meeting, but child safety should be discussed at some meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and school council members are informed and understand the issues]
- undertake annual training on child safety  
[School Councils can use 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
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At Lalor East Primary School, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

## Child Safety Champion

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#).

Our principal and child safety champion [amend if needed] are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Assistant Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Assistant Principala if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Assistant Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Welfare Team and consults with our Student Leadership Team on child safety.

The Wellbeing Team meets regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Leadership Team and OHS committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.



## **Child Safety Code of Conduct**

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

We ensure that students 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.

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

## **Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing**

At our school 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, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

## **Establishing a culturally safe environment (Child Safe Standard 1)**

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

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

At Lalor East Primary School, we have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

### **Build a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion**

- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school newsletters, school assemblies, parent information nights.
- Lead on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.

### **Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children**

- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
- Ask for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about what the school does well, and what can be improved.
- Implement the [Koorie Education Policy](#) to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities (Government schools).



- Use [Koorie Engagement Support Officers \(KESOs\)](#) to provide advice to government schools about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.
- Use the [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026](#) to guide the school's support for Aboriginal self-determination.

### **Actively address racism**

- Express zero tolerance of racism in your statement of commitment to child safety included in your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and other documents.
- Address racism from students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the culture of the school works to prevent incidents from occurring.
- Put school leaders at the front of anti-racist action. Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the school community.
- Encourage non-Aboriginal school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families and communities.

### **Guide and train staff and volunteers**

- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
- Arrange [Community Understanding Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) or equivalent for staff.

### **Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum**

- Find out about the Traditional Owners of the land/s where the school is situated at the [Map of Indigenous Australia](#) and learn about the importance of [acknowledging Traditional Owners](#).
- Include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.
- Develop a resource bank of digital, hardcopy print and other artefacts that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.

### **Partner with Aboriginal communities**

- Support local Aboriginal businesses through school procurement.
- Engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups, corporations or the Registered Aboriginal Party to review cultural safety in school environment, systems and processes.
- Engage with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) and/or the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

### **Review and assess how the school supports cultural inclusion**

- Use the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) [cultural safety continuum reflective tool](#) to make a tailored learning and development plan focused on staff cultural competence learning needs.
- Recognise and acknowledge key events and anniversaries (Harmony Day, Sorry Day, Anniversary the 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart, NAIDOC week etc...)

### **Student Empowerment (Child Safe Standard 3)**

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

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our behaviour matrix, response to student behaviours and our school values.



We inform students of their rights through lessons delivered as part of our 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 our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns through [our school website](#) or information available at our school office.

When the school 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 student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

At Lalor East Primary School, we have developed the following strategies to empower students and children:

### **Inform students of their rights**

- Provide age appropriate and accessible information to students such as information about:
  - the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.
  - the Charter of Commitment under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
  - the work of the [Commission for Children and Young People](#)
  - how the adults in the school should behave.
- Inform students of their [rights and special protections](#) including the right to:
  - live and grow up healthy
  - have a say about decisions affecting them
  - get information that is important to them
  - be safe and not harmed by anyone.

When sharing information under the [information sharing schemes](#):

- work to build trust by being open and transparent about information sharing and keep the child and family informed each time their information is shared if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so
- seek and consider the views of the child (or the relevant family members) about sharing their confidential information if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so
- Provide information through the curriculum via relevant subject areas to promote:
  - [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships](#)
  - [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework \(SWPBS\)](#)
  - [Safe Schools](#)
  - [Bully Stoppers](#)
  - [Vic SRC's Introduction to Student Voice](#)
  - [eSmart](#)

### **Empower students to contribute to school life**

- Display visually engaging and easy-to-read posters promoting student voice and agency.
- Discuss commitment to student's voice at enrolment and organise orientation activities focused on activating student's voice.
- Conduct year-level meetings and form groups to discuss students' rights and safety issues.
- Invite students to provide feedback on school-wide decisions and take their views into account in school decision-making.
- Document student participation in activities that contribute to the life of the school.
- Involve students in consultation processes and inform them of their impact on decision-making.
- Demonstrate that the school takes students seriously by acting on their concerns, noting that what might seem unimportant to an adult may be important to a young person.
- Become a [VicSRC Partner School](#).



- Provide students who find it harder to speak up or be heard with multiple avenues for communicating, including writing, drawing, or physical forms of communication.

### **Empower students to raise their concerns**

- Provide students with information about complaints processes.
- Give students a variety of ways to raise concerns. For example:
  - provide an anonymous, year-level student suggestion box
  - distribute regular online surveys
  - display information about the adults who students can talk to if they have a concern.
- Highlight student views in your school community or public-facing documents, including quoting students where appropriate.
- Create opportunities for all student voices by being aware of discriminatory barriers and any overreliance on the input of student leaders.

### **Strengthen peer support for safety and wellbeing**

- Display posters acknowledging sexuality and gender diversity and identify safe spaces where students can go if they need support.
- Carry out regular [whole school wellbeing assessment surveys](#).
- Use the [Bully Stoppers survey tool](#) to assess bullying in your school.
- Establish Student Action Teams to investigate issues of inclusion and exclusion.
- Discuss healthy boundaries for friendships. Point out that the risk of harm can occur in child-to-child interactions, as well as adult-to-child interactions.
- Run school transition programs (like [Transition: A Positive Start to School](#) or [Transition – Year 6 to 7](#) to provide support for students entering the school.
- Provide buddying or mentoring programs for new students transitioning to the school mid-year or outside of the regular transition timeline.

### **Establish protective factors**

- Teach students practical protective strategies, including:
  - what to do when they feel unsafe
  - phrases they can use to raise an objection
  - pathways for raising safety concerns, and
  - online safety behaviours.
- Provide contact information for independent child and youth advocacy services or helplines.
- Provide a range of age-appropriate picture books, fiction and non-fiction that include:
  - children's rights and empowerment themes
  - cultural and linguistic diversity
  - neurodiverse characters and people with disability
  - diversity in sexual orientation and gender.
- Support all students to identify trusted adults and friends they can talk to about a concern at school, at home or in the community.
- Deliver age-appropriate curriculum content about respectful relationships, sexuality, consent and sexual abuse prevention through the [Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials](#).
- Use the [School's Mental Health Menu](#) to support students in your school.
- Empower students with the knowledge that adults are accountable and that students have a right to safety.

### **Communicate in a respectful and age-appropriate way**

- Educate staff to uphold Aboriginal cultural safety and be respectful of identity and culture.
- Train staff and volunteers to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.



- Educate staff and volunteers about children's rights, including the 4 guiding principles in the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

### **Use sensitivity and build trust**

- Provide training to staff and volunteers to be attuned to [signs of harm](#) and risk factors in students.
- Remind staff and volunteers to recognise that students might communicate in different ways, including through verbal and non-verbal cues, play, body language, facial expressions, drawings or behaviours.
- Follow through on your commitments – show students that the leadership team and staff are trustworthy and take their worries or concerns seriously.

### **Family Engagement (Child Safe Standard 4)**

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, at Lalor East Primary School, we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

At Lalor East Primary School, we have developed the following strategies to support family engagement:

#### **Create a welcoming environment**

- Provide new enrolments with welcome packs that include information about child safety, the school's complaints processes and how to raise concerns.
- Conduct community events to welcome families and the broader community.
- Create a welcoming environment at school reception so community members and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto school grounds.

#### **Engage families and communities in building a child safe organisation**

- Ask parents and carers about their children. This can be in formal settings like parent/teacher interviews, or during chance meetings at pick-up and drop-off.
- Provide parents and carers with information about children's rights via newsletters, or parent information sessions.
- Regularly engage with parents, carers and students and discuss the needs of students through parent/teacher interviews.
- Discuss how your school approaches child safety topics at parents, carers and friends' association meetings. Seek community views where appropriate to do so. Make sure you have processes in place to manage disclosures if they arise.

#### **Provide regular opportunities to communicate**

- Provide frequent opportunities for parents and carers to engage with staff to discuss their children's experiences at school.
- Organise interpreters and translations to engage families from non-English speaking backgrounds in conversations about the school's child safety strategies.
- Ask families and carers about their preferred methods of communication, including email, social media, meetings and workshops and use their responses to inform your communications approach.
- Incorporate child safety questions in parent and carer surveys to measure awareness and confidence in the school's child safety approach and to support ongoing improvement.



- Remind the school community about the shared roles of parents, carers and school staff in creating a positive environment for learning by promoting the [Respectful Behaviours in the School Community Policy](#).
- Consider hosting community workshops on child safety and wellbeing topics, for example, respectful relationships or online safety. Provide families with take-home information to help them to talk to their children about safety and wellbeing at home.
- Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern is raised or complaint is made.

### **Reflect the diversity of the school community**

- Make newsletters and communications inclusive. Normalise a diversity of family profiles and reflect the characteristics of your school community.
- Select meeting venues that are physically accessible, welcoming and culturally safe.
- Encourage volunteer positions from families from diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

### **Provide inclusive and accessible information**

Display the [PROTECT poster](#) in shared areas that are accessible to parents and the community.

- Make sure child safety information is easy to read – consider font size, font style, colours used, formatting and visual presentation.
- Provide links to the school's child safety policies in the school's social media posts, newsletters and staff circulars.
- Check that the students, school staff, and members of the school community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety. Keep this information up to date and accessible, and review it regularly.
- Use images and other accessibility aids to help child safety information be understood by families that have low literacy or vision.
- Translate child safety information into multiple languages to reflect your school community.

### **Build family and community involvement in child safety into business as usual**

- Make child safety a standing item at school governing authority meetings.
- Report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and students to show transparency and accountability.
- Encourage families and carers to advocate for their children and champion their safety while at school and in other environments, including extra-curricular activities such as sports, tutoring, music and language classes.
- Promote [Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships education](#) to families.
- Acknowledge the important role that families and communities play in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns.
- Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern or complaint is raised.

### **Diversity and equity (Child Safe Standard 5)**

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, 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+.

Our Student Engagement & Inclusion Policy, Inclusion & Diversity Policy and our Gender Identity Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

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At Lalor East Primary School, we have developed the following strategies to support diversity and equity:

### **Recognise the diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances of students**

- Recognise the range of diverse student and family attributes. Pay attention to:
  - cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
  - the needs of students with disability and responses to disability
  - the needs of students from diverse religious and cultural communities
  - the needs of very young students and children
  - the impact of prior trauma
  - gender differences
  - the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
  - challenges for students who are in foster care, out of home care, living away from home or international students
  - students experiencing pregnancy or who are young parents
  - socio-economic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, remote or regional isolation).
- Pay attention to diverse student cohorts and individuals in your community, recognising that they may have higher risk of harm.
- Normalise asking for and using people's preferred pronouns and names for students.
- Use contemporary, culturally sensitive and inclusive examples when discussing families, relationships or professions and vocations.

### **Identify and address challenges that students experience due to their diverse attributes**

- Communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, address the incident in line with school policy.
- Let students know they can raise concerns or report incidents that occurred at school and outside the school.
- Check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. This can occur at pick-up or drop-off, at parent teacher interviews or through informal discussions.
- Engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe.
- Validate students' feelings. Students may feel that they have not been listened to or believed in the past.
- Offer buddying and mentoring for students who are at risk of social isolation.
- Discuss how students feel about discussing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Note that where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the wishes of the student that their information remain confidential.
- Take a holistic approach when responding to family violence.
- Respond to family violence in a way that is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory.



## **Put in place policies and strategies to help meet the diverse needs of students**

- Ensure school environments are welcoming and inclusive. For example:
  - display flags representing different cultures within the school community
  - provide materials in different languages
  - decorate the school with artistic expressions from students and young people.
  - Provide child safety information in accessible, child-friendly language and formats.
  - Accompany child safety information with the support materials needed to help students and families interpret it.
  - Anticipate the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances. Don't expect all students to be equally empowered to ask for what they need.
  - Provide staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination.
  - Create opportunities to remind staff and volunteers about student diversity and accommodating students and young people's needs.
  - Seek out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, provision planning.

## **Support diversity through school planning and resources**

- Recognise dates that connect with your school community, for example:
  - Cultural Diversity Week (March)
  - Hearing Awareness Week (1–7 March)
  - IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia, 17 May)
  - National Reconciliation Week (27 May–3 June)
  - Crazy Hair Day (Cystic Fibrosis Awareness, 26 July)
  - World Mental Health Day (10 October)
  - International Day of Persons with Disability (3 December)
- Compile a range of age-appropriate instructional materials for exploring differences and similarities in class including:
  - Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships resources
  - Books, and resources that reflect diverse views and perspectives
  - Speech and drama scripts that explore themes around diversity.
  - Use images of students with diverse characteristics in school publications to reflect the school community.

## **Suitable Staff and volunteers (Child Safe Standard 6)**

At Lalor East Primary School, 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 recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#)

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



- 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
  - 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)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

### **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. This will be done by peer observation, formal and informal feedback and regular performance reviews.

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.

At Lalor East Primary School, we have developed the following strategies to ensure suitable staff and volunteers:

### **Robust recruitment and screening**

- Where appropriate, consider including students in the recruitment process to provide an authentic opportunity for them to have a say about decisions that impact them.

### **Advertising**

- Ensure recruitment advertisements for staff in child connected work contain:
  - the job's requirements, including expected knowledge of child development appropriate to the role
  - an outline of duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
  - essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
  - Provide all job applicants with the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct and links to child safety resources.

### **Screening**

- Include selection criteria relevant to the role, such as:
  - experience working with children, or particular groups of children, including children with a disability or Aboriginal children
  - engaging with families
  - child safety experience
  - cultural safety in their work.
- Screen all staff, volunteers, leaders and school governing board members for their suitability during recruitment.



## Interviews

- Consider carefully about who will be on the interview panel and ensure panel members have the right skills, experience and information to perform their role.
- Develop questions about child safety in job interviews.
- Seek referees for both staff and volunteers as appropriate, including their last employer, and overseas referees if they've worked overseas.
- Ask referees about the person's character and experience in working directly with children and young people.

## Supervision and people management focused on child safety and wellbeing

- Undertake a risk assessment (refer to [Standard 9](#)) to determine what level of ongoing supervision and management is necessary to ensure staff and volunteers perform their role in a way that promotes child safety and wellbeing.
- Set out standards for child safety performance in staff contracts and state how performance will be assessed.
- Include child safety considerations in supervision between people managers and individual staff.
- Give people managers guidance on steps to take when managing a staff member whose behaviour raises child safety concerns, and when to escalate concerns about staff behaviour.
- Communicate regularly with staff and volunteers about the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct in supervision meetings, at staff meetings, in newsletters and staff updates.
- Provide refresher child safe training for staff and volunteers.
- Include child safety and wellbeing as a regular agenda item for staff meetings at all levels of the organisation.
- Include child safety and wellbeing goals in staff professional development plans and role statements.

## Suitable 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 and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

[You can insert further information about your school's training program here - refer to PROTECT Child Safe Standard 8 Guidance for suggestions.]



## 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
- Lalor East Primary School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

## Complaints and reporting processes

Lalor East Primary School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, 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 school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found at [\[insert link\]](#).

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 [\[insert link\]](#). Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, 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 complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy [\[insert link\]](#) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## Communications

Lalor East Primary School 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 (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters and other Child Safety materials around the school
- updates in our school newsletter and via Compass
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## Privacy and information sharing

Lalor East 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](#).



## Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

## Review of child safety practices (child safe standard 10)

At Lalor East 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.

## Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Other related Department of Education and Training Policies

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)



## Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

## Evaluation

This policy is a registration requirement for the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority and a requirement of the Department of Education and Training under *Ministerial Order No 1359*

This policy will be reviewed every year as part of the school policy review cycle, following changes to Departmental legislation and guidelines or at times that the Principal forms the opinion that the policy warrants a review.

**Ratified by School Council:**  
**Due for Review:**

21 June 2022  
March 2023

