

Child Safe Standard 1

Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

A culture of child safety at Mackellar Primary School (MPS) ensures that the school prioritises the safety of the children in our care and has a **zero-tolerance approach to child abuse**. At MPS, child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice, and an ongoing, dedicated process of improvement. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours.

A child safe environment is also the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. MPS fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults are informed about what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Governance in a child safe environment

Developing a child safe culture within the school is a necessary part of managing organisational risk, where early disclosures require accountability by all adults, and challenge unacceptable behaviour. Strong and clear governance arrangements are used to evolve child safety as a focus within the school. Leadership take preventative, proactive and participatory approaches to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children at MPS is the paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership responsibilities

Leaders have a critical role to play in creating and maintaining an organisational culture where children's best interests are at heart of the organisation and the way it operates. Leadership is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety at MPS by taking the lead in protecting children from abuse, and must be made aware of child abuse allegations and risks and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

If leadership believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, leadership phone 000.

Leaders ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by all staff at MPS. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection. Leaders must also:

Identify, analyse and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Mackellar Primary School has a duty of care to create a child safe organisation with a clear evidence-informed understanding of the potential risks to children in the school's setting. Our

school's preventative approach ensures that we adopt a risk management approach (Child Safe Standard 6) to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes:

- a risk management strategy and policy (Child Safe Standard 6) that sets out how we identify, assess, and take steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks, and
- undertaking a Child Safety Review by completing Appendix 1 Child Safe Standards – Implementation and Action Plan Tool (A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation, Fourth edition).

Develop a Child Safe policy

Mackellar Primary School has developed a Child Safe Policy (Child Safe Standard 2) which outlines our statement of commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

Develop Codes of Conduct

Mackellar Primary School has a Child Safe Code Of Conduct (Child Safe Standard 3) which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. To encourage appropriate behaviour between children, MPS has implemented School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) as a proactive and preventative framework that develops positive, safe and supportive learning cultures through whole school values and expected behaviours that are explicitly taught by educators. Social and emotional learning programs at MPS include The Resilience Project and Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships.

Choose suitable employees and volunteers

Mackellar Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children (Child Safety Standard 4). This includes police records and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers. The school's Recruitment Practices for Child Safe Organisations (Child Safety Standard 5) outlines further information.

Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

Mackellar Primary School ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse (Child Safe Standard 4). The school's leadership also includes a Primary Welfare Officer who understands the responsibilities and has knowledge of child safety issues, and is a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse. The school's Human Resources Practices for Child Safe Organisations resource contains further information.



Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Mackellar Primary School clearly communicates a zero tolerance of child abuse and reporting procedures and policies to ensure that mandatory reporting requirements are met (Child Safe Standard 5). Staff engage in professional development that supports them to respond appropriately to disclosures of child abuse. Staff are also educated in how to identify behavioural, emotional or physical signs of child abuse or neglect.

Promote inclusion

Mackellar Primary School is inclusive to all children and families. Our school culture supports:

- Cultural safety for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters
- The safety of children with a disability by ensuring our school is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

Mackellar Primary School's commitment to supporting the achievement and participation of all students also acknowledges that some children and young people have intersecting identities or additional needs that need to be taken into consideration. In addition to the above, these identities may relate to:

- Children in Out Of Home Care
- Experience of abuse, neglect or family violence
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Social factors
- Economic factors.

Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making

Mackellar Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments through a proactive and preventative approach to empowering children to protect themselves (Child Safe Standard 7). Educators:

- promote student agency, student leadership and student voice are part of the school's current Strategic Plan
- use Amplify as a guide to empower students in decision-making through conversations, collaboration and specific actions
- create a positive climate for learning by empowering students, enhancing student engagement and enriching their participation

- empower and support students to take ownership of their learning and learning growth
- ask children what makes them feel safe and unsafe
- educate children to recognise abuse in an age-appropriate way that can help them to avoid situations that might put them at risk
- provide opportunities for children to express their views on our school's Child Safe Policy or Code of Conduct, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through conversations and feedback sessions
- educate social and emotional learning through programs such as The Resilience Project and Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships where children are empowered to express their concerns if something doesn't 'look, sound or feel safe,' consistent with the messages communicated in Protect posters (located in all indoor learning spaces) and also in the school's School-wide Positive Behaviour matrices.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, following a significant incident if it occurs or if guidelines change. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible, we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

This policy was ratified by School Council on

Name:

Signature:

References:

Child Safe Standards Toolkit
A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Standard Organisation – Fourth Edition
Amplify - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au>

