

Child Safety Policy

DET International CRICOS Code - 00861K

Purpose

To outline our commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe. To empower children who are vital and active participants at Rowville Primary School and to listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

Guidelines

Rowville Primary School is committed to child safety and this policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family background or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety and we follow these obligations rigorously.

Rowville Primary School has robust human resources, recruitment practices and induction programs for all staff and volunteers.

Rowville Primary School is committed to regularly training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

The Principal, Assistant Principal and School Improvement team are responsible for leading the development of a culture of child safety. They will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.

Implementation

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation and people from all occupations and cultural backgrounds are welcome. The safety and wellbeing of International students is a key focus of our care.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by the Rowville Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children and hold a valid Victorian Institute of Teaching Card (VIT) or Working with Children Check (WWCC).

At Rowville Primary School, we only employ teachers who are VIT registered and other staff who have a current WWCC.

Training and education is provided to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing professional learning to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be inducted to ensure they understand Rowville 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 (please refer to Child Safety Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services or Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements, which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities.

Rowville Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical, as well as legislative, obligations.

We actively encourage applications from all candidates regardless of race, gender, sex, sexuality, disability, religion or cultural background.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the WWCC website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse and report any matter of concern.

At Rowville Primary School we take 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 in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so. Any personnel who have the responsibility for **mandatory reporting** must comply with their duties.

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 or online environments.

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).

Related Policies and Further Information

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Four Critical Actions for Schools
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf
- Privacy Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur.

This policy was ratified at School Council on 2 June 2021 and is due to be reviewed May 2023.