



Child Safe Environment Policy

Purpose

The Child Safe Environments Policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope

All staff, volunteers, contractors, placement students, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy will apply across all school forums, both on and off campus and outside of school hours.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The school has a well-documented commitment to child safety. This statement includes the principles and processes which guide actions and underpin decision making to ensure the safety of children and young people.

Refer:

Nepean School Commitment to Child Safety statement.

Policy and procedures

Policies and procedures outlining Nepean School's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below. For further information, please contact the school's Principal Carolyn Gurrier-Jones, Assistant Principal Claire Toohey or Child Safety Officer Miche Keyte.

A Child Safe Culture

Nepean School place learners at the centre of all we do. Our culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Personnel understand their Roles and Responsibilities/Code of Conduct

The school Principal, Assistant Principal, school leaders (Consultative Team) and Department Coordinators will ensure that each staff member, visitor, volunteer or placement student understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. These expectations are clearly stated in the school's Code of Conduct which sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. All people within the school will comply with the Code of Conduct.

Refer:

Nepean School Code of Conduct

Victorian Institute of Teaching <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/>

Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics

Human Resources Practices and Training

Nepean School applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. We will follow a rigorous, merit based selection process as per DET guidelines <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/Pages/default.aspx>

We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. Nepean School

will provide two Mandatory Induction sessions per term for prospective staff, volunteers or placement students.

Requirements–

- teachers are required to undergo a National Criminal History Records check and maintain current VIT registration.
- therapists/nurses are required to attend a Mandatory Induction session and be registered with AHPRA.
- volunteers are required to attend a Mandatory Induction session and hold a current Working with Children card.
- casual staff are required to attend a Mandatory Induction session and hold a current Working with Children check (for employment) and/or current VIT registration.
- placement students are required to attend a Mandatory Induction session and complete all placement paperwork prior to placement start date.

Evidence of compliance is required before any work, volunteering or placement can commence.

Refer –

Nepean School Mandatory Induction

Volunteer Register

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

Nepean School has clear expectations in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

The Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Student Welfare Officers are available to support staff through process of making a report if required.

Staff are required to complete DET Mandatory Reporting online training.

Refer:

School Policy Advisory Guide –

- Child Protection

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>

Risk Reduction and Management

Nepean School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

Refer:

School Policy Advisory Guide –

- Risk Management

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/risk.aspx>

Listening to Children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Refer:

Nepean School 'Promoting a Positive Learning Environment' statement

Confidentiality and Privacy

Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. The collection, use and storage of information is included in school policies.

Breaches

Breaches of Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Obligations are identified in the specific policies.

Refer:

School Policy Advisory Guide –

- Duty of Care
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>
- Child Protection Reporting Obligations
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/childprotection.aspx>

Policy Evaluation and Review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes

Child abuse includes

- any act committed against a child involving –
- a sexual offence or
- an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)

The infliction, on a child, of-

- physical violence or
- serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child

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

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

School staff means:

In a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act)* in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

Related Policies and Documents

Refer:

School Policy Advisory Guide –

- Duty of Care
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>
- Child Protection Reporting Obligations
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/childprotection.aspx>

DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework