

### CHILD SAFE POLICY

#### **1. Rationale:**

- 1.1 Kingston Heath Primary School is committed to child safety.
- 1.2 We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.
- 1.3 We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- 1.6 Kingston Heath is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- 1.7 The school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- 1.8 The school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- 1.9 We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- 1.10 We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

#### **2. Aims:**

- 2.1 To demonstrate a commitment to child safety.
- 2.2 To empower children who are vital and active participants at Kingston Heath Primary School. 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.
- 2.3 We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:
  - promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 Support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.

2.5 Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

### **3. Implementation:**

3.1 This policy applies to all school environments including camps, excursions and online environments.

3.2 We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

3.3 All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

3.4 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. Kingston Heath Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

3.5 Kingston Heath Primary School has a zero tolerance of child abuse. 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.

3.6 Kingston Heath 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 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 reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

3.7 Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse:

#### **Forming a belief on reasonable grounds**

- A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

#### **Reporting a belief**

- Mandated staff members (Teachers and Principals) must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection.
- Staff members, whether or not mandated, need to report to the Principal or Assistant Principal their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties. A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

- If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report.
- Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse.

These procedures do not:

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

3.8 The school will inform parents on how to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters through our newsletter and other means.

#### **4. Evaluation:**

4.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's three-year review cycle. This policy was ratified by School Council on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016.