

Overview

Oakwood School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Oakwood School has zero tolerance for child abuse. Oakwood School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse young people as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Oakwood School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Oakwood School will provide opportunities for employees and visitors to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety, thereby supporting them to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enabling them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures. It is important for our school to have strong Human Resource practices to help protect children from abuse. Human Resource practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

The school recognizes the good work and practices of employees and visitors in keeping children safe and protected.

Child Safety Officer

Julie FitzGerald, Assistant Principal-Student Wellbeing, acts as the Child Safety Officer at Oakwood School.

This role includes:

- Being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns
- Providing support to all personnel
- Being the contact for children, parents, staff and visitors to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with the school.

Training and Induction

Staff should receive induction and ongoing training in child safety.

- New staff need support and information when they begin their new role. Child Safety practices and policies form part of the school's induction processes.
- Existing staff need to continue to develop skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions.
- Training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that the school meets its' duty of care when providing services to children.
- Training will include:

- Identifying, assessing and reducing/removing child abuse risks
- Awareness and compliance with school policies and procedures (including the Commitment Statement, the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy.)
- Legislative requirements such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, Working Children Checks, Victorian Institute of Teaching teacher registration.
- How to handle a disclosure of suspicion of abuse.
- Training may be formal (e.g., training offered by external organisations, training developed and delivered internally, on-the-job training (e.g. staff meetings) or informal collegiate discussions.

Supervision

Supervision of staff and visitors should be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance. New staff and visitors should be supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, and ensure that their behavior towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported to the Principal.

Staff and Visitor Child Safety Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

The Code of Conduct outlines the expected standards of appropriate behavior with and in the company of children. Disciplinary procedures should clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the Code of Conduct, and should be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or breach of the Code of Conduct is known or suspected. All staff and visitors have a duty of care to raise concerns about the behavior of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Review Cycle

This policy was tabled at the Oakwood School Council Meeting on 18 February 2020. To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.