



Mossfiel Primary School

Child Safety Standard 9:

Child safety in physical and online environments

20 June 2022

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Mossfiel Primary School office on 9749 1227.



Overview

This standard focuses on child safety and wellbeing in physical and online environments and ensuring that procurement also reflects child safety.

Schools need to have policies and strategies:

- for identifying and responding to risk and reducing or removing the risk of harm
- for online conduct and online safety
- ensuring that procurement policies for facilities and services ensure the safety of children and students

Schools must analyse and understand potential risks to students. It is important to think about risks created by school structure and culture, activities and physical and online environments.

Online technologies are constantly changing which presents significant challenges for schools, parents and carers. Online behaviour needs to be addressed in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Codes of Conduct to promote child safety.

Arrangements with external agencies also create child safety risks. They create opportunities for unknown people to have contact with students.

Benefits of considering risks

By actively considering risks, schools can act preventatively to reduce the chances of risks happening. A thorough risk analysis is the first thing schools should do to promote child safety. It provides the foundation to inform all other child safety work, including policies, procedures and practices.

Schools will be in the best position to know where risks are located and how plans can be put in place to prevent or reduce them. Effective risk analysis will consider all of the child safe standards and risks in physical and online environments and procurement.

Actions

To comply with this standard, at minimum, Mossfiel Primary School must:

- make sure child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices enable school staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- develop and endorse a policy or statement on online conduct and online safety.
- develop procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties that ensure the safety of students.

Examples of actions to support child safety in physical and online environments

Promote a culture of online and physical safety for all students

- Supervise students properly in all settings, including the playground, excursions and camps.
- Give particular attention to the safety, diverse needs and vulnerabilities of students in each activity or setting. Consider whether there are any barriers that might prevent students from raising concerns.
- Inform students and their families about appropriate use of the school's technology, safety tools and how to seek help and report concerns including cyberbullying and online grooming.
- Keep up to date with current online safety issues and expert information from specialist government and non-government bodies including the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner, and eSmart Schools.
- Promote activities in the school community that connect schools and communities and raise awareness to prevent bullying and violence (e.g. [National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence](#)).
- Create a respectful, sensitive and safe environment for people who may be experiencing family violence. Schools are required to align to the MARAM framework over time. [MARAM responsibility 1](#) requires schools to create a respectful, sensitive and safe environment that enables a child or young person to feel comfortable to talk about their experiences of family violence and seek support.

Manage risk in physical spaces

- Identify and document the school's child safety risks in the school's risk register or equivalent and ensure strategies are in place to manage those risks.
- Consider the range of school environments and the nature of physical spaces including onsite buildings and grounds, classrooms, corridors, and pick-up and drop off areas.
- Consider off-site physical environments for student use and where reasonably possible, inspect these sites and venues for events, excursions, camps and international student accommodation ahead of time.
- Consider risks arising from child-to-child and adult-to-child interactions in physical and online spaces.
- Consider cultural safety. Are there elements of the physical school environment that would be unwelcoming to Aboriginal people?
- Inform staff, volunteers and students where appropriate of identified risks and risk management strategies.
- Keep records of risk management activities, including risk assessments for camps and excursions.
- Provide training and refresher training to staff and relevant volunteers on risk management policies and procedures.

Supervise appropriately

- Be aware of risks posed by dark spaces, stairwells, private spaces and corners in school environments and develop strategies to address these risks.
- Inform students about spaces that are off limits, including out-of-bounds areas, storerooms and staff rooms.
- Nominate ratios of staff and volunteers to students for different types of activities.
- Keep records of any court orders in place regarding access or intervention orders and communicate to staff who can collect students in these circumstances.
- Use observation aids when appropriate, such as observation windows, concave mirrors, CCTV and consider the balance between appropriate visibility and respecting staff and students' privacy.
- Undertake works to improve lighting in poorly lit areas.
- Let students know how to raise concerns and where to go if they need help.
- Organise professional learning to discuss risk and harm prevention and hazard awareness with staff, volunteers and school council members.
- Keep records of incidents that occur, including accidents and medical events.
- Review incidents against policies and procedures, including seeking student feedback on how incidents were handled and how safe they felt, and make improvements as needed.

Promote student safety online

- Give students opportunities to learn, play, create, entertain, make new friends and stay connected.
- Facilitate age-appropriate ways to use the internet and social media for students utilising [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships](#), [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework](#), [Safe Schools](#) and also [Office of the e-Safety Commissioner](#)
- Inform students about online safety risks, including:
 - cyberbullying and trolling
 - invasion of privacy or digital surveillance
 - inappropriate sharing of images
 - phishing, harvesting of personal information or data theft
 - identity theft
 - malevolent software (malware)
 - offensive images and messages
 - age-inappropriate online content
 - impersonation/catfishing
 - grooming.
- Outline acceptable use of personal devices for students.
- Prohibit the use of student email addresses to sign up to unauthorised third-party services and communicate this expectation to students and the school community.
- Use filtering software on school-based devices.
- Encourage parents to use parental controls on personal devices.
- Advise students on how they can seek help from a trusted adult if they are exposed to inappropriate imagery or content that upsets them.
- Monitor online activity and respond to breaches of the online policies and procedures with appropriate consequences.

Promote acceptable behaviour by staff and volunteers

- Address acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour in online environments in the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct. Cover social media, email, instant messages, SMS and other apps in your code.

- Outline acceptable use of personal devices by staff and volunteers.
- Have guidelines for taking, storing and using images of children and students – including photos and video recordings.
- Deal with misuse of digital devices and unacceptable behaviour in accordance with school policy.
- Review communication protocols regularly, considering emerging services and technologies, such as disappearing message services.
- Uphold policies and report breaches in accordance with the school’s complaints handling processes and Code of Conduct.
- Provide avenues for students, families, carers, communities and staff to report online issues or concerns.
- Protect student privacy by supporting students to limit the amount of information provided online.
- Require school staff to undertake information security training to reduce the risk of online phishing or malware attacks.

Consider procurement and third parties

- Undertake child safety due diligence when engaging third parties. A new vendor presents new risks.
- Require vendors to provide evidence of compliance with the Child Safe Standards when establishing contracts to deliver services to students.
- Ensure a Privacy Impact Assessment is undertaken for any software handling student personal information.
- Make child safety a feature in legal contracts. The Victorian Government Common Funding Agreement has this as standard.
- Ask contractors to provide their Working with Children Clearance upon entry to the school.
- Provide contractors with a copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Nominate a staff member who is responsible for collecting child safety compliance information about third party providers.
- Keep records of due diligence processes.
- If a vendor is found to be non-compliant with the Child Safe Standards:
 - cease all activities with the vendor until the issue is resolved
 - if appropriate, inform the vendor of the non-compliance and provide an opportunity to rectify the problem, or
 - if the issue is serious, contact the relevant authorities.

Resources

- <https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-physical-and-online-environments-guidance>
- [Camps and Excursions](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Family violence: information for employees](#)
- [Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance and Toolkit](#)
- [Mobile Phones — Student Use](#)
- [OHS Purchasing](#)
- [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students](#)
- [Privacy Impact Assessments](#)
- [Procurement](#)
- [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#)

- [Reporting and Managing School Incidents \(including emergencies\)](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Safety - Visual and Performing Arts](#)
- Supervision of Students

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Standard last reviewed	20 th June 2022
Consultation	School Council Policy Sub Committee 14/6/2022 Staff 18/7/ 2022 Staff Consultative Committee Student Voice Team (SRC) 20/7/2022 Parent / Carer Community 20/7/2022
Approved by	Paul Maisey – Mossfiel PS Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 2024 The mandatory minimum review cycle for this policy is 2 years or following a relevant child safety incident