Mossfiel Primary School
Child Safety Standard 6:

Suitable Staff and Volunteers

20 June 2022

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the Mossfiel Primary School office in person or on 9749 1227.

Overview

This standard focuses on ensuring that people who work with children and young people are suitable and supported to act in a child safe way. Schools should make child safety and wellbeing a key consideration when recruiting staff and volunteers.

As part of this standard, Mossfiel PS will:

- develop robust procedures to ensure only suitable people work with children
- supervise staff and volunteers to ensure they prioritise the safety of children
- support staff and volunteers to understand their responsibilities.

Benefits of recruiting suitable staff and volunteers

Selecting suitable people to work with children is vital to protecting children from harm.
Good recruitment practices:

- create a safer workplace
- reduce the opportunity for harm to occur
- prevent, screen out or deter people who are unsuitable to work or volunteer with children
- recruit staff who uphold the school

Rigorous selection processes and appropriate training and supervision helps keep staff and students safe. This standard helps schools meet child safety and occupational health and safety legal requirements.

Actions

To comply with this standard, at minimum, Mossfiel PS will:

- make sure job advertisements have clear statements about:
    - the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
    - the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- advise job applicants about the child safety practices of the school, including the Code of Conduct
- make volunteers aware of the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
- screen school staff applicants:
    - sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance if they person is required to have one or any equivalent background checks such as Victorian Institute of Teaching registration
    - collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references
- screen volunteers:

    - sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance if they person is required to have one of any equivalent background check
    - consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer's role and, if reasonable and appropriate collect and record proof of identify, qualifications, history of working with children and references
- provide an induction to staff, volunteers and contractors engaged in child-related work, regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of the role
- ensure that induction addresses the school's:
    - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
    - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
    - procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse
- make sure staff, school council members, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities for:
    - children and students
    - information sharing and reporting obligations
    - recordkeeping obligations
- provide supervision and people management of staff and volunteers that focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

Government schools

- HR Practices for a child safe environment
- HR Web Induction
- Human resources: Recruitment in Schools (PDF, 622KB)
- Recruitment in Schools Policy
- Reportable Conduct
- Suitability for Employment Checks
- Visitors in Schools
- Visitors Policy template (login required)
- Volunteers in Schools
- Volunteers Policy template (login required)
- Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors

Child safe recruitment practices will be outlined in the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Decisions about the employment of staff or volunteers should prioritise child safety.
Families, children and young people should be informed about how the school prioritises child safety in recruitment, induction and ongoing supervision of staff.

Examples of actions to engage suitable staff and volunteers

Robust recruitment and screening

- Consider including students in the recruitment process to provide an authentic opportunity for them to have a say about decisions that impact them.

Advertising

- Ensure recruitment advertisements for staff in child connected work contain:
    - the job's requirements, including expected knowledge of child development appropriate to the role
    - an outline of duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
    - essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- Provide all job applicants with the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct and links to child safety resources.

Screening

- Include selection criteria relevant to the role, such as:
    - experience working with children, or particular groups of children, including children with a disability or Aboriginal children
    - engaging with families
    - child safety experience
    - cultural safety in their work.
- Screen all staff, volunteers, leaders and school governing board members for their suitability during recruitment.

Interviews

- Think carefully about who will be on the interview panel and ensure panel members have the right skills, experience and information to perform their role.
- Develop questions about child safety in job interviews.
- Seek referees for both staff and volunteers as appropriate, including their last employer, and overseas referees if they've worked overseas.
- Ask referees about the person's character and experience in working directly with children and young people.

Supervision and people management focused on child safety and wellbeing

- Undertake a risk assessment (refer to Standard 9) to determine what level of ongoing supervision and management is necessary to ensure staff and volunteers perform their role in a way that promotes child safety and wellbeing.
- Set out standards for child safety performance in staff contracts and state how performance will be assessed.
- Include child safety considerations in supervision between people managers and individual staff.
- Give people managers guidance on steps to take when managing a staff member whose behaviour raises child safety concerns, and when to escalate concerns about staff behaviour.
- Communicate regularly with staff and volunteers about the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct in supervision meetings, at staff meetings, in newsletters and staff updates.
- Provide refresher child safe training for staff and volunteers.
- Include child safety and wellbeing as a regular agenda item for staff meetings at all levels of the organisation.
- Include child safety and wellbeing goals in staff professional development plans.

Training and support to uphold child safety

- Refer to Standard 8 for further guidance on building child safety knowledge, skills and awareness.
- Nominate a child safety champion and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers.
- Provide induction that covers:
    - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
    - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
    - how to contribute to identifying, removing or reducing risks
    - recordkeeping and information sharing requirements
    - school values and philosophy
    - procedures for managing complaints
    - privacy and reporting protocols.
- Train all staff and volunteers as appropriate to their roles, on topics such as:
    - child safety (including family violence)
    - mandatory reporting
    - responding to student sexual offending
    - human rights and the rights of children
    - diversity and inclusion
    - harassment and bullying

    - cultural safety
    - privacy and information sharing.
- Cover important topics in your child safety training, including:
    - risk factors and signs of harm, including intentional and unintentional harm, physical or emotional harm, bullying or cyberbullying, abuse and neglect
    - how to identify and respond to child safety risks, especially for vulnerable students
    - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns
    - how to engage with families to support student's safety and wellbeing
    - how to appropriately handle or share sensitive information relating to a child's wellbeing health or safety.
- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example through staff meetings, newsletters, year level briefings.
- Inform staff and volunteers, as appropriate, of their responsibilities under the information sharing and family violence reforms.

Make child safety a key part of recruitment processes

- Provide role descriptions for staff and volunteers to clearly outline their duties and responsibilities regarding supervision, child safety and wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion. This may involve revising existing role descriptions.
- Make sure all staff, particularly those with mandatory reporting responsibilities, are aware of the up-to-date processes for making a report.
- Provide child safety champion/s with information to support their function relating to child safety, family violence and information sharing.
- Put a process in place to check staff and volunteers' working with children clearance status or equivalent background check on at least an annual basis.
- Include child safety in ongoing staff support, supervision and performance management processes.
- Align complaints processes with best practice, including the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Reportable Conduct requirements.
- Declare and manage any potential conflicts of interest, such as family or business relationships or close friendships.
- Provide clear avenues for staff to report concerns.
- Involve staff in after-action reviews when a child safety incident has occurred.

Resources

- https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-suitable-staff-volunteers-guidance
- Alcohol at School Events
- Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes
- Child protection privacy and information sharing
- Duty of Care
- Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance and Toolkit
- Privacy and Information Sharing
- Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations
- Recruitment in Schools
- Supervision of Students

Approval and review

Policy last reviewed	20th June 2022
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