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## **BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION**

Kensington Primary School (KPS) welcomes and recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community, assisting in our classrooms/with sports events/excursions/school concerts/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)* and the Child Safe Standards, KPS will require parent/ family volunteers and family members to provide the Office with a copy of their current Working With Children Check card. Volunteers may also be required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

## **DEFINITIONS**

*Child-related work:* work that usually involves direct contact with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional contact with children that is incidental to the work.

*Closely related family member:* parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

*Volunteer worker:* A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

*School work:* School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a School Council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the Principal or School Council
- Providing assistance in the work of the school as approved by the Principal or Principal nominee.
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools
- This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

## **PURPOSE**

To outline the processes that Kensington Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage all people who volunteer at KPS and who may have contact with students.

To provide a child safe environment and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

## **GUIDELINES / IMPLEMENTATION**

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that KPS volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that KPS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers who assist in the school when children are present to hold a current WWCC. Volunteers must produce their valid WWCC to the office for validation and to be photocopied for school record keeping purposes.

### **Volunteers working with student include:**

- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not
- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised. [This is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act* and must not be changed]
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily

participate in, the activity. [This is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act* and must not be changed]

- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, KPS may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion, for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications. Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

### **Volunteers involved in non child-related work**

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fundraising event set up and coordination, during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At KPS, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Check and may also be required to provide proof of ID/references/work history.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be required to provide a valid WWC Check from October 8<sup>th</sup> 2018. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, we believe that it is important that our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Check.

### **Management and Supervision**

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's Child Safety Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and our Child Safety Code of Conduct. The Principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at KPS.

KPS will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The Principal (or their nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in.

All volunteers will be provided with an induction in relation to KPS's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

The Principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, volunteers are required for the type of work being performed.

### **Compensation**

#### *Personal injury*

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

#### *Property damage*

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

#### *Public liability insurance*

The Department of Education and Training's Public Liability Insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in school work is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party damage to or
- the destruction of a third party's property.

### **RELEVANT RESOURCES (DET)**

- KPS Child Safe Policy
- KPS Child Protection Reporting Policy

- KPS Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Statement of Commitment KPS 2017

#### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's policy review cycle.

This Policy was approved by School Council: August 27<sup>th</sup> 2018

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Child Safe Policy sets out our school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe. It provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards to ensure the care, safety and wellbeing of all students in our school.

The Child Safe Policy applies to all staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people, across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

## **Statement of Commitment**

- Kensington Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Kensington Primary 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 consideration is given to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.
- Every person involved in Kensington Primary 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.

## **Principles**

We have a moral and legal responsibility to create a school environment where children are respected, their voices heard and they are safe and feel safe. In its planning, decision-making and operations, staff at Kensington Primary School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Our Students**

We empower the children in our school and involve them when making decisions, especially about

matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance and welcome people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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.

### Our Staff and Volunteers

We have clear expectations for our staff and volunteers about how to behave with children in our school. All of our staff and visitors 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. (Refer to KPS Visitors Policy).

### Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

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

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

### Recruitment

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. Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

If, during the recruitment process, a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

### Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our **Incident Reporting Form**, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored in the Principal's Office.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as a school take.

### Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, visitors or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it. (Refer to KPS Privacy Policy)

### Legislative Responsibilities

We take 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: Staff in our school 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. All Staff must respond to any allegation of child abuse following the Four Critical Actions as mandated by DET.

### Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks. These include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or visitors are to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

### Allegations, Concerns, Complaints

Our staff will take all allegations seriously and we have practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure that all children, families, staff and visitors know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report the suspicious behaviour.

#### **RELEVANT RESOURCES**

- **KPS Visitor Policy**
- **KPS Child Safe Code of Conduct**
- **FOUR Critical Actions for Schools - DET Document**
  - Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and suspicions of Child Abuse
- **Incident Report Template for Victorian Schools**
  - Responding to Suspected Child Abuse
- **KPS School staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child-safe environment**

#### **EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families, children and community members have the opportunity to contribute.

**This Policy was approved by Kensington School Council    Date: November 2016**

## **Introduction**

Kensington Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

## **Purpose**

This Child Safety Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes of ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal, Assistant Principal and school leaders of Kensington Primary School will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal, Assistant Principal and school leaders of Kensington Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

## **Acceptable Behaviours**

All staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to the school's Child Safe Policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.



## Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes<sup>1</sup>
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy<sup>2</sup> or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

## Evaluation

The Code of Conduct will be reviewed no later than December 2018 or earlier if legislative or other changes require in the interim.

**This Code of Conduct was approved by School Council**

**Date: November 2016**

## DEFINITIONS

**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-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**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.

**Proprietor** in relation to a government school, means the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

**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 governing authority** means, in the case of a government school:

- the Secretary; or
- a school council, as authorised by or under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006; or
- the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school or under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

**School staff** being an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;



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