



Metung Primary School

CHILD SAFETY COMMITMENT & CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

RATIONALE

Metung Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Metung Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse or neglect. Metung 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 attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Metung Primary School (staff, parents and students) has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children. Metung Primary School has zero tolerance towards child abuse or neglect and will act to protect all children from harm.

Children have the right to give their views and opinions about decisions that affect them and to be listened to. Empowerment is about helping children to have their say. Children are more likely to speak up about their concerns, about feeling unsafe, or make a complaint if they feel their views are valued and welcomed.

IMPLEMENTATION

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Metung 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; **refer to Bullying Prevention Policy and Student Code of Conduct**
- 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, grooming, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities; **refer to Mandatory Reporting Policy**
- 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
- Adhere to Ministerial Order 870 by;
 - Following DET child safe guidelines when recruiting staff
 - Developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating risk management procedures and policies to ensure child safety in all school environments **see risk management document**
- Metung Primary School understands that it is an offence to Fail to Disclose or Protect any child if there is reasonable belief an act of abuse may have occurred. www.justice.vic.gov.au



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CODE OF CONDUCT SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO CHILD SAFETY

- This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse, grooming 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 or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.
- The principal and staff of Metung Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and staff of Metung 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:

- 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, grooming or other child safety concerns to the Principal or the designated school leader.
- Discuss concerns with appropriate authorities such as Child First, Department of Health and Human Services or Victoria Police and follow their advice and recommendations.
- 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.
- Keeping immediate, accurate and confidential written records of concerns and disclosures whether they have been reported to authorities or not. These records are kept by the staff member and copies can be provided to the principal if the staff member chooses.



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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
- Fail to act if a student discloses abuse or concerns of abuse towards themselves or another child.
- 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, ethnicity or academic ability
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.). An exception to direct communication may be considered when that communication is reasonable in 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.

Whole school strategies that promote participation and empowerment of children include:

- Buddies program approach including our school values, 'Rise to the challenge', 'Make good choices', 'Own your own behaviour' and 'Accept others as they are', including strategies for empowerment
- Health Education including puberty and body changes education for grade 5/6 students biannually
- Digital Technologies Policy & Acceptable Use Agreement
- Protective Behaviours

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/identify.aspx>

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard7_Guidance.pdf

If you have concerns regarding the safety of a child please contact one of the following:

- Principal or staff at Metung Primary School
- DHHS Child Protection on 131 278.
- Your local police station



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RELATED POLICIES

- Bullying Prevention policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Digital Technologies (Internet Social Media & Digital Devices) policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Visitors Policy
- Duty Of Care policy
- Camps and Excursions policy
- Child Safety Reporting policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy
- Mobile Phones policy
- Working with Children Checks policy
- Photographing, Filming and Recording Students

REVIEW PERIOD

School council approved this policy in **August 2018**.

This policy was last updated in **August 2018** and is scheduled for review in **2022**.