

Child Safe Policy

Rationale

Albert Park College is committed to child safety. Children should be safe in all school environments and outside school hours when in our care.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children enrolled in our school.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures. We understand our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks as much as we can. Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

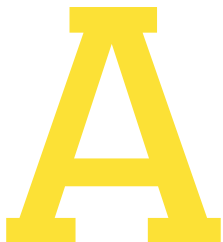
We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Guidelines:

1. Our children:

- 1.1. This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions through our Student Representative Council, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
- 1.2. We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are made welcome. In particular we:
 - 1.2.1. promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
 - 1.2.2. promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) children
 - 1.2.3. promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - 1.2.4. ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate if they meet the selection criteria of our Specialist school

2. Our staff and volunteers:



- 2.1. This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school.
 - 2.2. We ask that all of our staff and volunteers agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
3. Support and supervision:
- 3.1. Support and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
 - 3.2. 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 support our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
 - 3.3. 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 children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability. We remain committed to the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) children
 - 3.4. 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.
4. Recruitment:
- 4.1. We use the recruitment processes of the Department of Education and Training. We take all reasonable steps to employ highly skilled people. 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.
 - 4.2. All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.
 - 4.3. We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.
5. Fair procedures for personnel:



- 5.1. 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.
 - 5.2. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using an incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.
 - 5.3. 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.
6. Privacy:
- 6.1. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents 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.
7. Legislative responsibilities:
Our school takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:
- 7.1. 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.
 - 7.2. Failure to protect: People of authority 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.
 - 7.3. Any personnel who are mandatory reporters will comply with their duties.
8. Risk management:
- 8.1. In Victoria, schools are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.
 - 8.2. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments.
9. Regular review:
- 9.1. This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute.
10. Allegations, concerns and complaints:



- 10.1. Our school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are supported to deal appropriately with allegations.
- 10.2. We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.
- 10.3. Any allegations, concerns or complaints should be made to the Child Safety Officer or Principal, or can be emailed to albert.park.co@edumail.vic.gov.au.
- 10.4. We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.
- 10.5. 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:
 - 10.5.1. a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
 - 10.5.2. behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
 - 10.5.3. someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
 - 10.5.4. observing suspicious behaviour.