



DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL

Child Safe Environments Policy

Preamble

Ministerial Order 870 is a key part of the Victorian Government's response to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Inquiry's Betrayal of Trust report made a number of recommendations aimed at protecting children from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Purpose

The child safe environments policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope

All staff, volunteers and contractors; whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy will apply across a range of school forums (e.g. in-school, camps, excursions, online) and outside of school hours.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Dandenong High 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, with particular attention 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.

- Dandenong High School has zero tolerance for child abuse
- Dandenong High 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
- Every person involved in Dandenong High 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
- The use of corporal punishment is prohibited
- In its planning, decision-making and operations, Dandenong High School will:
 - Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
 - Value and empower people 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
 - 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

A child-safe culture

Dandenong High School's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/School Engagement Policy

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the School's Engagement Policy. The School's Engagement Policy sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Refer to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics

Human resources practices and training

The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with them. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations and procedures for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Refer to the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures for further details

Risk reduction and management

The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

Listening to children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. The collection, use and storage of information is included in school policies.

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafef

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving – 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 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.

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 internal network 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 staff means:

In a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

Related policies:

- School Policy Advisory Guide – <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed as part of the School's yearly review cycle

School Council Endorsement date: 21st May 2019