

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the school's administration office.

PURPOSE

The MINDALK Primary School *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

CONTEXT STATEMENT

MINDALK Primary School is a Supported Inclusion School located in Truganina in the City of Wyndham. A Supported Inclusion School is a local government school with additional professional capabilities and facilities designed to cater to a higher proportion of students with disability. Students with disability will be provided with enhanced support to receive high-quality, evidence-based educational provision alongside their peers without disability in a safe, accessible, inclusive and supportive environment.

MINDALK Primary School can enrol 575 students, including 50 places for students with a disability. Further information regarding enrolment is contained within our school's *Enrolment Policy*.

SCOPE

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school staff

- school governing authority
- student
- volunteer.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

MINDALK Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning and asexual (LGBTIQA+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School leadership team

Our school leadership team, comprising the Principal, Assistant Principal and Learning Specialists and Leading Teachers (School Improvement Team – SIT) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principals and Assistant Principals:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings

- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the *Child Safety Code of Conduct* to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe when hiring school council employees. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the Principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

MINDALK Primary School has nominated a child safety champion to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In addition to these responsibilities, our child safety champion is also responsible for:

- Utilising the weekly staff briefing to discuss concerns around child safety
- Discussing and planning for opportunities to discuss child safety with year levels.

Our Principal and child safety champion are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*. Anyone in our school community should approach the Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available

- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the *Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*, and *Child Safety Risk Register*.

Our school has also established a Wellbeing Team who meet weekly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Wellbeing Team provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Wellbeing Team also monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Our *Child Safety Code of Conduct* sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The *Child Safety Code of Conduct* also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

MANAGING RISKS TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our *Child Safety Risk Register* is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our Wellbeing Team monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions in the *Child Safety Risk Register* at least annually.

As a Supported Inclusion School, we pay particular attention to the safety and diverse needs of our students with disabilities, through measures such as additional yard duty supervision zones, regular safety checks of accessible play equipment and researching and/or inspecting the accessibility of sites and venues for events, excursions and camps ahead of time.

ESTABLISHING A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

At MINDALK Primary School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

- Providing frequent and authentic opportunities to gain family and community perspectives and feedback
- Training and professional development of staff
- Supporting opportunities for individualised learning for Koorie students
- Establishing connections to indigenous perspectives within Units of Learning
- Ensuring our school events, assemblies and activities acknowledge and celebrate culture
- Flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds and displaying plaques/signs outside our main entrance that Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners
- We ensure our built environment and website demonstrates an appreciation and acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Our *Action Plan – Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety* outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children, students and their families. This plan links to the Department of Education's [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan](#).

STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

To support child safety and wellbeing at MINDALK Primary School, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, our school values and the School-wide Positive Behaviour Support approach.

We inform students of their rights through our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and School-wide Positive Behaviour Support approach and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns on our website or at the school's administration office.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Students can contribute to and provide feedback on child safety and school decision-making through the Junior School Councillor roles, Student Representative Council and other, less explicit forums such as surveys and suggestion boxes. Friendship, inclusiveness and peer support are promoted through the Buddies Program, School-wide Positive Behaviour Support implementation, Units of Learning, break time clubs and our Social and Emotional Learning sessions.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at MINDALK Primary School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- Seeking input from families through our digital platform, newsletter, school council and parent meetings.
- Having all our child safety policies and procedures available for students and parents on our website or at the administration office
- Using the weekly newsletters to inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- Displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters across the school with versions in child-friendly language accessible to all students.
- Providing translation or interpreter services for our culturally and linguistically diverse families to help ensure they understand our child safety policies and practices.

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQA+.

Our school has several measures in place to support the safety and equity of our students with additional and specific needs including:

- Using case management, Student Support Groups and developing Individual Education Plans to support students with a disability, students in Out of Home Care, Koorie students and students with other complex needs
- Providing sensory areas, accessible play spaces and wider corridors to support our students with disabilities
- Referring students to school-based wellbeing supports, Student Support Services, allied health professionals or other appropriate external support services or agencies where appropriate
- Providing a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+, including having a dedicated day of celebrating diversity and participating in the Safe Schools program
- Offering targeted support programs and services for students with English as an Additional Language
- Using contemporary, culturally sensitive and inclusive examples when discussing families, relationships or professions and vocations and using images of students with diverse characteristics in school publications to reflect the school community.

Our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and *Inclusion and Diversity Policy* provide more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

SUITABLE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

At MINDALK Primary School, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#).

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration

- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (this document)
- the *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- the *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures* and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done through performance reviews and compliance with the annual 'Statement of Expectation'.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

At MINDALK Primary School:

- We conduct formal and informal observations of staff working with children
- Our leadership team regularly walks around classrooms and the school yard
- We have systems in place for recording information on staff conduct and any concerns raised
- We intervene early and provide feedback to staff if we identify any concerning or unsafe conduct to prevent harm before it occurs.
- We determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures, updating any child safety policy, procedure or practice where gaps or improvements are identified
- We have a log of complaints and concerns to allow us to monitor areas for improvement in our child safety policies, procedures and practices.
- Child Safety is a standing agenda item in the weekly staff briefing and weekly school leadership meetings
- We monitor and manage child safety risks using a risk register.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our *Volunteers Policy*, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

CHILD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND AWARENESS

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

As a Supported Inclusion School, we are aware that staff have additional responsibilities in managing the child safety and wellbeing of our students. Students with disabilities are more vulnerable to bullying or abuse and they may have difficulty in communicating or reporting any concerns they may have. To further address this, we have:

- robust child safety policies and procedures that are regularly reviewed and updated, with input from students, families, and staff.
- ongoing staff training and education on child safety (for both physical and online environments), identifying signs of abuse, and responding to disclosures.
- a culture where students feel comfortable raising concerns and where they have clear channels in a variety of verbal and non-verbal formats, for reporting issues.

School council training and education

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- MINDALK Primary School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

COMPLAINTS AND REPORTING PROCESSES

MINDALK Primary School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's *Complaints Policy*.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) must follow our *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending.

Our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and *Bullying Prevention Policy* cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

COMMUNICATIONS

MINDALK Primary School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (this document), *Child Safety Code of Conduct*, and the *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure*
- displaying PROTECT posters and child-friendly infographics in classrooms and communal spaces
- updates in our school newsletter and digital platform
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

MINDALK Primary School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

REVIEW OF CHILD SAFETY PRACTICES

At MINDALK Primary School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

The Principal will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Related Department of Education policies

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Preventing and Addressing Racism in schools](#)

POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW

The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	July 2025
Consultation	Consultation with students, staff and parents and/or School Council to take place in Term 1, 2026 (or as soon as the School Council is appointed)
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Term 1, 2026 To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 2 years thereafter*

*The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* will be reviewed earlier if a significant incident occurs or due to legislative changes.