



Leadership in a Child Safe Environment

Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities.

All staff must act to protect children from abuse in our organisation, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.

Our school fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults should know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Governance in a child safe environment

Leadership will take preventative, proactive and participatory approaches to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school should be a paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership responsibilities

The principal is responsible to lead and collaborate with the leadership team to embed a culture of child safety in our school. The principal will lead, working collaboratively with the leadership team, in protecting children from abuse, and must be made aware of child abuse allegations and risks and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

All allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by our school. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection. If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Suitable employees and volunteers

Our school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children, in line with the DET Recruitment in Schools Guide. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager.

Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

Our school will ensure that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. The principal and/or assistant principal will be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

Promote inclusion

Our school will be inclusive to all children and families. Our school will establish a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters
- the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring our school is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making

Our school will promote the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. Enabling and promoting the participation of children includes:

- supporting children and young people to understand their rights, contribute to child safety planning and raise concerns
- promoting and encouraging children's participation in decision making
- valuing and respecting children's opinions
- seeking children's views about what makes them feel safe and unsafe
- establishing an environment of trust and inclusion that enables children to ask questions and speak up if they are worried or feeling unsafe



Our Policy Commitment to Child Safety

Ballarat North Primary School is committed to child safety.

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.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Ballarat North Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Ballarat North Primary School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, 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.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We 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 in our school.

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers 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.

Training and supervision

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

Ballarat North Primary School 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 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 organisation'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. Inappropriate behaviour will be reported including to 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 organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

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

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. 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.

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 an organisation take.

Privacy

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. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Ballarat North Primary School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation)
- Family violence
- Emotional abuse

- Neglect (including medical neglect)
- Grooming

The staff at Ballarat North Primary School are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

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, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

Regular review

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. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

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.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

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 it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Definitions

****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.

****Child abuse** includes:

- (a) any act committed against a child involving—
 - (i) a sexual offence; or
 - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming); and
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - (i) physical violence; or
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) serious neglect of a child.



Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers and School Council members of Ballarat North Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of Ballarat North Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Ballarat North Primary School child safe policy at all times and upholding our statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal or a member of the leadership team, and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal or a member of the leadership team.
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- put children at risk of abuse
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our Principal's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the principal of Ballarat North Primary School.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Child Safe Recruitment Checklist

Robust recruitment processes help ensure the best applicants are employed. From advertising through to conducting interviews and checking the background of applicants, it is important that each step is done consistently and thoroughly.

Selection criteria

We will develop appropriate selection criteria for any advertised position to reduce the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. We will also ensure that applicants have the specific knowledge and skills required for the position.

Examples of appropriate selection criteria may include:

'Must have experience working with children.'

'Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children.'

Applicants should have the opportunity to indicate their understanding of, or any experience they have in working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds.

Advertising

Ballarat North Primary School promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability. When advertising positions we will ensure advertisements include statements that promote safety. Such statements could be similar to those below:

'Ballarat North Primary School promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children with a disability.'

'This organisation promotes the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, and encourages applications from Aboriginal peoples. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with Aboriginal children and/or communities.'

'This organisation promotes the safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and encourages applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.'

Interviews

The interview process is a very important step in selecting the right people to work at Ballarat North Primary School and in identifying any people who may pose a risk to children. Sufficient time will be allowed to plan and prepare for the interview process, and form an interview panel with the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview, ensuring that all panel members are clear on what the position requires.

Interviews may include open-ended style of behavioural-based questions which will give the panel insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. Some useful questions may include:

'Tell us about why you want to work with children?'

'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?'

'Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?'

Pre-employment screening

Ballarat North Primary School will screen applicants (including paid and volunteer positions) in an effort to help prevent people who may abuse children from entering our school.

Interview panels will check if applicants have any criminal convictions, formal disciplinary action taken against them, or any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct.

A police record check will be conducted.

Working with Children Check

Under the *Working with Children Act 2005*, people who are doing child-related work, and who are not exempt, need a Working with Children Check. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers. Applicants will provide evidence of their Working with Children Check, or evidence of their application for a Working with Children Check.

Referee checks

Interview panels will always speak to at least two referees to help assess an applicant's character and skills. When speaking with the referees, panels should seek to establish the referee's relationship with the applicant, including:

- how long the applicant and referee worked together
- the specifics of the position
- the applicant's perceived strengths and weaknesses
- whether the referee would hire the person again, particularly in a role working with children, and whether they have any concerns about the applicant working with children.

Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in the school, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the principal, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern

- Explain that your organisation has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the Principal, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

We need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. We will be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible.

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, we will ensure a culturally appropriate response by seeking local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. Children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident. If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Legal responsibilities

Mandatory Reporting

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses, registered psychologists, and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic).

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse, and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Ballarat North Primary School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#).

Child in need of protection

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS or Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS Child Protection, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

At Ballarat North Primary School we also encourage all staff to make a referral to Child FIRST when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#).

Reportable Conduct

Our school must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of an allegation of 'reportable conduct'.

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child; or
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

Our principal must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health staff and school council employees.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they should notify the Regional Director.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#).

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

“Reasonable excuse” is defined by law and includes:

- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department’s *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Failure to disclose offence](#).

Failure to protect offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the Department’s *School Policy and Advisory Guide*: [Failure to protect offence](#).

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.

For more information about this offence and reporting obligations see: [Child Exploitation and Grooming](#).

Child Abuse Incident Report

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. Ballarat North Primary School may provide this resource to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern in our school. Staff may also use this resource to record disclosures.

All incident reports must be stored securely.

Incident details

| | |
|---|--|
| Date of incident: | |
| Time of incident: | |
| Location of incident: | |
| Name(s) of child/children involved: | |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved: | |

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No

Yes, Aboriginal

Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |

Please describe the incident

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| When did it take place? | |
| Who was involved? | |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| What did you see? | |
| Other information | |

Parent/carer/child use

| | |
|---|--|
| Date of incident: | |
| Time of incident: | |
| Location of incident: | |
| Name(s) of child/children involved: | |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved: | |

Office use:

| | |
|--|--|
| Date incident report received: | |
| Staff member managing incident: | |
| Follow-up date: | |
| Incident ref. number: | |

Has the incident been reported?

| | |
|--|--|
| Child protection | |
| Police | |
| Another third party (please specify): | |

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes No

Strategies to Embed a Culture of Child Safety

Ballarat North Primary School is committed to embedding a child safe culture by implementing the following strategies.

| School Council | | |
|--|--|--|
| Strategy | Action | Responsibility |
| The school governing authority (School Council) communicates that it has zero tolerance of child abuse . | Statement of commitment to appear on the school website. Statement made at the beginning of each year in the school newsletter. | Principal & School Council President Principal & School Council President |
| Child safety is included as an item for discussion at meetings of the school governing authority. | Child safety to be included on School Council agenda as required. | Principal & School Council President |
| Child safety strategies are developed and enhanced through ongoing review of the effectiveness of practice. | This statement to be reviewed annually by School Council. | Principal & School Council President |
| An appropriate reporting process is in place for child abuse that includes overseeing outcomes. | This statement that outlines the reporting process is developed and reviewed annually by School Council. | Principal |
| The school governing authority oversees the implementation and improvement of child safety strategies. | Achieved through actions listed above. | All members of School Council |
| The school governing authority communicates with the school community about the school's child safety strategies and their implementation. | Statement of commitment to child safety appears on the school website. Statement made at the beginning of each year in the school newsletter. | Principal & School Council President Principal & School Council President |
| The school reports on child safety in its annual report. | Mention of child safety made in the 'wellbeing section' of the Annual Report. | Principal |

| School staff (includes contractors and volunteers) | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Strategy | Action | Responsibility |
| Ensuring awareness of the child safety strategies in place at our school and the allocated roles and responsibilities assigned to staff. | <p>Induction in child safety for all staff (including contractors & volunteers)</p> <p>Display Child Protect and 4 Critical Action Posters in staffroom and include in Staff Information Handbook.</p> <p>Leadership team to agenda child safety as required.</p> <p>Child safety is an item for discussion at whole staff meetings as required. In a calendar year this will include training with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating our whole school approach to child safety and the responsibilities of all staff in acting accordingly • Detecting inappropriate behaviour • Encouragement to report and the process for reporting inappropriate behaviour. | Principal and Assistant Principal |
| Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety to be carried out. | <p>Pre-employment checks to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking of identification for staff as part of recruitment. • Criminal history checks and confirming currency of Working with Children Check/Victorian Institute of Teaching registration. • Querying gaps in employment history. • Reference checks with previous employers and other relevant contacts. | Principal |
| Foster a culture of openness with approachable and supportive managers. | Leadership to always role model a willingness to listen and respond appropriately to all situations without favour or bias. | Principal and Assistant Principal |

| Children | | |
|--|---|--|
| Strategy | Action | Responsibility |
| Children are made aware of how to detect and report inappropriate behaviour. Children are encouraged to report inappropriate behaviour. | A protective behaviours program (or equivalent) to be implemented across the school each year. The program will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping children identify situations that 'don't feel right' • Informing children as to how they can report inappropriate behaviour • Encouragement for children to report inappropriate behaviour | Class teachers |
| The school has nominated contact persons that children can approach in relation to child safety. | Nominated contact people to be class teacher, Principal or Assistant Principal. | Class teachers, Principal and Assistant Principal. |
| The school has child safety reporting procedures. | A document outlining child safety reporting procedures to be developed and shared with staff and parents. This document to appear on the school website and in the staff information folder. | Principal and Assistant Principal. |
| The school refers children to other agencies for support if needed. | Considered response is implemented in all cases where child safety concerns have been raised, including referral to other agencies. | Principal and Assistant Principal. |

| Environment | | |
|---|---|--|
| Strategy | Action | Responsibility |
| The school has child safety strategies in place for all physical school environments. | <p>The school has a Child Safe policy and risk assessment that includes strategies for managing physical environments. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ regularly reviewing the physical environment to ensure all risks are identified and managed ○ assessing new or changed physical environments for child safety risks ○ supervising or monitoring activities. | Principal and Assistant Principal. |
| The school has child safety strategies for its online environments. | <p>The school has a Digital Technologies Policy and Student Acceptable Use Agreement to manage and monitor online learning environments and behaviours.</p> <p>Strategies are also outlined in the school's Child Safe Risk Assessment.</p> | Principal, Assistant Principal and IT Leader |
| Visitors are appropriately screened and supervised. | The school has a Child Safe policy and Visitors Policy that includes strategies to minimise the chances of visitors posing a risk to students. | Principal and Assistant Principal. |



Strategies to Promote Child Empowerment and Participation

At Ballarat North Primary School children will feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. Ballarat North Primary School has a simple and accessible process that helps children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All personnel working or visiting our school need to have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

Rationale

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. We will provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse.

We will ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children, and all children are informed about this.

At Ballarat North Primary School we will :

- Consider access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.
- Gather feedback from children, for example through surveys, focus groups and circle time, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implement improvements based on this feedback.
- Enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible.
- Ensure services are accessible for people with a disability.
- Ensure Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Raise awareness in the community about children's rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites and newsletters.

Through successfully implementing the above strategies we expect all children at Ballarat North Primary School will feel confident in being able to:

- Use reporting procedures when they feel unsafe and have access to all relevant support and materials.
- Understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- Understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to school staff, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
- Feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- Feel empowered to contribute to the school's understanding and treatment of child safety
- Know and understand that their reports of concern are responded to appropriately