



## Standard Four Child Safe Human Resource Practices

### Statement from Department of Education and Training (DET):

Schools must have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse. They should foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations. Robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, schools need to provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

### Implementation Guidelines for Standard 4:

#### 1. Child Safety Officer:

The Principal will fulfil the role of child safety officer and will be the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and to provide support to other personnel. The Principal will ensure that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with the school's legal requirements and policies and procedures.

A designated child safety officer also provides a single contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with our school.

#### 2. Recruitment and Selection of staff:

- Design and adhere to recruitment and selection processes that focus on:
  - ~ factors that may indicate a risk to child safety, such reluctance to undergo a Working with Children Check or to provide evidence of a Working with Children Check
  - ~ understanding of child safety
  - ~ understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture
  - ~ understanding of and respect for cultural and / or linguistic diversity
  - ~ understanding of and respect for the needs of children with a disability
  - ~ declaration of prior conduct, including of any disciplinary action taken against them by an employer, any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct by them by any court or tribunal of any kind, and/or any investigations they have been subject to by an employer, law enforcement agency, any integrity body, or similar in Australia or in another country
  - ~ undertaking face-to-face interviews
  - ~ police record checks (including personal identification checks)
  - ~ checking referees and qualifications
  - ~ use of probation periods

#### 3. Training:

- Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility
- Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal peoples, by encouraging awareness of and ability to talk about Aboriginal history and stories.
- Support staff to build resilience and cope with child abuse incidences, through training and counselling.
- Regularly provide information, training and education for School Council, staff and volunteers about child safety on a needs basis, including:
  - ~ what child abuse is
  - ~ how to identify and reduce child abuse risks

- ~ understanding and appreciating Aboriginal culture and other cultures and languages they may engage with in their role
- ~ the importance of ensuring culturally safe environments for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and how to promote this
- ~ the importance of ensuring safe environments for children with a disability, and how to promote this
- Training can be formal such as:
  - ~ higher education training and accreditation
  - ~ training offered by external organisations
  - ~ training developed and delivered internally
  - ~ on-the-job training meeting key objectives
- Training can also be informal such as:
  - ~ inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
  - ~ inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
  - ~ inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
  - ~ internal mentoring and coaching.

#### **4. Induction:**

- New staff will need support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff might need to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.
- Training and support also promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by new employees and volunteers to ensure that the organisation meets its duty of care when providing services to children.
- Training should enhance the skills and knowledge of your employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.
- New employees and volunteers working with children need to receive training in the following areas:
  - ~ identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
  - ~ policies and procedures (including the code of conduct and child safe policy)
  - ~ legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse
  - ~ how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including the school's reporting guidelines
  - ~ cultural awareness training.

#### **5. Supervision:**

- Supervision of employees and volunteers will be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed.
- As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate.

#### **6. Performance and development review:**

- A proactive performance development strategy will be used to improve employees and volunteers skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.
- Performance will be measured against the school's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards will align with those of the code of conduct and child safe policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of your organisation and appropriate behaviour.

#### **7. Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures:**

- Disciplinary procedures should be accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures should be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.
- Employees and volunteers should be aware of:
  - ~ reporting and disciplinary procedures
  - ~ how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within the organisation
  - ~ their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Maldon Primary School has a code of conduct which outlines expected standards of appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children. (See Student Engagement Policy)

Children and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Our policy 'Addressing Parents' Concerns' clearly outlines what members of the school community should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

**Maldon PS will have successfully implemented this standard by ensuring:**

- interviews, reference checks and Working with Children Checks are undertaken for staff and volunteers
- recruitment processes select appropriate staff
- staff (and volunteers where necessary) are trained in child safety, and understand and practise appropriate behaviour
- staff (and volunteers where necessary) are aware of the risk of child abuse, how to identify inappropriate behaviours in other adults, indicators of abuse in children and how to respond
- staff (and volunteers where necessary) are aware of the organisation's commitment to child safety and their duty of care requirements
- staff (and volunteers where necessary) can easily access and understand the school's Statement of Commitment to child safety and relevant policies
- staff and volunteers know how to ensure the cultural safety of, and engage safely with, Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- staff and volunteers know how to ensure the safety of, and engage safely with, children with a disability.

**Relevant Documents for Standard Four:**

\*Student Engagement Policy

\*Engaging with Students with Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, and Students with a Disability