



Belle Vue Primary School STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN (Child Safe Standard 7)

DESCRIPTION

Belle Vue Primary School ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. We strive to provide simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All staff at the 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. Some organisations do not have simple and accessible processes assisting children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

All Victorian schools are required to meet the seven Child Safe Standards, to ensure that they are well prepared to protect children from abuse, family violence and neglect. Requirements for these standards are set out in Ministerial Order 870 (MO 870) and compliance is monitored by the VRQA.

Under CSS-7 schools are required to deliver appropriate education about the following elements:

- Element 1 - Standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- Element 2 - Healthy and Respectful Relationships (including sexuality)
- Element 3 - Resilience
- Element 4 - Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention

MO 870 also specifies that schools must promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user-friendly to children.

ELEMENT ONE: STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING THE SCHOOL

Why is the development of standards of behaviour important?

At Belle Vue Primary School the right for students to learn and feel safe is underpinned by clearly articulated and well-promoted standards of behaviour (or codes of conduct).

These standards are outlined in the following documents:

- The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- The Child Safe Standards

These standards and policies of behaviour are communicated across the school community (students, staff and parents/carers), setting a positive tone for safe and

supportive relationships, articulating clear boundaries and supported pathways for students.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct is acknowledged by all families during Getting to Know You Interviews at the start of each year. The code of conduct is also displayed across the school including individual classrooms.

These standards and policies are also available on the school's website.

Why engage students in the development of these standards of behaviour?

The process for setting, promoting and reviewing standards of behaviour for students is central to their success. Belle Vue Primary School students take an active part in setting and embedding standards of behaviour, building their ownership of school culture and empowering them to seek support and make positive changes within their environment. This is achieved through the following:

- The Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Social and Emotional Education program (including Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships/You Can Do It)
- Involvement in the National Day against Bullying and Violence

In developing this policy schools are required to:

- work with the school community to set/review shared values and a vision
- consider if the school environment is inclusive and empowering and provides opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making.

The school also raises staff awareness of the following department initiatives which can be used to complement the existing Social and Emotional Education Program:

- eSmart - a framework to support schools in the creation of a cyber-safe or eSmart environment. Victorian schools have been funded to participate in the initiative and are supported to develop their school cyber safety policy and implement strategies to build a respectful and caring school community.
- BullyStoppers - a wide range of content to support students, parents, teachers and principals to work together to make schools safe and supportive. There are interactive learning modules for teachers and students and fact sheets with practical steps for keeping safe online.

ELEMENT TWO: HEALTHY AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS (INCLUDING SEXUALITY) and ELEMENT THREE: RESILIENCE

Why is the delivery of education about respectful relationships, resilience and sexuality important?

Social and emotional learning is a critical part of school education and is mandated within the Victorian Curriculum. Research shows us that:

- equipping students with the skills to build positive relationships and communicate respectfully is essential preparation for productive and healthy adult lives

- building resilience (the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity) has a positive impact on both social and academic outcomes, and is particularly critical for students who may be impacted by abuse
- students who are well informed about sexuality are more likely to make positive and informed decisions and less likely to place themselves at risk in adolescence.

Belle Vue Primary School's Social and Emotional education program seeks to create a classroom learning environment where student voice, strengths and abilities are acknowledged and celebrated. Explicit teaching take place across the school:

- Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships
- You Can Do It Keys (Confidence, Resilience, Getting Along, Persistence and Organisation) –
- Kindness – Prep to Grade 6 ; staff and the wider community using activities from Random Acts of Kindness
- Growth Mindsets – changing the way we think about our learning
- Sex Education program for Grade 5/6 students that it is in alignment with the learning standards under Personal and Social Capability and Health and Physical Education within the Victorian Curriculum
- Life Education Van

Why engage parents/carers in the delivery of social and emotional learning?

Parents/carers and schools are critical partners. By equipping parents/carers with information about their child's learning, schools can support parents to continue learning within the home environment and build strong consistent messages.

Belle Vue Primary School involves parents and carers using the following methods:

- Newsletter articles such as information on the Child Safe Standards or the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence.
- Parent information sessions on the school's social and emotional education program such as Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships/You Can Do It

ELEMENT FOUR: CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Why is the delivery of child abuse awareness and prevention education important?

The primary objective of child abuse awareness and prevention education is to help to keep children safe from child abuse. School-based child abuse awareness and prevention programs have been found to increase children's capacity to disclose abuse.

Belle Vue Primary School ensures that all teaching staff are aware of the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships resource and use it to complement the existing social and emotional education program. This allows child abuse awareness and prevention to be embedded into the social and emotional program such as through the following topics:

- Topic One: Emotional Literacy- students are supported to build their self-awareness of emotion, their emotional vocabulary and their capacity to identify when they feel safe or unsafe.
- Topic Four: Problem Solving- students are supported to build their capacity to respond to situations where they may be at risk of abuse or experiencing abuse and to avoid risk.

- Topic Six: Help Seeking- students are supported in their capacity to identify when problems are too large to solve alone, to establish a safety network and rehearse help-seeking strategies.
- Topic Eight: Positive Gender Relations- students are introduced to: the concept of No-Go-Tell (a three step response to harm); body parts and safe and unsafe touching; and to the definitions of abuse. Students are also supported to identify ‘good’ and ‘bad’ secrets.

Knowing how to respond to disclosures of abuse is critical in keeping children safe and is set out within the [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Child Abuse within Victorian Schools](#).

Mandatory Reporting

At Belle Vue Primary School, all mandated school staff must undertake the Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module annually. We also encourage all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the school’s Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures as well as the Department’s *School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations*.

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL

DATE:

Date	Version Number:	Update information	Next Review:
7 December 2016	1.0	N/A	December 2018
3 May 2019	2.0	Updated as part of review using DET information from Protect resource.	May 2021