



Belle Vue Primary School GOOD LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE IN A CHILD SAFE SCHOOL (Child Safe Standard 1)

Child Safe Environment

A culture of child safety within any organisation is essential for reducing the risk of harm to children.

Belle Vue Primary School will act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We do this by providing a culture of child safety embedded throughout our school so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. This culture has been achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of Belle Vue Primary School. Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives.

At Belle Vue Primary School, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Belle Vue Primary School is inclusive to all children and families. It establishes 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 that Belle Vue Primary School is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

Children and adults 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.

School Leadership

Leadership at Belle Vue Primary School takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership at Belle Vue is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety, including the use of the tools provided by the education department. The leadership team takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, and are aware of child abuse allegations and risks, and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Belle Vue Primary School will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. 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

Child Safe Policy

The school's child safe policy outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. All staff are made aware of the school's Child Safe Policy. Regular reviews of the Child Safety Policy take place as appropriate and amendments are made in line with regular risk management strategies. The latest version of the policy is available on the school's website.

Code of Conduct

Belle Vue Primary School has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) developed the Code of Conduct as required by Part 2.6 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Code of Conduct is a set of principles or standards for the behaviour and conduct of all Victorian teachers in the Victorian Government Teaching Service and the non-Government sector.

The following principles are of particular relevance:

Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.

Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. This includes the use of digital technology and social media which can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

As part of its Student Engagement, Management and Welfare Policy, Belle Vue Primary School has developed a specific Student Code of Conduct that encourages appropriate behaviour between children.

Screening Processes

Belle Vue Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, it will ensure it includes:

- Selection criteria in job descriptions
- Police record and identity checks
- Working with Children Checks where required
- Face-to-face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager

Training and Supervision

Belle Vue Primary School ensures 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. Staff are informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements as part of their initial, and annual, induction to the school and are provided with supporting documentation in their staff handbook. Updates take place annually as part of Staff Performance and Development. Copies of staff Mandatory Reporting certificates are collected and held by the school.

The principal, leadership team and the Welfare Co-ordinator (Child Safety Officer) understand their responsibilities. The Welfare Co-ordinator is the person who has knowledge of child safety issues, and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

Identifying and Reducing Risk of Abuse

The process for reporting concerns about child safety (including confidentiality) are set out in the school's Child Protection Reporting Policy and Procedures (Including Mandatory Reporting).

In addition, Belle Vue Primary School adopts an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how the school identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks. Risk management strategies are informed by the tools provided by the education department. Any risk management strategy is inclusive to all children and families including Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Promoted Inclusion

Belle Vue Primary School is inclusive to all children and families. In particular, establishes 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 that Belle Vue Primary School is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

Promotion of the Participation and Empowerment of Children

Belle Vue Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. Belle Vue Primary School provides opportunities for children to express their views on the student Code of Conduct, and then incorporates this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through Junior School Council meetings; suggestion boxes and feedback sessions.

Belle Vue Primary School endeavours to listen to children and take their ideas or concerns seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.

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Belle Vue Primary School CHILD SAFE POLICY (Child Safe Standard 2)

Commitment to Child Safety

Belle Vue Primary 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.

Belle Vue Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Belle Vue Primary 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. Particular attention will be 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.

Every person involved in Belle Vue Primary 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.

IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF ABUSE PHONE 000.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants at Belle Vue Primary School. 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.

Valuing Diversity

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

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.

Our organisational culture 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 Belle Vue Primary School'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 (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including 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. Belle Vue Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

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. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information.

We carry out reference checks and require proof of police record checks where applicable 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. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

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 form¹, 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

Belle Vue Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.²
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.³
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.⁴

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 (for example, any doors

² A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

³ Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

⁴ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

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

Belle Vue Primary School 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 observed⁵
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour

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Belle Vue Primary School INCIDENT REPORT FORM (Child Safe Standard 5)

The child safe standards require schools to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.ⁱ This resource can be provided to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern in our school. Teaching and school staff can 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 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Sexual offence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Serious emotional or psychological abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Serious neglect | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

¹ The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. For further explanation of the different types of child abuse, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>.



Belle Vue Primary School CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT (Child Safe Standard 3)

Belle Vue Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Belle Vue Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Belle Vue Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable behaviour:

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership and/or child safety officer
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes¹
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy² or take illicit drugs under any circumstances

¹ SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

² SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet

Evaluation:

The Code of Conduct will be reviewed as part of the school's regular review cycle or earlier if there are legislative or other changes required in the interim.

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Belle Vue Primary School HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES (Child Safe Standard 4)

Overview

It is important for schools to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse. At Belle Vue Primary School, we foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target schools. 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, we 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.

Belle Vue Primary School reinforces our commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

Welfare Co-ordinator (Child Safety Officer)

Employees and volunteers are supported through the Welfare Co-ordinator (Child Safety Officer) who has specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist us in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with (Department of Education and Training) DET legal requirements and policies and procedures.

The Welfare Co-ordinator (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 your organisation.

Recruitment

Belle Vue Primary School uses robust recruitment processes that help to ensure that the best applicants are employed. Each step (from advertising through to conducting interviews and checking the background of applicants) is done consistently and thoroughly. This ensures that we recruit only the most suitable people.

Clear job descriptions and duty statements are created in line with Department guidelines that include the following statement:

Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, in accordance with their legal

obligations including child safe standards. The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website.

Appropriate selection criteria is a valuable first step to reducing the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. Criteria will be created in line with Department guidelines to ensure that applicants have the specific knowledge and skills required for each position. This criteria includes the safety of all children such as asking applicants to indicate their understanding of, or any experience they have in working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds.

An interview panel with the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview will be formed for each position. Each panel member will be clear on what each position requires.

When recruiting potential staff or volunteers the following factors are important considerations:

- Motivation to work with children (personal and/or professional)
- Relevant and verifiable experience
- Understanding of children's physical and emotional needs
- Understanding of professional boundaries
- Communication skills
- Attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- Values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness and non-discrimination)
- Response from referees

Relevant referees will be contacted so as to provide an insight into the applicant's character and skills. Where possible, referees that can provide insights into the applicant's experience of working with children will be contacted.

The duties and responsibilities of each role will determine if a Working with Children's Check is required. Guidelines outlined in the school's Working with Children Policy will be applied to any potential applicant. They state that unless an exemption applies to a person, a valid Working With Children Check (WWC Check) is the minimum standard for all adults working with children. If a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a WWC Check e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption.

Registered teachers are exempt from obtaining a Working With Children's check. Teachers undergo thorough background checking as part of their permission to teach from the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under Part 2.6 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. All registered teachers working at the school (including in a voluntary capacity) must ensure that the school has a copy of their current VIT registration.

Training and induction

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Belle Vue Primary School's employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will be provided support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff provided support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that Belle Vue Primary School meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

Our staff are committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by signing Belle Vue Primary School's Code of Conduct. Training provided will enhance the skills and knowledge of our employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

Employees and volunteers working with children will receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Belle Vue Primary School's policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy)
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse¹, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse², and to hold Working with Children Checks³ where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
- cultural awareness training

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

¹ The failure to disclose criminal offence requires adults in Victoria to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child (unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so). More information about [failure to disclose](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting obligations. Certain professionals are mandatory reporters, meaning they are required to report to the Department of Health and Human Services if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical and sexual abuse. More information about [mandatory reporting](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/intake/overview-of-intake-of-reports-under-the-children,-youth-and-families-act/1122-mandatory-and-other-required-reporting) is available in the *Child protection manual* <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/intake/overview-of-intake-of-reports-under-the-children,-youth-and-families-act/1122-mandatory-and-other-required-reporting>.

² The failure to protect criminal offence applies to people within organisations who knew of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so. More information about [failure to protect](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

³ For more information about [Working with Children checks](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) visit the working with children website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>.

- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching

Supervision:

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members are present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision. As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including Belle Vue Primary School's internal reporting procedures (such as the Welfare Co-ordinator (Child Safety Officer) and leadership), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

Performance and development review:

A proactive performance development strategy is 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 is measured against Belle Vue Primary's School's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures:

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will 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 will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within Belle Vue Primary School. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Our Code of Conduct is publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Belle Vue Primary School's disciplinary procedures clearly outline what employees or volunteers 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.

Further information

Further information on *child safe standards* can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>.

Additional resources for organisations in the *child safe standards* toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, **[An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](#)**, has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the *child safe standards*, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

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Belle Vue Primary School REPORTING CHILD ABUSE (Child Safe Standard 5)

The child safe standards require schools to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.¹ This resource is designed to provide guidance on what to do if a child discloses an incident of abuse, or if a parent/carer raises a concern or allegation of abuse which may have taken place in your organisation.

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 your organisation, 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 your manager or your organisation's child safety officer/champion,² 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 organisation's management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.

¹ The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. For further explanation of the different types of child abuse, please see see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>.

² A child safety officer/champion is a person in your organisation who has knowledge of child safety issues, and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse. You could consider including child safety officer/champion duties in the person's job description.

- 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.

Further considerations:

Some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. Sensitivity should be used when dealing with these issues and people's needs should be met where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, there needs to be a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, 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. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters. Advice on [communicating with people with a disability](#) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities>.

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

Legal responsibilities:

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities. The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another). More information about [failure to disclose](#) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities. More information about [mandatory reporting](#) is available in the *Child protection manual* <www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting>.

Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so. Further information about [failure to protect](#) can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence, and the Department of Health and Human Services website>.

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Belle Vue Primary School INCIDENT REPORT FORM (Child Safe Standard 5)

The child safe standards require schools to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.ⁱ This resource can be provided to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern in our school. Teaching and school staff can 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 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Sexual offence | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Serious emotional or psychological abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Serious neglect | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

¹ The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. For further explanation of the different types of child abuse, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>.



Belle Vue Primary School STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE OR REMOVE THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE (Child Safe Standard 6)

Description

Belle Vue Primary School has adopted a risk management approach by identifying and considering their child safety risk(s) based on a range of factors including the nature of their activities with children, physical and online environments and the characteristics of children to whom they provide services (including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability). This covers both 'business as usual' risks and risks posed by specific activities such as excursions and overnight trips. Where risks are identified, organisations are required to institute measures to reduce or remove them. **Please refer to the school's Excursions, Camps and Incursions Policies and Procedures, Bullying and Harassment Policy, On-site Supervision Policy, Learning Technologies Acceptable Use Policy and Duty of Care Policy.**

Rationale

Belle Vue Primary School has an active approach to their duty of care in protecting children tend to have a risk management approach and a commitment to continuous improvement. Additionally, implementation of a risk management approach is part of the school's recognition of its legal responsibilities to ensure the safety of children.

Implementation

In order to implement this standard Belle Vue Primary School will:

- Ensure clear and accessible processes for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities appropriate to the organisation, its size and resources, physical and online environments, and the characteristics of the children to whom it provides services.
- Developing, recording and communicating clear processes for removing risks to children (for example, rules on online communications that could be included in the code of conduct or child safe policy, removing staff or volunteers who may pose a risk).
- Provide relevant staff and volunteers with training in identifying child abuse risks, for example blocked-off/out-of-sight spaces (especially rooms with doors that can be locked), overnight stays, and opportunities for physical contact, such as sports coaching and personal care.
- Engage methods for continual improvement in how risks are managed by learning from past lessons, including policy review and staff training.
- A risk management approach driven through endorsement and ownership by management, including responsibility for risk identification and response in position descriptions.
- Ensure supervision requirements for staff and volunteers who work with children.
- Institute processes for periodic review of risk management approaches and/or processes and following any incidents.
- Recognise and adapt to the needs of particular children and communities, including Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a

disability. For example, acknowledgement that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed for some children with a disability.

- Recognise and address risks to Aboriginal children which might exist because of their experiences, for example if a child does not feel safe identifying as Aboriginal, or if there is an inadequate response to self-identification.
- Recognise and address risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, which might exist because of their experiences, for example increased communication with families may be necessary to build trust and understanding of organisational activities.
- Recognise and address risks for children with a disability, for example communication barriers when telling an adult they feel unsafe.
- Have a central reporting and advisory contact for staff to raise concerns and get advice about what to do if they need to report suspected abuse, for example the Welfare Co-ordinator (Child Safety Officer).
- Include statements about shared responsibility for management of risks in all position descriptions in line with Department guidelines.
- Have a consistent risk management approach across the school.
- Include discussion about apparent risks or ‘near misses’ in team meetings and areas for improvement.
- Roster staff with appropriate experience and qualifications to manage high risk environments.

Successful Implementation

Successful implementation of this standard will ensure that Belle Vue Primary school is an organisation in which:

- situational risks are considered and understood by all personnel
- steps are put in place to reduce risks where possible
- risk management approaches are regularly reflected on and improved
- specific risks to Aboriginal children are identified, assessed and mitigated
- specific risks to children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background are identified, assessed and mitigated
- specific risks to children with a disability are identified, assessed and mitigated.

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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.

Implementation

In order to implement this standard, Belle Vue Primary School 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. Information could be included in welcome packs, information sessions and posters, as well as on the school website.
- Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children. Policies and procedures are able to be accessed and understood by children with a disability.
- Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisation to review information and processes.
- 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.
- Translate organisational information (including information about children's rights, child safe policies, statements of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages.
- Gather feedback from children, for example through surveys, focus groups, story time and social media, 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. For example, views could be gathered through suggestion boxes and feedback sessions.

- Ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops.
- Train relevant staff and volunteers on methods of empowering children and encouraging children’s participation.
- Ensure Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other organisational activities, such as organisational planning and decision making.
- Raise awareness in the community about children’s rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites and newsletters.

Successful Implementation

Successful implementation of this standard will ensure that Belle Vue Primary school is an organisation in which:

- reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible for all children
- children understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
- children feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- children feel empowered to contribute to the organisation’s understanding and treatment of child safety
- children’s reports of concern are responded to appropriately
- staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation.

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