



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help understanding this policy, please contact Watsonia North Primary School at 9435 1285 or email the school: <http://www.watsonia-north.edu.au>.

Purpose

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

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

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

Scope

This policy:

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

Definitions

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

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student
- volunteer

Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Roles and Responsibilities

School Leadership Team

Our school leadership team (comprising the principal, assistant principal and leading teachers/learning specialists) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child-safe culture is created and maintained and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principals, assistant principals, and leading teachers will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child-safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing

- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community, including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

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

School Council

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

- champion and promote a child-safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at the school council
- undertake annual training on child safety, using the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on [PROTECT](#).
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal, who is bound by this policy.

Specific Staff Child Safety Responsibilities

Watsonia North Primary School has nominated the assistant principal as a Child Safety Champion to support the principal in implementing our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined in [Guidance for child safety champions](#).

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

- The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach them if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Principal and Assistant Principal are responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

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

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

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour. Staff are also required to sign a declaration at the beginning of each year.

Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing

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

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

To promote a culture of online and physical safety for all students, Watsonia North Primary School will;

- Supervise students properly in all settings, including the playground, excursions and camps.
- Give particular attention to students' safety, diverse needs and vulnerabilities in each activity or setting. Consider whether any barriers might prevent students from raising concerns.
- Inform students and their families about the appropriate use of the school's technology and safety tools and how to seek help and report concerns, including cyberbullying and online grooming.
- Keep up to date with current online safety issues and expert information from specialist government and non-government bodies, including the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner and eSmart Schools.

- Promote activities in the school community that connect schools and communities and raise awareness to prevent bullying and violence (e.g. National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence)
- Create a respectful, sensitive and safe environment for people who may be experiencing family violence through alignment to the MARAM framework over time. MARAM responsibility 1 requires schools to create a respectful, sensitive and safe environment that enables a child or young person to feel comfortable to talk about their experiences of family violence and seek support.

Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment

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

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

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

Build a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion

- Begin assemblies, events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge the Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make Aboriginal voices part of decision-making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school newsletters, school assemblies, and parent information nights.
- Lead on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.
- Ensure Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islanders have an IEP to support learning and wellbeing.

Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children

- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
- Ask for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about what the school does well and what can be improved.

- Implement [the Koorie Education Policy](#) to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities (Government schools).
- Use [Koorie Engagement Support Officers](#) (KESOs) to advise government schools about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.

Actively address racism

- Express zero tolerance of racism in your statement of commitment to child safety included in your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and other documents.
- Address racism from students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the school's culture works to prevent incidents from occurring.
- Put school leaders at the front of anti-racist action. Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the school community.
- Encourage non-Aboriginal school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families and communities.
- Incorporate Aboriginal activities throughout the curriculum.

Guide and train staff and volunteers in current and future

- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and promote cultural inclusion.
- Arrange [Community Understanding Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) or equivalent for staff.

Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum

- Find out about the Traditional Owners of the land/s where the school is situated at the [Map of Indigenous Australia](#) and learn about the importance of [acknowledging Traditional Owners](#).
- Include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in student curriculum planning.
- Develop a resource bank of digital, hardcopy print and other artefacts that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.

Partner with Aboriginal communities

- Support local Aboriginal businesses through school procurement.
- Engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups, corporations or the Registered Aboriginal Party to review cultural safety in the school environment, systems and processes.

Review and assess how the school supports cultural inclusion

- Use the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency [cultural safety continuum reflective tool](#) to make a tailored learning and development plan focused on staff cultural competence learning needs.
- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

Recognise key events and anniversaries to be acknowledged present and future:

- 2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations
- Harmony Day
- Sorry Day and Anniversary
- NAIDOC week First week of July
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 4 August
- Reconciliation Week

Student Empowerment

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

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced, and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and The Resilience Project, Our student Code of Conduct, our School Values and our school buddy program.

We have developed the following strategies to promote student empowerment in our school community:

Inform students of their rights

- We inform students of their rights through class discussions, our Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy, our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and participation in events such as Day for Daniel, giving them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.
- We provide age-appropriate and accessible information to students, such as information about:
 - the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.
 - the Charter of Commitment under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
 - the work of the [Commission for Children and Young People](#)
 - how the adults in the school should behave.
- Through curriculum opportunities, we inform students of their rights and special [protections](#), including the right to:
 - live and grow up healthy
 - have a say about decisions affecting them
 - get information that is important to them
 - be safe and not harmed by anyone.
- Through curriculum opportunities, we provide information via relevant subject areas to promote:
 - [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships](#)
 - [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework](#)
 - [Safe Schools](#)
 - [Resilience Project](#)

Empower students to contribute to school life

- Display visually engaging and easy-to-read posters promoting student voice and agency.
- Discuss commitment to student's voice at enrolment and organise orientation activities focused on activating student's voice.
- Conduct year-level and form group meetings to discuss students' rights and safety issues.
- Invite students to provide feedback on school-wide decisions and take their views into account in school decision-making using the annual Attitudes to School Survey.
- Document student participation in activities that contribute to the life of the school.
- Involve students in consultation processes and inform them of their impact on decision-making.
- Demonstrate that the school takes students seriously by acting on their concerns, noting that what might seem unimportant to an adult may be necessary to a young person.
- Become a [VicSRC](#) Partner School
- Provide students who find it harder to speak up or be heard with multiple communication avenues, including writing, drawing, or physical forms of communication.

Empower students to raise their concerns

We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. We give students a variety of ways to raise concerns. For example:

- provide an anonymous, year-level student suggestion box
- distribute regular online surveys
- display information about the adults students can talk to if they have concerns.

Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at school from the school office or by accessing the Concerns and Complaints Policy on the school website.

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

Strengthen peer support for safety and wellbeing present and future

- Display posters acknowledging sexuality and gender diversity and identify safe spaces where students can go if they need support.
- Participate in the National Day of Action Against Bullying
- Carry out regular whole-school [wellbeing assessment surveys](#)
- Use the [Bully Stoppers survey tool](#) to assess bullying in your school.
- Establish Student Action Teams to investigate issues of inclusion and exclusion from ATTSS data.
- Discuss healthy boundaries for friendships. Point out that the risk of harm can occur in child-to-child interactions and adult-to-child interactions.

- Use school transition programs, like [Transition: A Positive Start to School](#) (DOCX, 4.3MB) or [Transition – Year 6 to 7](#) to support students entering the school.
- Provide buddy or mentor programs for new students transitioning to the school mid-year or outside of the regular transition timeline.

Establish protective factors

- Teach students practical protective strategies, including:
 - what to do when they feel unsafe
 - phrases they can use to raise an objection
 - pathways for raising safety concerns, and
 - online safety behaviours.
- Provide contact information for independent child and youth advocacy services or helplines.
- Provide a range of age-appropriate picture books, fiction and non-fiction that include:
 - children's rights and empowerment themes
 - cultural and linguistic diversity
 - neurodiverse characters and people with disability
 - diversity in sexual orientation and gender.
- Support all students to identify trusted adults and friends they can talk to about a concern at school, home or in the community.
- Deliver age-appropriate curriculum content about respectful relationships, sexuality, consent and sexual abuse prevention through the [Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials](#)
- Use the [School's Mental Health Menu](#) to support students in our school.
- Empower students with the knowledge that adults are accountable and that students have a right to safety.

Communicate in a respectful and age-appropriate way

- Educate staff to uphold Aboriginal cultural safety and be respectful of identity and culture.
- Train staff and volunteers to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Educate staff and volunteers about children's rights, including the four guiding principles in the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Use sensitivity and build trust

- Provide training to staff and volunteers to be attuned to [signs of harm](#) and risk factors in students.
- Remind staff and volunteers to recognise that students might communicate differently, including through verbal and non-verbal cues, play, body language, facial expressions, drawings or behaviours.
- Follow through on our commitments – show students that the leadership team and staff are trustworthy and take their worries or concerns seriously.

Family Engagement

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

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

We have developed the following strategies to promote family engagement in our school community:

Create a welcoming environment

- We create a welcoming environment at school reception, so community members and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto school grounds.
- We have a contact person for new enrolments and provide their details in induction materials or school transition packs
- We conduct school open days or host community events to welcome families and the broader community.

Engage families and communities in building a child-safe organisation

- We ask parents and carers about their children. This can be in formal settings like parent/teacher interviews or during chance meetings at pick-up and drop-off.
- We provide parents and carers with information about children's rights via newsletters or parent information sessions.
- We regularly engage with parents, carers and students and discuss the needs of students through parent/teacher interviews.
- We will create opportunities for families to have input into developing and reviewing our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- seeking input from families and the community through the school newsletters, school council, subcommittees of the school council, student, staff, and parent meetings.
- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents on the school website <http://www.wats-north.edu.au> or at the school office.
- Newsletters will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school.

Provide regular opportunities to communicate

- Provide frequent opportunities for parents and carers to engage with staff to discuss their children's experiences at school.
- Organise interpreters and translators to engage families from non-English speaking backgrounds in conversations about the school's child safety strategies.

- Ask families and carers about their preferred methods of communication, including email, social media, meetings and workshops, and use their responses to inform your communications approach.
- Incorporate child safety questions in parent and carer surveys to measure awareness and confidence in the school's child safety approach and support ongoing improvement.
- Remind the school community about the shared roles of parents, carers and school staff in creating a positive environment for learning by promoting the Respectful Behaviours in the School Community Policy
- Consider hosting community workshops on child safety and wellbeing topics, for example, respectful relationships or online safety. Provide families with take-home information to help them talk to their children about safety and wellbeing at home.
- Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern is raised or a complaint is made.

Reflect the diversity of the school community

- Make newsletters and communications inclusive. Normalise a diversity of family profiles and reflect the characteristics of your school community.
- Select meeting venues that are physically accessible, welcoming and culturally safe.
- Encourage volunteer positions from families from diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Provide inclusive and accessible information

- Display the [PROTECT poster](#) (PDF, 203KB) in shared areas accessible to parents and the community.
- Make sure child safety information is easy to read – consider font size, style, colours used, formatting and visual presentation.
- Provide links to the school's child safety policies in the school's social media posts, newsletters and staff circulars.
- Check that the students, school staff, and school community members know who to contact if they are concerned about child safety. Keep this information up to date and accessible, and review it regularly.
- Use images and other accessibility aids to help understand child safety information by families with low literacy or vision.
- Translate child safety information into multiple languages to reflect your school community.

Build family and community involvement in child safety into business as usual

- Make child safety a standing item at school governing authority meetings.
- Report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff, volunteers, community, families, and students to show transparency and accountability.
- Encourage families and carers to advocate for their children and champion their safety while at school and in other environments, including extra-curricular activities such as sports, tutoring, music and language classes.
- Promote [Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships education](#) to families.

- Acknowledge the important role families and communities play in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns.
- Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern or complaint is raised

Diversity and Equity

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

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

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

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

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

Recognise the diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances of students

- We recognise the range of diverse student and family attributes, including but not limited to:
 - cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
 - the needs of students with disability and responses to disability
 - the needs of students from diverse religious and cultural communities
 - the needs of very young students and children
 - the impact of prior trauma
 - gender differences
 - the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
 - challenges for students who are in foster care, out-of-home care, living away from home or international students
 - socio-economic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, remote or regional isolation).
- We pay attention to diverse student cohorts and individuals in our community, recognising that they may have a higher risk of harm.
- Normalise asking for and using people's preferred pronouns and names for students.
- Use contemporary, culturally sensitive and inclusive examples when discussing families, relationships, professions, and vocations.

Identify and address challenges that students experience due to their diverse attributes.

- We communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if bullying or discrimination occurs, we address the incident in line with school policy.
- Let students know they can raise concerns or report incidents at and outside the school.
- Check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. This can occur at pick-up or drop-off, during parent-teacher interviews, or during informal discussions.
- Engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe.
- Validate students' feelings. Students may feel they have not been listened to or believed in the past.
- Offer buddying and mentoring for students at risk of social isolation.
- Discuss how students feel about discussing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Note that where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the student's wishes that their information remains confidential.
- Take a holistic approach when responding to family violence.
- Respond to family violence in an accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

Put in place policies and strategies to help meet the diverse needs of students.

- We ensure school environments are welcoming and inclusive. For example:
 - display flags representing different cultures within the school community
 - provide materials in different languages where possible
 - decorate the school with artistic expressions from students and young people.
- Provide child safety information in accessible, child-friendly language and formats.
- Accompany child safety information with the support materials needed to help students and families interpret it.
- Anticipate the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances. We do not expect all students to be equally empowered to ask for what they need.
- Provide staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination.
- Create opportunities to remind staff and volunteers about student diversity and accommodating students and young people's needs.
- Work closely with our Student Support Services team.
- Seek out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, and provision planning.

Support diversity through school planning and resources currently and in the future:

- Recognise dates that connect with our school community, for example:
 - Cultural Diversity Week
 - Hearing Awareness Week
 - NAIDOC Week
 - R U OK? day

- International Day of Persons with Disability
- Compile a range of age-appropriate instructional materials for exploring differences and similarities in class, including:
 - Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships resources
 - Books and resources that reflect diverse views and perspectives
 - Speech and drama scripts that explore themes around diversity.
- Use images of students with diverse characteristics in school publications to reflect the school community.

Suitable Staff and Volunteers

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

Staff recruitment

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

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

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

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Staff induction

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

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

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

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

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by regular performance reviews.

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

Suitability of volunteers

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

Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness

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

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

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

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

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

Plan to resource and prioritise child safety training

- Our [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#), [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#), and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy will be available on our school website
- Child safety improvement and training will be included in school planning.
- Time-release or scheduled meeting time will be provided for teachers, non-teaching and auxiliary staff to undertake child safety and related training.
- Staff will be directed to PROTECT for guidance on:
 - information to assist them in recognising indicators and risk factors of child harm, including harm caused by other children and young people
 - the processes to follow if a concern is raised.

- The school will keep a record of all staff and volunteers who complete child safety training to ensure all are appropriately trained, and training is refreshed as required.

School council training and education

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

Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment

Complaints and Reporting Processes

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

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding, which is documented in our school's Complaint Policy.

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

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

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

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

Communications

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

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters, Bullying, NoWay! posters around the school
- updates in our school newsletter

- ensuring that child safety is an agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

Privacy and information sharing

Watsonia North Primary School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information, refer to Schools' Privacy Policy.

Records management

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

Review of Child Safety Practices

At Watsonia North Primary School, we have established processes for reviewing and improving our child safety policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every two years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.
- monitor and manage child safety risks using a risk register
- determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures.
- use complaints and incidents as a learning opportunity to inform continuous improvement.
- inform the school community of relevant or applicable child safety policy changes.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

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

- Positive Relationships and Anti-Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Related Department of Education and Training policies

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

Other related documents

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

POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW

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

Approval

Created date	June 2022
Consultation	Consultation on this policy is mandatory. Please insert date/s and who you consulted with, e.g., student representative groups, parent groups, and school council. School Council: June 2022 Staff: 2022 briefing to be conducted in Term 3
Endorsed by	Sarah Pollnitz, ACTING PRINCIPAL Adrian Lim, School Council President
Endorsed on	21 June 2022
Next review date	June 2024

Signatures

Sarah Pollnitz (Acting Principal)

Adrian Lim (School Council President)