



# Brunswick South-West Primary School

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Brunswick South-West Primary School 03 9387 6886

### Purpose

The Brunswick South-West Primary School (BSWPS) Child Safety Policy demonstrates our 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 BSWPS 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 students' use 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 abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
  - serious neglect of a child.

### **Child-connected work**

Child-connected work means work authorised by BSWPS, School Council or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training, and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

### **Child safety**

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

### **School environment**

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- the BSWPS grounds;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events).

### **School staff**

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by the School Council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

### **Student**

- Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school.

Source: [Ministerial Order 1359](#) (PDF, 363KB)

## **Statement of commitment to child safety**

BSWPS is a child-safe organisation committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and their families. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

The school's approach to creating and maintaining a child-safe school environment is guided by our school's Philosophy, Vision and Values.

At BSWPS, our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

*We **respect** ourselves, each other, our school and the wider community and our natural environment, understanding that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on those around us.*

*We are **inclusive** of everyone, accepting and caring for people in our community with kindness and empathy, embracing diversity, and valuing the uniqueness of each individual.*

*We demonstrate and model **curiosity** by asking questions, exploring and discovering more about ourselves, each other and the world, and thereby building our skills, knowledge, positive relationships and personal wellbeing.*

We are committed to providing a child-safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Our child-safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

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.

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

We are committed to reviewing regularly 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 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 and assistant principals will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- 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.

Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in BSWPS's other child safety policies and procedures, including Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment 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 that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The [BSWPS Child Safety Code of Conduct](#) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

## Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

BSWPS believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount. 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 the 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.

## Establishing a culturally safe environment

At BSWPS 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.

In order to promote cultural safety in our school community, we:

- Begin events and meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners
- Ensure that each classroom creates its own Acknowledgement of Country annually
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students
- Stay 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
- Continue to learn about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia
- Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people
- Build school-wide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes
- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students
- Arrange Community Understanding Safety Training (CUST) or equivalent for staff
- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Student empowerment

BSWPS has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse at the school office or through the Principal.

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

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user-friendly to children, including:

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at BSWPS to read at the office and on our school website
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

## Family engagement

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

To support family engagement, at BSWPS we are committed to providing families and 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 will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices, and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- making available for students and parents all of our child safety policies and procedures on the [BSWPS website](#)
- using Newsletters and Compass to 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
- involving families and the school community in developing and reviewing child safety and wellbeing policies and practices through the Education Sub-Committee and School Council
- displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters across the school
- Distributing Child Safety Information Packs and International Student Safety Cards to all international students and their families upon enrolment/during orientation, with information in simple English/native language of family (where possible).

## 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 wellbeing 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 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 [BSWPS Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

## Suitable staff and volunteers

At BSWPS, 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 on 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
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## 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 Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures.

## 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 through the Performance and Development Plan process. In addition, we maintain vigilance for any signs of unsafe practices, while fostering strong lines of communication and a culture of transparency among staff members.

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 [BSWPS Volunteers Policy](#), which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to 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 develop their capacity to effectively 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.

## 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
- BSWPS child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

## Complaints and reporting processes

BSWPS 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 and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The [Complaints Policy](#) can be found on the school website.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including School Council employees) 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 relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## Communications

BSWPS 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 materials around the school
- providing updates in our school newsletter and Compass
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and School Council meetings
- ensuring Child Safety Information Packs and International Student Safety Card are handed to all international students and their families upon enrolment/during orientation with information in simple English/native language of family (where possible).

## Privacy and information sharing

BSWPS 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 BSWPS we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe 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.

## Related policies and procedures

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

- 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 school community.

## Approval

<b>Created date</b>	<b>October 2022</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Emma Fuller Principal
<b>Endorsed on</b>	17th October 2022
<b>Next review date</b>	October 2024