



Northern School for Autism

"Learning for Life"

STANDARD 4

Screening, Supervision & Training Practices That Reduce the Risk of Child Abuse by New & Existing Personnel

Policy & Guidance

- Carefully developed policies and procedures not only help to identify the most suitable persons to work with children in the school, they can also deter unsuitable persons from applying or being appointed, either in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Selecting suitable and appropriate people to work with children is vital. Everyone benefits when the best people, who also share the school's values about keeping children safe from harm, are chosen. If good care is taken during the recruitment phase, it is more likely that people who are unsuitable to work with children will be screened out. Good recruitment practices help to reduce the opportunities for harm to occur by deterring the 'wrong' people from applying.
- The school needs to be clear about the role and responsibilities of each position, particularly when they involve working closely with children.
- A job description or duty statement should include a clear outline of the role and also state the expectation that staff must provide a child safe environment. It should clearly spell out:
 - the organisational context
 - duties and tasks of the role
 - qualifications, experience and attributes a person must have
 - the level of responsibility and supervision associated with the position
- A well-developed job description is more likely to attract suitably qualified staff and volunteers. When roles and responsibilities are unclear, unsuitable people are more likely to apply because the organisation may not look as professional and capable of identifying unsuitable applicants.

Purpose

- To ensure Northern School for Autism complies with the legislative requirements of MO 870.
- To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
- To raise awareness of the importance of child safety with staff.
- To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
- To ensure the school selects the best and most suitable staff for any position teaching or non-teaching.
- To ensure the school develops procedures and practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel and are compliant with the Child Safe Standard 4.
- To ensure the promotion of:
 - the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
 - the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - the safety of children with a disability

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<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au/web/>



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Implementation

- The school will ensure that newly recruited and existing staff and volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of the relevant policies and procedures and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.

Recruitment - Screening

- This policy is intended for School Leadership, other staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors.
- Job advertisements will clearly state that the school is committed to child safety. This should be included in all advertisements, duty statements and other documents.
- Job advertisements will contain statements such as:
 - We are committed to excellence and to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.
 - All applicants must have full registration from the Victorian Institute of Teaching and be four year trained.
 - Applicants must provide the names of three referees who can comment on previous experience in relation to the selection criteria.
 - A valid Working with Children Check is mandatory.
 - We are a child safe and equal employment opportunity employer.
 - Applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and from people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are encouraged.
- Referee checks will be carried out.
- The school will ensure decision-making is rigorous, defensible and transparent.
- The school is aware of the requirements of privacy legislation and laws relating to unlawful discrimination.
- Applicants will be told what will happen to any information they provide and who will have access to the information.
- Selection processes will be fair and just; however, the safety and wellbeing of children will be the primary consideration.
- During the interview process, applicants will be informed that a Working with Children Check and a criminal record check will be undertaken.
- Notwithstanding any of the above, the school will adhere to the recruitment requirements as described in DET's Recruitment Guide, last updated 24 October 2019.

Post-Employment Supervision and Ongoing Training

- The school has in place a rigorous professional learning program for all staff.
- New staff are provided with information about matters such as the philosophy, vision, mission and values of the school, curriculum, students with medical conditions, school polices, OH&S and routine matters e.g. yard duty requirements.

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- Graduate teachers are provided with additional induction opportunities generally over several school terms, including strategies to enhance teaching and learning.
- Mentoring, coaching and in-house training strategies are used for all staff.
- All staff must have a Professional Learning Plan based on the school's Professional Learning Plan which is linked to the School Strategic Plan.
- Leadership development opportunities are a key component of the school's professional learning program for senior staff.
- There is a significant budget allocation made for professional learning.
- The school is developing a formal induction program for volunteers, external providers (and contractors) to ensure they have appropriate information about the child safe culture of the school.
- The school regularly will provide information, training and education for School Council, staff and volunteers about child safety on a needs basis, including:
 - what child abuse is
 - how to identify and reduce child abuse risks
 - understanding and appreciating Aboriginal culture and other cultures and languages they may engage with in their role
 - the importance of ensuring culturally safe environments for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and how to promote this
 - the importance of ensuring safe environments for children with a disability, and how to promote this
 - what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children, such as inappropriate sexualised play, bullying and fighting
 - what is inappropriate behaviour between children and adults, with reference to the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- The school will support staff to build resilience and cope with child abuse incidences
- As part of the process, the school will monitor the currency of all Working with Children and other Suitability Checks and advise staff, volunteers and external providers two months before the expiration date.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed every two years as part of VRQA requirements, if an incident occurs or if guidelines change (latest PROTECT update August 2020).

A mandatory policy

School Council Approval Not Required for this policy, but the Principal may choose to table this policy with Council for noting

References:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/school/pal/child-safe-standards>

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<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>

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