



STANDARD 6

Strategies to Identify & Reduce or Remove Risks of Child Abuse

Policy & Guidance

- Creating a child safe organisation begins with a clear, evidence-informed understanding of the potential risks to children in the setting.
- Taking a preventative approach means identifying the potential risks in the school environment. These range from the impact of the physical environment and how it affects the continual supervision of staff and children to staff recruitment practices.
- School staff, students and parents are in the best position to know the vulnerabilities and risks within the school and its activities and how to plan to prevent them.

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 environment.
- To describe the minimum requirements for child safe risk management in the school.
- To ensure the school develops strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks that are compliant with the Child Safe Standard 6.
- 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
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

Definition

'The school environment' is defined as anywhere within the school grounds, classrooms, computer and/or science laboratories, storerooms, offices.

It extends to off-site locations such as venues for school camps, sporting venues, excursions.

Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of all children is a high priority for this school.
- The school has **zero tolerance of child abuse**.
- Management of risk is everyone's responsibility.
- This policy is intended for School Leadership, staff, School Council, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers.
- The risk management process will involve:
 - establishing the context (internal and external factors, objectives, appetite for risk)
 - identify the risk
 - analysing and evaluating the risk,

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- risk treatment (treat, share, retain, avoid)
- To reduce the likelihood of harm, the school will think about and define the risks. (What could go wrong within the school environment as a whole or for any specific activity?)
- Children will be involved in this process, as they may have a very different idea about what makes them feel unsafe. This will be done formally through the Student Attitude to School Survey, through existing school structures and informally through class discussions and one-on-one meetings e.g. with the Student Welfare Officer.
- If applicable, Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds strongly will be encouraged to provide input.
- Over a period of time, the Leadership Team will work collaboratively with staff, children, School Council and the community to:
 - formally identify the potential risks within the school’s physical environment e.g. doors that lock, volunteers working unsupervised with students, volunteers working in the school grounds during recess periods, other visitors to the school, school boundaries, school camps or excursions
 - consider the risks to children due age related vulnerability, children who have experienced trauma, neglect or abuse, Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and children with a disability
 - identify the risk associated with children working online including cyber bullying, online grooming, trolling, disclosure of personal details
 - consider the opportunities for accidental or accidental harm e.g. poor physical environment leading to injury, poor supervision, high-risk activity, pushing, shoving, jostling, slapping, pinching etc.
 - reflect on opportunities for psychological abuse – bullying, ignoring or isolating, lack of respect, social vilification or discrimination
 - document the risks
 - identify the level of risk i.e. low, medium or high
 - consider the consequences of the risk e.g. moderate, severe
 - develop strategies to minimise the risk e.g. require WWC Checks and/or criminal record checks for all volunteers, increase levels of supervision, change the environment, make it harder for abuse to occur
 - review the risk management strategy annually or if an incident occurs
 - set a time frame for completing the risk analysis and incorporating the learnings
 - identify a person to lead the ongoing monitoring and review
- Please refer to the schools *Risk Management – Schools* and the Risk Assessment Template, a separate document.
- Please refer also to the school’s *Excursions (Including Camps) Policy, Incursions (Safety of Children Working with External Providers) Policy, Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks – Volunteers* and the *Visitors to the School Policy*.

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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 early 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>

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

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suitability-checks>

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