

NOBLE PARK ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE strategy document

V 1.0

2017

In producing the Child Safe Strategy Document, information has been gathered from a diverse range of sources, including various School databases, DET and DHHS websites and internal and external reports.

This report was prepared by the Wellbeing Coordinator and ratified by the School Council in September 2017.

Feedback and Interpretation Requests

Noble Park English Language School values your feedback on our Child Safe Strategy Document. Please, provide any feedback, interpreter requests or suggestions to the Principal at the undernoted address.

Public Availability

Copies of this report are available on the School website. Please, contact the Principal if you would like to request a hard copy.

Published by

Noble Park English Language School

21-35 Thomas Street

Noble Park, VIC 3174

Ph.: +61 3 9546 9578

<http://nobleparkels.vic.edu.au/>

Note: Where the term ‘Aboriginal’ is used, it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation. Throughout this paper, we refer to ‘Aboriginal peoples’ rather than ‘Aboriginal people’ to reflect the plurality and diversity of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

Further Information and Support

**Department of Health and Human Services**

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations)

**Email:** [childsafestandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafestandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

**Phone:** 9096 000 or 1300 650 172

**Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child’s safety.**

**Information about child protection services can be found on the department’s website:**

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse)

Acknowledgement

The compilation of this document has been enhanced by the availability of resources from a wide variety of organisations including the State of Victoria Department of Health and Human Services, CompliSpace Pty Ltd, the *Child Protection Toolkit* prepared by Moores Legal Pty Ltd and published by Our Community, the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) *Child Safe Standards Readiness Tool* and the second edition of *A Guide for Creating a Child-safe Organisation* produced by the Commission for Children and Young People.

**Contents**

04 Introduction

05 Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

06 Background to Child Safe Standards

07 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

08 Victorian Child Safe Standards

09 Child Safety and Diversity

11 Standard 1: Strategies to Embed an Organisational Culture of Child Safety

13 Standard 2: A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

14 Standard 3: Child Safety Code of Conduct

15 Standard 4: School Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Practices for a Child

Safe Environment

18 Standard 5: Procedures for Responding to and reporting Allegations of Suspected Child

Abuse

20 Standard 6: Strategies to Identify and reduce or Remove the Risk of Abuse

22 Standard 7: Strategies to Promote the Participation and Empowerment of Children

24 Glossary

25 Useful Links and Resources

26 Related Documents

**Introduction**

The protection of children and young persons is the responsibility of everyone who works at Noble Park English Language School (NPELS), including all staff, contractors, external agency workers, parents and volunteers. We all share responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children.

Noble Park English Language School has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interest of children and keeping them safe at all times. NPELS and its School Council are committed to implementing the following minimum child safe standards:

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety;
2. A Child Safe Policy;
3. A Child Safety Code of Conduct;
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse;
5. Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse; and
7. Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment.

The Child Safe Standards fall under the Ministerial Order 870-Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and take effect as of August 1, 2016. All Victorian schools are required to operate within a child-safe environment; NPELS has met all the required standards for child safety and will continue to embed these important policies and practices within our School.

This Child Safe Strategy is a comprehensive and overarching document that provides an overview of the key elements of NPELS’ approach to creating a child safe organisation and to embed child safe practices into our School culture. It is dynamic, multifaceted, and ongoing developmental process of learning, monitoring and reviewing. NPELS will incorporate annual review information, compliance with Standards, training, policy updates and mandatory reporting requirements in the School’s annual report.

**Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Noble Park English Language School is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation and embedding a child safe culture into our practices and processes to ensure that all children who attend the School are safe at all times.

All children, regardless of their gender, age, religious beliefs, race, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have right to protection from abuse. NPELS is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with disability.

NPELS has zero tolerance for child abuse. All staff employed by NPELS are responsible for the protection of children within our care and to report information about suspected child abuse.

**Background to the Child Safe Standards**

**The Betrayal of Trust Report**

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p.6) documented that in April 2012, the Victorian government initiated an inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and other non-government organisations. The inquiry’s final report, *Betrayal of Trust*, made a number of recommendations that have been acted on by the Victorian government. These included:

* Criminal law reform – offences relating to grooming, failure to protect and failure to disclose.
* Creating child safe organisations – mandatory child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme. The standards are compulsory for all organisations working with children. The proposed reportable conduct scheme will require centralised reporting of abuse allegations to an oversight body.
* Civil law reform – removal of time limit on legal action. Legislation has removed the previous 12-year timeframe in which victims (including family members) needed to have commenced legal action for damages due to wrongful death (brought by dependants of a deceased victim) or personal injury resulting from child abuse. This reform applies to both past and future cases of child abuse.

**Victoria’s New Child Protection Framework Overview**

Principle Based Child Safe Standards

Ministerial Order 870

Child Protection Program

Prescriptive Legal & Regulatory Requirements

WWC

ETR

CWS

CA

FVP

CFY

**LEGEND**

CYF – Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 WWC – Working with Children Act 2005

CWS – Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 CA – Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

ETR – Education and Training Reform Act 2006 FVP – Family Violence Protection Act 2008

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

A cornerstone of the development of universal child safe procedures is the rights that are outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC). CROC specifically recognises that children have a right to be protected from physical and mental harm and neglect and to be able to enjoy the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

**The Charter of Human Rights**

Victoria’s Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) outlines the basic human rights of all people. It was introduced in Victoria through the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.*

**Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) has investigated how institutions or organisations, such as schools, churches, sports clubs and government organisations, have responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse.

The Royal Commission’s research and recommendations on best practice aim to provide guidance to protect against the occurrence of child sexual abuse and to respond appropriately when any allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse occur, including holding perpetrators to account and providing justice to victims.

**Victorian Child Safe Standards**

Following the release of the Betrayal of Trust report, the Victorian Government acknowledges that ‘while the majority of children are safe in organisations, there are inadequate and inconsistent approaches to child safety in organisations across Victoria. It provided 15 recommendations, including the introduction of Child Safe Standards in Victoria, to ensure child safe environments in organisations that work with children’. (Department of Health and Human Services, 2015)

The Victorian Government introduced the compulsory minimum standards that apply to organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from abuse. The Child Safe Standards were passed by the Victorian Parliament on 26 November 2015. The Child Safe Standards apply to organisations from the 1 January 2016. The Victorian Education Minister issued a Ministerial Order No.870 on 7th January 2016 that required all Victorian Non-Government and Government Schools to comply with the Ministerial Order from the 1st of August 2016, as a requirement of registration.

At the commencement of 2016, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) provided a Child Safe Readiness Tool, which allowed the School to assess its current level of readiness to comply with the new requirements. NPELS completed the tool and was able to identify areas to be actioned in preparation for compliance with the Ministerial Order requirements. The School has acted on key areas highlighted during the completion of the readiness tool and these have been included in this Child Safe Plan.

To comply with the compulsory Child Safe Standards, the School must include the following principles as part of each standard:

* Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children.
* Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
* Promoting the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, the School must have:

* Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements.
* A Child Safe Policy.
* A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
* Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.
* Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
* Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
* Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

**Child Safety and Diversity**

Noble Park English Language School respects cultural differences and variations in child rearing practices due to family’s personal, cultural or religious beliefs. Cultural diversity refers to people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs or views.

The Royal Commission advises that ‘some children are more vulnerable to abuse, based on various factors including age, gender, ethnicity, disability and prior abuse or neglect’.

Respecting diversity means:

* Valuing and respecting people’s beliefs;
* Building responsive relationships;
* Communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs;
* Examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs, and respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another;
* Acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance.

**Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal Children**

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) defines a child safe organisation as one that recognises that these cultural differences and variations do not reduce a child’s right to be safe or the organisation’s responsibility to protect the child from harm.

Every Aboriginal person and every Aboriginal child needs to feel that their sense of self and their identity is ‘valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them’. Cultural identity and safety are fundamental to a child’s overall wellbeing. It affects how the child sees themselves in relation to others and how the environment affects upon their sense of safety.

To create a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture, NPELS ensures that the Aboriginal flag is flown each day. An acknowledgement of Traditional Owners also occurs at the commencement of assemblies and the School observes Reconciliation Day.

**Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds**

The Child Safe Standards require organisations to consider cultural safety of culturally and/ or linguistically diverse children across the implementation of all the standards. The Victorian community includes people of many backgrounds, countries and languages, including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others. These families have experienced varied journeys. Some have experienced trauma, violence and harm. Others have lost support of their extended family.

The School will promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

* Ensuring the School clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination;
* Being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds;
* Recognising times of importance to difference cultures;
* Ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of recognition and artwork;
* Employing staff that are representative of local community;
* Actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved;
* Asking about the best way to provide information to children and families.

**Promoting the safety of children with a disability**

NPELS acknowledges that people with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community and need to be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities. People with a disability have the same rights as other members of the community to live free from abuse. The Child Safe Standards require the School to consider the safety of children with a disability across the implementation of all the standards.

Education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The Standards give students, and prospective students with a disability, the right to education and training opportunities on the same basis as students without disability.

Strategies that promote understanding and acceptance of diversity, including disability, and policies for identifying risks and responding to concerns are a vital component of a child safe organisation. Children with a disability can be vulnerable to abuse. Reasons for this include:

* Communication difficulties;
* Personal care requirements;
* Limited provision of developmentally appropriate sexual and relationship information;
* Social isolation.

NPELS promotes the safety of children with a disability by:

* Acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensuring our risk assessment process considers their needs;
* Enduring our School clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children;
* Making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties;
* Being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability;
* Supporting staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability;
* Thinking about how we can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families.

**Child Safe Standards**

**Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements**

The Noble Park English Language School Council has the responsibility to embed a culture of child safety and ensure that policies and procedures demonstrate zero tolerance of abuse in the School.

**Ministerial Order requirements:**

The School governing authority must:

1. Develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at school;
2. Allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
3. Inform the school community about strategies, and allocate roles and responsibilities;
4. Put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and
5. Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements

1. Develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at NPELS

Noble Park English Language School is committed to child safety and is expected that all staff, volunteers and carers will support the School in achieving this objective. In response to the Ministerial Order, the School has:

* Introduced a Child Safe Policy.
* Introduced a Child Safe Code of Conduct.
* Revised the Mandatory Reporting Policy.
* Delivered Child Safety staff training.
* Revised the School’s Recruitment and Induction processes.
* Conducted a Child Safe Risk Assessment.
* Implemented a Critical Incident and Recovery Plan.
* Allocated roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies.

1. Allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies

The School’s Child Safe Policy states that it is every staff member’s responsibility to create a Child Safe environment. However, there are staff with delegated responsibilities for aspects of the School’s Child Safe Strategy including:

The School Council

The School Council of NPELS is responsible for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Council is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Safety Code of Conduct are in place.

The Principal

The Principal of NPELS is responsible for:

1. Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse.
2. Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, School policies and procedures, and the School’s Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
3. Ensuring that all adults within the NPELS community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with Child Safety policies and procedures.
4. Ensuring that all adults within the School community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child, in accordance with these policies and procedures.
5. Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

Staff/ Contractors/ Volunteers

All staff, contractors and volunteers share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

1. Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, the Child Safe Policy and procedures in relation to child protection and comply with all requirements.
2. Report any reasonable belief that a child’s safety is at risk to relevant authorities (such as Child Protection services and/or the police) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.
3. Report any suspicion that a child’s safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person at the School.
4. Provide an environment that is supportive of all children’s emotional and physical safety.
5. Inform the school community about strategies, and allocate roles and responsibilities

Noble Park English Language School will communicate the Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Strategy through the School website, Enrolment Booklet, Parents’ Group sessions and other key communication channels within the School.

1. Put strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices

The School’s Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Strategy will be a key resource for the School to communicate to the school community the strategies that are being implemented to create and develop a child safe culture at NPELS.

1. Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies

The School’s Principal class and Leadership team will review the Child Safe Policy as part of the School’s three-year policy review cycle. Following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the School’s child protection policies and procedures require modification to better protect the children under the School’s care.

**Standard 2: A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

A school’s policies and procedures provide the foundation for and commitment to child safety in the school.

**Ministerial Order requirements:**

The school governing authority must ensure that the school has a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

1. The values and principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment and;
2. The actions the school proposes to take to:
3. Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school’s adherence to its child safety policy or statement of commitment.
4. Support, encourage and enable school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
5. Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

The school governing authority must inform the school community about the policy or statement, and make the policy or statement publicly available.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements

Noble Park English Language School has developed a publicly accessible Child Safe Policy, which is published on the School website. This Child Safe Strategy Document also contains a public statement of commitment to child safety.

Noble Park English Language School Council has approved the Child Safe Policy. The Child Safe Policy is an overarching document that provides key elements to the School’s approach to becoming child safe. It sets out the processes for reporting and responding to concerns and allegations and refers people to where these processes can be found. The Child Safe Policy also contains the Child Safety Code of Conduct, which provides specific guidelines on appropriate behaviour with children.

**Standard 3: Child Safety Code of Conduct**

All school staff in the school environment must be covered by a code of conduct, which addresses child safety.

Schools should recognise and consider existing professional codes of conduct when developing child safety codes of conduct.

**Ministerial Order requirements:**

The school governing authority must develop, endorse, and make publicly available a code of conduct that:

1. Has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment.
2. Sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children.
3. Takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff), and the needs of all children; and
4. Is consistent with the school’s child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements

Noble Park English Language School has a Staff, Contractors and Volunteers Child Safety Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct has been published on the School website. Furthermore, it is embedded into any new contracts at the School and in the School’s induction process.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct incorporates the following:

1. Has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment.
2. Sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children.
3. Takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff), and the needs of all children; and
4. Is consistent with the school’s child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

**Standard 4: School Staff Selection, Supervision and Management Practices for a Child Safe Environment**

Schools must ensure that recruitment processes are in place to manage and reduce the risk of child abuse. In addition, processes must be in place to ensure that there are appropriate staff induction programs, staff professional development and staff supervision arrangements to ensure a child-safe environment.

**Ministerial Order requirements:**

1. Subject to the requirements of the ETR Act, the school governing authority must ensure that the school implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this clause.
2. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
3. The job’s requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
4. The job occupant’s essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
5. All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school’s child safety practices (including the code of conduct).
6. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
7. Working with Children Check status, or similar check.
8. Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.
9. The person’s history of work involving children; and
10. References that address the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.
11. The school need not comply with the requirements in clause (4) if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in clauses (4) (a) to (4) (d) about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
12. The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
13. The induction of new school staff into the school’s policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work; and
14. Monitoring and assessing a job occupant’s continuing suitability for child-connected work.
15. The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements

The following policies and documents have been developed and implemented in preparation to meeting Ministerial Order 870:

* NPELS Volunteer Policy.
* NPELS Volunteer Agreement.
* Staff Child Safe Code of Conduct.
* Statement of commitment to child safety included in all advertised vacancies.

Noble Park English Language School undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers, including:

* Working with Children Checks
* Valid VIT registration
* Police checks
* Face-to-face interviews where possible
* Interview questions to assess people’s motives when working with children
* Referee checks that assess the quality of the applicant’s previous experience
* Induction process
* Probation periods

All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school are informed about the School’s child safety practices. The following statement is now published on the employment advertisements for Noble Park English Language School:

***Child Safe Standards***

*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. All schools have a Child Safety Code of Conduct consistent with the Department’s exemplar available at* [*http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx)

The School makes reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:

* Working with Child Check status, or similar check.
* Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.
* The person’s history of work involving children.
* References that address the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.

Noble Park English Language School requires all workers/ volunteers to pass through the School’s recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with NPELS.

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with Noble Park English Language School must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Noble Park English Language School may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at NPELS and during their time NPELS at regular intervals.

Noble Park English Language School will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved DET and internal procedures.

Once engaged, workers/ volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of the Child Safe Policy and a wide range of School policy and procedure documents.

Noble Park English Language School has a comprehensive Staff Induction program. The School recognises that effective induction is critical to ensuring that staff are able to contribute to the School’s Vision and Mission, are aware of their legal obligations as members of staff of the School and are able to undertake their work roles quickly and effectively. The School is committed in providing induction to all new members of the School staff. The induction program provides an opportunity for new staff to be introduced to School’s policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work.

The School is committed to monitoring and assessing a job occupant’s continuing suitability for child-connected work.

**Standard 5: Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse**

The School’s policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse must enable individuals to take the appropriate course of action to protect the safety of students.

**Ministerial Order requirements:**

1. The school governing authority must have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with this clause and other legal obligations.
2. The school governing authority must ensure that the procedure is:
3. Sensitive to the diversity characteristics of the school community.
4. Made publicly available.
5. Accessible to children, school staff, and the wider community.
6. The procedure must:
7. Cover all forms of ‘child abuse’ as defined in the ETR Act.
8. Apply to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors or other persons while connected to a school environment.
9. Identify the positions of the person or people who are responsible for:
10. Promptly managing the school’s response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously.
11. Responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.
12. Monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure.
13. Managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if the person allocated responsibility under clause (3) (c) (i) cannot perform his or her role.
14. Include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.
15. Clearly describe the actions the school will take to respond to an allegation of child abuse, including actions to:
16. Inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting).
17. Protect any child connected to the alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved.
18. Make, secure and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the school’s response to it.
19. The procedure must not:
20. Prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school.
21. State or imply that it is the victim’s responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation.
22. Require staff to make a judgement about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
23. Prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements:

Noble Park English Language School Council has approved the Child Safe and Mandatory Reporting Policy, which has a clear set of procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with the Ministerial Order and other legal obligations, including criminal offences regarding grooming, failure to disclose and failure to report.

The Mandatory Reporting and Child Safe policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse apply to all staff involved in child-connected work at Noble Park English Language School, including outside of school hours.

The policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse at Noble Park English Language School enable individuals to take appropriate course of action to protect the safety of students.

The Mandatory Reporting Policy is updated regularly. Staff at Noble Park English Language School is required to undertake the DET eLearning Module on Mandatory Reporting every year.

**Standard 6: Strategies to Identify and Reduce or Remove the Risk of Abuse**

The school governing authority must develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

**Ministerial Order requirements:**

1. The school governing authority must develop and implement risk management regarding child safety in school environments.
2. The school’s risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risks(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.
3. If the school governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments, the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

***Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.***

1. As part of the risk management strategy and practices, the school governing authority must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
2. At least annually, the school governing authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:
3. Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse.
4. Child abuse risks in the school environment.
5. The school’s current child safety standards.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements:

Risk Management for Camps and Excursions

Noble Park English Language School aims to provide a diverse learning experience for students and to equip them with necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs to embrace life beyond school. The School’s camping and excursion programs are distinctive, important and integral components of the curriculum.

The purpose of the Camps and Excursions Policy is to help ensure that all components of the camping and excursions programs at Noble Park English Language School are conducted in a consistent, organised, effective and efficient manner, with due attention given to important aspects including (but not limited to) planning, preparation, approval, safety, risk management, communication, and regulatory compliance.

Noble Park English Language School has a duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of all students. Such duty of care may, at times, extend beyond the school day and school premises. Camps and excursions are examples of activities whereby the expected level of care needs to be sustained beyond the regular school day.

Excursion, incursion and camps risk registers are revised periodically to ensure that there are documented strategies regarding child safety in school environments. The School will continue to work actively towards implementing this goal.

Other Strategies to Minimise Risks of Harm

Noble Park English Language School takes seriously its commitment in relation to the safety and protection of students. Noble Park English Language School has developed policies and procedures to manage the risks of harm to the students, which our school complies with, for example:

* **Supervision -** Noble Park English Language School manages the supervision of students appropriately to ensure that there is adequate supervision of students.
* **Emergency –** Noble Park English Language School ensures that all employees are briefed to appropriately handle emergency situations and critical incidents in accordance with the School Emergency Management Plan.
* **Online school environments –** Noble Park English Language School has developed and implemented an ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy for staff and students. Safeguards are in place to minimise risks in this environment.
* **Visitors/ Volunteers/ Outsiders –** Noble Park English Language School has procedures in place for management of visitors, volunteers and other outsiders. These include relevant signage and directions, induction, and a COMPASS kiosk for signing in and out of the school. Policy and procedures for volunteers and visitors to Noble Park English Language School are documented in the School Visitors and Volunteers Policy and the Volunteer Agreement.

**Standard 7: Strategies to Promote the Participation and Empowerment of Children**

Schools must ensure that children feel safe to report abuse and have processes in place to ensure that students are empowered to raise any child safety concerns.

Schools must support students to develop appropriate knowledge and skills so that children can identify and communicate when they don’t feel safe.

**Ministerial Order requirements:**

1. The school governing authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
2. Standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
3. Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
4. Resilience; and
5. Child abuse awareness and prevention.
6. The school governing authority must promote the child safety standards required by this Order in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements:

At Noble Park English Language School, we expect all children to behave in an appropriate and acceptable manner. We believe that the quality of children’s learning and the quality of life in the School will be enhanced and enriched through the promotion and maintenance of high standards of behaviour.

We aim to establish a caring and supportive environment where all members of the School community feel secure, respected and valued. The development of personal qualities and social skills, and the fostering of socially acceptable behaviour, are an integral aspect of the school curriculum.

We expect children to take responsibility for their own actions, be aware of the needs and rights of others and so increasingly display self-discipline in all aspects of School life. The maintenance of an orderly community where children show consideration for others, and are courteous and caring, will be afforded the highest priority.

A primary aim for the School is to encourage within each student the development of positive character. Rules, and the means to enforce those rules, have been established to assist in this development. The rules and their enforcement are also intended to help each student accept responsibility for personal actions, and to ensure the safety and welfare of other members of the School community.

Clear guidelines, communicated with students and consistently reinforced by all staff, add greatly to the effective maintenance of a school culture, which supports a safe environment for all students, and a positive classroom atmosphere. The Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy, and Anti-Bullying Policy clearly articulate the behavioural expectations of students at Noble Park English Language School.

Pastoral Care is an important part of the culture at Noble Park English Language School. Effective pastoral care at the School is achieved through weekly Homegroup sessions and regular assemblies that promote positive school environments that support the physical, social, intellectual and emotional development of every student.

The National Safe Schools Framework has set as a key priority the importance of achieving a shared vision of physical and emotional safety and wellbeing for all students, as well as identifying guiding principles and standards that can inform practice and assist school communities to build safe and supportive environments.

Pastoral care is therefore incorporated into total school curriculum and the way it is delivered. It incorporates effective discipline as well as promotion of health and wellbeing, resilience and academic care.

Glossary

Aboriginal The term ’Aboriginal’ in this guide is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

CALD Culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Child The word ‘child’ and ‘children’ in this guide refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

Child abuse For the purposes of this document, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:

* Physical violence
* Sexual offences
* Serious emotional and psychological abuse
* Serious neglect

Further explanation of these types of abuse is provided in the School Mandatory Reporting Policy and Child Safe Policy documents.

Child safety In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.

NPELS Noble Park English Language School

School Noble Park English Language School

Useful Links and Resources

Australian Government Department of Social Services. (2016, April). *Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse Frequently asked questions.* Retrieved from <http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/royal-commission-to-investigate-institutional-response-to-child-sexual-abuse>

Commission for Children and Young People. (2015, December). *A Guide for Creating a Child-safe Organisation.* Retrieved from [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf)

Commonwealth of Australia (2014, June). *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Interim Report Volume 1.* Retrieved from [www.childabusroyalcommission.gov.au/about-us/our-reports](http://www.childabusroyalcommission.gov.au/about-us/our-reports)

CompliSpace Pty Ltd. (2016, March). *The New Victorian Child Safe Standards: A radical shift in your school’s child protection obligations.* Retrieved from [www.schoolgovernance.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-New-Victorian-Child-Safe-Standards-A-radical-shift-in-your-schools-child-protection-obligations.pdf](http://www.schoolgovernance.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-New-Victorian-Child-Safe-Standards-A-radical-shift-in-your-schools-child-protection-obligations.pdf)

Department of Education and Training. (2016, March). *The Child Safe Standards.* Retrieved from [www.education.vic.gov/about/programs/health/Pages/childsafe.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov/about/programs/health/Pages/childsafe.aspx)

Department of Health and Human Services. (2015a, December). *An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards.* Retrieved from [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)

Department of Health and Human Services. (2015b, December). *Child Safe Standards.* Retrieved from [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)

Department of Justice and Regulation. (2015, August). *Failure to disclose offence.* Retrieved from [www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)

Department of Justice and Regulation. (2015, August). *Failure to protect: a new criminal offence to protect children from sexual abuse.* Retrieved from

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)

Department of Justice and Regulation. (2015, August). *Betrayal of Trust Implementation.* Retrieved from [www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation)

Our Community Pty Ltd. (2016, January). *Child Protection Toolkit: What every not-for-profit organisation must do NOW.* Retrieved from

[www.communitydirectors.com.au/files/ICDA/Child\_Protection\_Toolkit\_2016\_Online.pdf](http://www.communitydirectors.com.au/files/ICDA/Child_Protection_Toolkit_2016_Online.pdf)

School Governance. (2016, March). *Child Protection Revolution: Are You Ready?* Retrieved from [www.schoolgovernance.net.au/video-1](http://www.schoolgovernance.net.au/video-1).

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority. (2016, February). *VRQA Child Safe Standards Readiness Tool.* Retrieved from [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/documents/readiness.pdf](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/documents/readiness.pdf)

Related Documents

In providing a safe educational environment, which recognises, values and build student wellbeing, we aim to provide a framework at Noble Park English Language School, which allows our students to develop academically, socially, emotionally and physically. Policies and Procedures, which build on this conceptual framework, include:

* Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Staff Code of Conduct
* Mandatory Reporting Policy
* Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
* Supervision Policy
* ICT Policy and User Agreement
* Volunteers and Visitors Policy
* Volunteer Agreement
* Staff Induction Policy
* Student Enrolment Handbook
* Employment Policy
* Working with Children Policy
* General Classroom Guidelines
* Camps, Excursions and Incursion Risk Registers
* National Safe School Framework

Prescriptive legal and regulatory requirements include:

* Ministerial Order 870
* Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
* Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
* Education and Training Reform Act 2006
* Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
* Working with Children Act 2005
* Family Violence Protection Act 2008
* Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001

Evaluation

This document will be reviewed as part of the School’s three-year review cycle. Following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the School’s child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the School’s care.

Document History

Approved by School Council: **18th September2017**