



# Child Safe Standards

At The Currajong School

## Acknowledgement to Country

The Currajong School, acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are gathered and pay our respects to their Elders both past, present and emerging.





## Overview of Child Safe Standards

- ▶ **The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) commenced in Victoria in January 2016. After five years, we have seen how the Standards improve safety for children and young people.**
- ▶ **Organisations covered by the Standards will need to comply with new Standards by 1 July 2022. Until then, the current Standards apply.**
- ▶ **The new Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. They provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia.**
- ▶ **The things organisations already do to keep children and young people safe will help them be compliant with the new Standards.**
- ▶ **In some areas, organisations will need to change or develop their current child safety policy, practices and organisational culture to meet the new Standards. Further information and guidance will be provided by the Commission and other regulators over the coming months to help organisations move to the new Standards by 1 July 2022.**

**The Currajong School has decided to align to the new eleven Child Safe Standards, from Term 4 2021**



**Child Safe Standard 1** – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

### How we address this at The Currajong School

- ▶ Students have the ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. It is encouraged and actively supported by staff, students and the school community.
- ▶ Strategies are embedded within the school which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- ▶ Our school has measures to ensure racism within the organization is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- ▶ Our school actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- ▶ Our schools' policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

### This can be seen through

- ▶ Our students are taught about histories of Indigenous Australians. Each year our students acknowledge and celebrate Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week.
- ▶ At all our school events, meetings and assemblies our leaders, students and staff commence with an acknowledgment of country.
- ▶ Our teachers organize cross cultural learning through all areas of the curriculum. This ensures that our students are regularly immersed in new learning and engage in discussions that surround cultural perspectives and understanding.
- ▶ Displays of Aboriginal culture are in all classrooms and across the school, to ensure our environment is culturally safe, respecting and valuing the identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people.





**Child Safe Standard 2** – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

**How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Our school makes a public commitment to child safety.
- ▶ A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels within the school from the top down and bottom up.
- ▶ Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.
- ▶ A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- ▶ Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- ▶ Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

**This can be seen through**

- ▶ All staff, volunteers and visitors must read and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- ▶ All the staff, the school board and families are provided with professional development annually. New members of the community are inducted on child safety when they commence at the school.
- ▶ Our public commitment to child safety is on the school website, and in our school newsletter and other official documents.
- ▶ Child Safe Standards is a standing agenda item in staff briefing each week and also at the School board meetings.
- ▶ Risk management is completed for all incursions and excursions to ensure the safety of our students
- ▶ Child safe policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated. They are available on our school website and school shared drive.



**Child Safe Standard 3** –Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

**How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Children and young people at our school are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- ▶ The importance of friendships is recognized at Currajong. Support from peers is encouraged, to help students feel safe and be less isolated.
- ▶ Where relevant and if required students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way. This is sourced by our allied health and leadership teams.
- ▶ Staff and volunteers at Currajong are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for our students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- ▶ Our school has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- ▶ Our school provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

**This can be seen through**

- ▶ The Rights, Responsibilities and Respectful Relationships program is explicitly taught and implemented.
- ▶ Our Allied Health team provided scheduled social skills sessions to foster friendships and encourage students to build strong relationships with peers.
- ▶ Students are taught their rights, including safety and participation in child friendly ways, and we create age-appropriate posters for classes.
- ▶ Student voice and agency is encouraged and supported in all classes and programs across the school that fosters our student's confidence, engagements and strengthening their contributions.
- ▶ The Currajong School has a Student Representative Council (SRC) where students provide feedback to the leadership team on learning environments and safety.
- ▶ Choice and negotiation is a key factor in our teaching and learning, students have daily negotiation time that empowers them to problem solve and make individual decisions .



## **Child Safe Standard 4 –Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing**

### **How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Our Families participate in decisions affecting their child.
- ▶ Our school engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- ▶ Our families and school community have a say in the development and review of school practices.
- ▶ Families, carers and the community are informed about the schools' operations and governance.

### **This can be seen through**

- ▶ Student Support Group Meetings ( SSG's) are held each term with families as a collaborative discussion on supports and strategies to support the students learning and wellbeing.
- ▶ Families have opportunities for collaborative input and are part of the decisions process of establishing goals within the Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- ▶ Through our team around the child approach and case management team process families assist in decision making around behaviour support plans and interventions that may be required by internal and external allied health services.
- ▶ Our school's approach to child safety, is easily accessible on the school website through a dedicated section and availability to school policies and procedures. All classes and offices have a child safe folder with relevant information available for staff and visitors. A child safe display and folder of relevant information available to families in our dedicated parents' room. Parents are also informed of the school's child safe approaches throughout the year in the school newsletter.
- ▶ Each term the leadership team hold a parent meeting with the families of each class cohort to canvass their views , perceptions and feedback on schools' practices.
- ▶ At a minimum of once a year, the leadership team conduct a Whole school parent survey, and a whole school staff survey to gain feedback and evaluate programs and practices in the school.
- ▶ Through the school newsletters, annual implementation plan, school strategic plan, detailed school website, and school blogs on the website, families and the community are informed of the school's governance and operations.
- ▶ Families can talk with our Child Safe Officer; Julian Pharaoh



## **Child Safe Standard 5 –Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice**

### **How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Our whole school, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people’s diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- ▶ The students in our school have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- ▶ Our school pays particular attention to the needs of individuals with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.
- ▶ Our school pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

### **This can be seen through**

- ▶ Our school has policies and procedures in place to support and respond to the vulnerable and diverse needs of our students in a specialist setting. These supports include class sizes of 10-12, with 3 staff in each room, an extensive allied health team including as school psychologist, speech pathologist, music therapist and occupational therapist. The staff run and support programs that respond to the students' individual academic, social and emotional needs.
- ▶ With a high staff to student ratio the students are able to access information and support in culturally and accessible ways with a staff member they can trust.
- ▶ To support students who require supports with expressive and receptive language, visual communication supports are used. Such as visual timetables, emotional regulation thermometers etc.
- ▶ Being a specialist school, our focus is on inclusion and diversity. The schools' values of Respect, Resilience and Responsibility ensure all students are safe and supported, no matter their disability, sexuality or cultural background.
- ▶ Our school adopts and implements a school wide approach to Positive Behaviour Supports, that promotes equity and respectful behaviours.
- ▶ The Rights, Responsibilities and Respectful Relationships program is taught and implemented across the school.
- ▶ Our leadership team work closely with a KESO and align professional development for staff as required.



## **Child Safe Standard 6 –People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice**

### **How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ At our school, recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasize child safety and wellbeing.
- ▶ Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- ▶ All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- ▶ At Currajong, ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

### **This can be seen through**

- ▶ The entire HR and recruitment process includes an individual's suitability and reflect child safe practices. In the Job advertisement our school's commitment to Child Safe practices is made explicit. All referees are asked a series of questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children, and child standards. All shortlisted candidates are asked a question around the child safe standards at interview . New staff must agree to the child safe code of conduct as part of signing a new contract , and a statutory declaration signed for their suitability to work with children in a school.
- ▶ All staff, new staff appointed, and volunteers must read, agree to and sign the schools Child Safe Code of Conduct annually.
- ▶ Our school's child safe code of conduct is attached to our visitor sign in book that all visitors must read when coming to the school.
- ▶ VIT cards and Working with Children Cards are photocopied and stored on file for all staff, volunteers and visitors to the school.
- ▶ Staff and the school board receive annual professional development on Child Safety, and all staff must complete the mandatory report module and provide leadership with a certificate of completion.
- ▶ New staff and volunteers to the school receive induction on the schools' policies and procedures and obligations towards reporting, information sharing, confidentiality and ensuring the safety of students.
- ▶ Our school policies of student wellbeing, duty of care, visitor/volunteers, mandatory reporting along with our school wide behaviour management procedures ensure child safety and wellbeing.



## Child Safe Standard 7 –Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

### How we address this at The Currajong School

- ▶ Our school has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.
- ▶ Our school adopts effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- ▶ At our school, complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- ▶ Our school has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.
- ▶ At Currajong, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

### This can be seen through

- ▶ Our school has a complaints policy for staff, parents and the community that is available on the school website and whole school server that are child focused.
- ▶ The leadership team endeavors to initially respond to all complaints within the same day they are raised, and follow up with more details with in 48 hours of being notified.
- ▶ The Currajong School ensures all staff follow policy and procedures that align to privacy reporting and legislation. It is also a requirement that teachers do this to maintain full registration with VIT.
- ▶ All decisions at The Currajong School are made on the premise of 'What is best for our students' how do we provide a safe and secure learning environment that promotes a positive climate for learning.



## **Child Safe Standard 8** –Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

### **How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Our staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the schools' child safety and wellbeing policy.
- ▶ Our staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- ▶ Our staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- ▶ Our staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

### **This can be seen through**

- ▶ Our staff and volunteers receive annual training with child safe standards, and complete compulsory online training for mandatory reporting through child protection.
- ▶ A child safe standards update is a standing agenda item at staff briefings, and school board meetings so staff and volunteers are always kept up to date to implement policies and procedures relating to child safe and wellbeing.
- ▶ The Currajong School leadership team and school psychologist provide information, training and support to support staff and volunteers who disclose harm. Staff are also provided regularly information about the EAP and supporting wellbeing of themselves and others.
- ▶ Through our professional development schedule our staff receive training through presentations and professional reading on how to build culturally safe environments that are inclusive and engaging.



## **Child Safe Standard 9** –Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

### **How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Our staff identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- ▶ At Currajong, the online environment is used in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.
- ▶ Our risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.
- ▶ When our school contracts facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

### **This can be seen through**

- ▶ Our staff and students have ICT user agreements that identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments.
- ▶ Our student engagement and wellbeing policy, duty of care policy, yard supervision policy, and child safe policies all ensure our online and physical environments promote safety and wellbeing of all students.
- ▶ Risk management processes occur for all incursions and excursions conducted by the staff in the school.
- ▶ Risk management is conducted for all contracts, facilities and services provided by third parties to ensure the comply with our commitment to child safe standard practices.
- ▶ Our students are explicitly taught about being safe online and the risks or problems they may face. This is taught through the digital technology's curriculum.
- ▶ Our physical environment is well maintained, attractive and promote positive wellbeing. The grounds are kept safe by secure fences, doors and buildings that minimize the opportunity for students to be harmed.



## **Child Safe Standard 10** –Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

### **How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Our school regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- ▶ Our schools, complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- ▶ Our school reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

### **This can be seen through**

- ▶ Our child safe and wellbeing policies and practices are reviewed on an annual basis or sooner as needed. School leadership and staff ensure they are up to date in practices and adopting evidence-based research to support our students and families.
- ▶ Safety incidents are all recorded on our school management system Sentral. This data is reviewed weekly by the leadership team and case management team, where supports and interventions are reviewed to support improvement in outcomes for the students.
- ▶ Each term the leadership team hold Class cohort parent meetings to gauge feedback, concerns or complaints to ensure we are addressing needs of the students and ensuring continuous reflection and improvement.
- ▶ Reporting of information, reports and findings is regularly done to all stakeholders in our school community through weekly meetings, briefings, written weekly wraps, email communication, the family seesaw app, parent meetings, SSG's, the annual implementation plan and school newsletters.



## **Child Safe Standard 11** –Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

### **How we address this at The Currajong School**

- ▶ Our policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- ▶ Our policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- ▶ Our school uses best practice models from ISV and DET and Board consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- ▶ Our Leadership team champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- ▶ Our staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

### **This can be seen through**

- ▶ Our policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and address all of the standards. Our policies are available on the school website and staff Google Drive.
- ▶ The Currajong School works with Independent Schools Victoria, and DET to ensure our policies and procedures are following best practice.
- ▶ The Currajong policies and procedures are role modelled by the leaders and the school community is supported to ensure they are embedded into day to day operations.
- ▶ Pulse checks are done throughout the year to ensure staff and volunteers understand the implementation of the policies and procedures.



# PROTECT

**Everyone has the right to be safe and be protected from abuse.**

No one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid, including anyone in your family, anyone at school or anywhere else in the community.

Tell a teacher or any adult at your school if you feel unsafe.

**For Students, please call:  
1800 551 800 (Kids Helpline)  
In an emergency, always contact 000  
for emergency services**



**It's everyone's responsibility.**

Adults at school must listen and respond to concerns about child abuse.

If you suspect abuse of any child or young person, you have a responsibility to report it, even if you are not sure.

**Further information & resources**  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/protect)

**For Parents**  
1800 991 099 (Child Wise Helpline)  
131 278 (Child Protection  
Crisis Line)  
1300 138 180 (Child First)

