

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY POLICY

*The Currajong School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all **Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)***

At The Currajong School, we consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people to be our highest priority. We strive to always ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at our school. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment where all students can be happy, confident and resilient, regardless of their sexual or gender identity, cultural background, disability or other circumstances. We take account of the diversity of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and vulnerable children. Any physical contact with children or young people must be appropriate to the delivery of the programs and services based on the needs of the individual rather than the needs of any staff.

All visitors, volunteers, staff, casual staff and any teacher placements must have a working with children check (WWCC)/VIT registration and undertake an induction in regard to Child Safety at our school. Contractors are encouraged to do work outside of school hours or on curriculum days, when students are not present, however, in the event that they have to enter the school they must have a WWCC and do a Child Safety induction or be accompanied at all times by a staff member.

Safeguarding children underpins our policies and procedures in relation to the protection of children and young people and guides the following:

- taking a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- valuing and empowering children to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- fostering a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- respecting diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- providing written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- engaging only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development

- ensuring children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- reporting suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- sharing information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers."

Safeguarding children underpins our practices in relation to the following:

- our open and effective communication with children and young people and their parents, which is valued
- the screening and recruitment of our personnel
- the behaviour of our staff towards children and young people
- the induction and training of our staff about safe guarding children and young people
- our response to the abuse and neglect of children if it occurs
- share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
- our maintenance of a safeguarding culture in our school

Our staff are required to:

- undergo an extensive screening process including a National Criminal Records Check and/or a Working with Children Check.
- behave professionally and respectfully and with care towards children and young people including not acting outside the boundaries of their duties or using their position with the school to solicit work or initiate contact with children and young people who are attending our school.
- understand the important responsibility they have to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation either by staff, or anything that occurs outside the scope of our school.
- continue to create and maintain a child safe culture.

We are dedicated to protecting the children and young people in our school. Staff have undertaken training such as elmolearning.com, Protecting the Safety of Children and Young People, Mandatory Reporting Professional Learning module, and working with organisations such as DHHS and the Australian Childhood Foundation.

Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations

We consider any form of child abuse including emotional, physical and sexual abuse, family violence, grooming or neglect as intolerable under any circumstances.

We have a legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people and will ensure that any incident of suspected child abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

All students know who to talk to if they feel unsafe or are worried. Our staff have developed posters for the classrooms using boardmaker symbols so that our students feel comfortable raising any issues.

Teachers will also report any issues raised by students that they find concerning to leadership immediately.

Our staff are required to report any suspected child abuse to the Principal, the Assistant Principal, Leadership, Child Protection or the police. The Currajong School will cooperate with child protection and police and any other agencies to protect children and young people from harm.

The Currajong School Practice and Behaviour guidelines

Our staff and any volunteers, students on placement, and visitors are required to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct towards children and young people.

The following guidelines underline our practice and behaviour.

Overnight camps

Overnight camps occur only with the authorisation of the Principal, and a parent/carer.

Standards of conduct that must be observed include:

- Providing children and young people with privacy with any bathing and dressing, or assisting them with personal care
- Not leaving children or young people under the supervision or protection of unauthorised staff
- The right of young children or young people to talk or indicate by their behaviour, that they feel unsafe, or distressed during the stay, and their parents/carers may need to be contacted.

Positive Behaviour Support

We support our students to be as independent as possible. We promote the practice of Positive Behaviour Support strategies by all staff to ensure a safe and positive learning environment and the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and staff at our school. We have developed The Currajong School Positive Behaviour Resource for all staff to follow as well as any new staff. All strategies are fair, respectful and appropriate to the situation and the developmental stage of the children and young people involved.

All our students have complex communication needs and unique goals and abilities within the education setting. In order to support the varied and diverse needs of all of our students across the school, and empower them to communicate and participate, we use verbal communication alongside a variety of alternative communication (AAC) strategies.

No staff member is to take action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

Professional Boundaries

Our staff are advised not to act outside the confines of their duties, as specified in their position description when working with students to deliver educational programs. At The Currajong School we discourage staff to engage with students who attend the school in activities outside of school hours, such as baby-sitting. Staff need to make the Principal aware of any such activities.

Photographs of children and young people

Students are only photographed by our staff while engaged in programs or activities if:

- prior consent from parents/carers has been obtained (with the exception of events open to the school community such as Family nights, performances, incursions)
- the context is directly related to participation in educational programs
- the child is appropriately dressed and posed
- all visitors to the school read and sign a policy stating that mobile phones are only to be used on breaks and no photos of students are to be taken at any time without prior parent consent

Use of electronic communication

Any communication is to be restricted to the delivery of our educational programs and services or if necessary, communicating with a parent/carer. Staff are to check with Leadership before ringing parents/carers about such things as an incident or an upcoming event, or transport issues, early finish for school, cancellation of an event or excursion.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as per our three-year review cycle or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next review:
October 2021	School Board	October 2024



The Currajong School acknowledges the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the Elders past, present and emerging.