

Student Voice Policy

March 2020

RATIONALE

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. The School will provide processes of communication and specific curriculum to assist children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

AIMS

Schools need to ensure children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse; possessing simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All school staff and people working in a child connected capacity need to have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

IMPLEMENTATION

The school will provide students with the following strategies to facilitate the empowerment of students:

Provision of child-appropriate and accessible information through curriculum about:

- Privacy,
- How they can raise concerns about abuse;
- Student engagement;
- School wide positive behaviour support;
- Respectful relationships education;
- Health education;
- Mental Health;
- Supporting Resilience;
- Child wise personal safety education;
- Standards of behaviour for students
- Healthy and Respectful relationships;
- Resilience;
- Information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children, for example by having policies and procedures that can be accessed and understood by children with a disability. Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children. As required, the school will engage with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisation to review information and processes. Additionally, the Regional

Koorie Education Support Officer can arrange appropriate support for a student.

- Provide culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.
- Empowering students to have a formal voice of what needs to occur at Moorabbin Primary School from their perspective, with an identified forum.
- Translate organisational information (including information about children's rights, child safe policies, and statements of commitment, reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, as required or upon request
- Gather strategic feedback from children (for example, through surveys and focus groups) about student safety, modes of raising concerns and suggested improvements for the school.
- Enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. (For example, student views could be gathered through surveys) via direct communication with the Primary Welfare Officer.
- Ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops through classroom of Moorabbin Primary School's buildings.
- Provide relevant training to all staff of Moorabbin Primary School on methods of inclusiveness to encourage the participation of all children, in all activities, through:
 - Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;-Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;
 - Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children living in Out-of-Home Care;
- Ensure Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Raise awareness within the School about children's Rights through our Schools values: Thoughtful, Enthusiasm, Respect, Responsibility, Inclusive, Friendly, Inquisitive and Capable.
- Provide a physical environment that is visually inclusive and welcoming for Aboriginal peoples and culture, such as by displaying symbols that indicate support and respect for Aboriginal peoples.

- Promoting a school environment where the past is acknowledged and Aboriginal cultural diversity is respected, such as by including an Acknowledgement of Country at meetings or events.

Samples adapted from DHHS booklet-An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and published by Victorian Govt. 2015

Moorabbin Primary School acknowledges within our statement of commitment that it is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Within this context it is vitally important that Moorabbin Primary School staff promote the participation and empowerment of all children. When children have an environment in which they feel safe, respected and comfortable, they are more likely to speak on issues of safety and wellbeing.

All staff of Moorabbin Primary School has a responsibility to provide teaching and learning environments that are free from discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Moorabbin Primary School community.

The safety and wellbeing of our students form a central and fundamental responsibility of our School and compliments our vision and values of: Thoughtful, Enthusiasm, Respect, Responsibility, Inclusive, Friendly, Inquisitive and Capable.

We are committed to Zero tolerance of child abuse; including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect.

It is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. Moorabbin Primary School affirms our commitment towards-

- The support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- Actively working towards listening to and empowering children.
- Creating systems to protect children from abuse and will take all allegations and concerns seriously; having mechanisms in place to ensure consistency in line with school, DET and DHHS protocols.
- Promoting cultural safety and safe learning environments for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Empowering and providing an inclusive environment for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Evaluation

Ratified by School Council

This policy is to be reviewed annually or as policy is amended