

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

### **Commitment to child safety**

All children who come to Western Autistic School have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child centered learning environment where children feel safe and enjoy learning.

### **Children's rights to safety and participation**

Western Autistic School staff are committed to building the independence of our learners, and our foundational curriculum targets key skills that learners need in order to communicate their needs and preferences. We recognise and celebrate student achievement, and seek to encourage student voice both informally, and formally through channels such as our junior school council. The work that we do to support student participation is outlined in the school's Student Engagement Policy.

Across the school we work to teach children about personal safety, and to respond to any staff, student or parent safety concerns. As part of this we have a robust occupational health and safety framework in place, which is coordinated by staff in the following roles:

- Occupational Health and Safety Representative (Laverton Campus)
- Occupational Health and Safety Representative (Niddrie Campus)
- Occupational Work Place Manager (Laverton Campus)
- Occupational Work Place Manger (Niddrie Campus)

For more information about the school OHS procedures, please consult the school emergency plan, the school risk register and the OHS activities calendar

### **Valuing diversity**

At Western Autistic School we value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds

### **Recruiting staff and volunteers**

Western Autistic School applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements.

### Supporting staff and volunteers

Western Autistic School seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive a copy of this upon induction. Information on the schools Child Safe practices and OHS procedures are also included as part of our mandatory staff induction processes.

### Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The campus principal for each campus has been designated as the Child Safety Persons for that site. These staff have responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints processes are outlined on the attached diagram.

All school staff are responsible for child safety at the school and for reporting any suspected incident of child abuse. Teachers at the school are also legally obliged to report any suspected instance of child abuse under the Department of Education mandatory reporting guidelines.

### Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

### REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

<b>Evaluation</b>	Recommended review cycle 1 to 2 years
<b>Date Ratified</b>	September 22
<b>Next review date</b>	2021
<b>School Council Approval</b>	Approved
<b>School Council President</b>	
<b>School Principal</b>	
<b>Date of ratification</b>	

**WESTERN AUTISTIC SCHOOL**

**Commitment to Child Safety**

**The Child Safe Standards**

Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out the specific actions that schools need to take to meet the child safe standards. The introduction of child safe standards form part of the Victorian Government's response to the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in schools.

The standards will promote cultures where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice in organisations.

The Child Safe Standards set out to create safe places for children to fully and actively participate in the life of the community benefiting everyone. Western Autistic School will ensure that the children in its care are protected to the best of its ability and in line with their duty of care and the compulsory child safe standards.

**The Standards**

To create and maintain a child safe school, we will comply with the following standards.

**Standard 1** Good leadership & governance in child safe school - strategies to embed a school culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

**Standard 2** Commitment to Child Safety Policy - a child safe statement of commitment to child safety

**Standard 3** Code of Conduct - a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

**Standard 4** Human Resources Practices - screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

**Standard 5** Reporting Child Abuse - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

**Standard 6** Identifying and Reducing Risks - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

**Standard 7** Empowering Children - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children. Ministerial Order No. 870 has set out the specific actions for schools to take to meet these requirements

In complying with the child safe standards above, we will be mindful of the diversity of students and school communities and include the following inclusion principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the safety of children with a disability
- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds