

# **OAKLEIGH SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND RECRUITMENT PRACTICES**

**The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel. This document aims to inform good human resources practices at Oakleigh South Primary School.**

## **Overview**

It is important for organisations to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse.

At Oakleigh South Primary School we aim to foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as be aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations such as ours. Rigorous human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, Oakleigh South Primary School provides opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This helps support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

Oakleigh South Primary School reinforces a commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

## **Child safety officers – Principal and Assistant Principals**

Employees and volunteers are supported through the appointment of an individual child safety officer (at Oakleigh South Primary School this is the Principal and Assistant Principals) with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. They assist all staff in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with Oakleigh South's legal requirements and policies and procedures.

Our child safety officer/s also provides a contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with our school.

## **Training and induction**

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff receive induction and ongoing training. New staff are provided with support and information when they begin their role at Oakleigh South Primary School, and existing staff develop skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

Training and support also promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that Oakleigh South Primary School meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

It is essential that all staff are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children, for example by acknowledging and signing our school's code of conduct. Training should enhance the skills and knowledge of your employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

**Employees and volunteers working with children receive training in the following areas:**

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks (for example, via Mandatory Reporting e-Learning Modules, updated yearly)
- policies and procedures (including the code of conduct and child safe policy that is part of the staff induction session and handbook)
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse<sup>3</sup>, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse<sup>4</sup>, and to hold Working with Children Checks<sup>5</sup> where required (for example, the register of WWCC held in the office, or the VIT registration process that requires yearly police checks)
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines (staff are regularly updated during the year with appropriate in house training and completion of e-Learning modules)
- KESO Training - cultural awareness training – (this will be completed in 2020).

**Training can be formal such as:**

- higher education training and accreditation
- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training

**Training can also be informal such as:**

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching
- connection with NEVR cultural awareness training and department conduits

**Supervision**

Supervision of employees and volunteers should be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, Oakleigh South Primary School asks that two staff members should be present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability, language barrier (for example EAL) or new arrivals to Australia may require additional or culturally sensitive supervision.

As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate.

Any warning signs are reported through appropriate channels, including Oakleigh South's internal reporting procedures (such as our child safety officer/s and leadership), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

### **Performance and development review**

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve employees and volunteers skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance is measured against our standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards must align with those of the code of conduct and Oakleigh South's child safe policy so everyone is aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

### **Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures**

Oakleigh South Primary School has a Code of Conduct that provide links to services for staff, students and families at our school in regards to Child Safe requirements. This code of conduct outlines expected standards of appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children. Procedures for managing an allegation of child abuse or a breach of the code of conduct is outlined in Oakleigh South's Child Safe Policy.

Employees and volunteers are aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within the organisation. Staff are regularly informed as to their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Oakleigh South's Code of Conduct, Child Safe Policy, procedures and resources are publicly available via our website. Children and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Oakleigh South's Child Safe policies and procedures clearly outline what employees or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

**This policy was reviewed and updated on September 13, 2019.**