

Standard One **Child Safe**

Leadership and Governance in Child Safe Standards

Leadership in a child safe environment

Working with children can be very rewarding and it brings extra responsibilities. Echuca Primary School will act to protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We do this by providing a culture of child safety, embedded throughout our school so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday practice and thinking. This culture has been achieved through the proactive leadership in demonstrating appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of Echuca Primary School.

Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. At Echuca Primary School, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.¹

Governance in a child safe environment

Leadership at Echuca Primary School takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership responsibilities

Leadership at Echuca Primary School is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety, including the use of the tools provided by the education department. The leadership team takes the lead in protecting children from abuse and are aware of child abuse allegations, including risks and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Echuca Primary School will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and or child protection.

Identify and analyse risk of abuse

Echuca Primary School adopts an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our school identifies, assesses and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

¹ For definitions of key terms, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)
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Please note: The Department of Health and Human Services provides risk management tools for school use.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000

In its commitment to Child Safe Standards, Echuca Primary

School has: Developed a Child Safe Policy

This child safe policy outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

Developed Codes of Conduct

Echuca Primary School has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working with and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) developed the Code of Conduct as required by Part 2.6 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Code of Conduct is a set of principles or standards for the behaviour and conduct of all Victorian teachers in the Victorian Government Teaching Service and the non-Government sector.

The following principles are of particular relevance when using social media tools:

Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.

Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and the profession as a whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

Echuca Primary School has also developed a specific Code of Conduct that encourages appropriate behaviour between children called the Student Code of Conduct.

Echuca Primary School

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Chosen suitable employees and volunteers

Echuca Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, it will ensure it includes:

- Selection criteria in job descriptions
- Police record and identity checks
- Working with Children Checks where required
- Face to Face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers including from the applicants most recent employer

Supported, trained, supervised and enhanced performance

Echuca Primary School ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. In particular, the Principal, leadership team and the child safety officer understand their responsibilities. Our child safety officer at Echuca Primary School is the person who has knowledge of child safety issues and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

Promoted Inclusion

Echuca Primary School is inclusive to all children and families. In particular establishes a culture that support:

- Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders community controlled organisations
- Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents and communications such as the website and newsletters
- The safety of children with a disability for example by ensuring that Echuca Primary School is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability

Empowered and promoted the participation of children in decision making

Echuca Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. Echuca Primary School provides opportunities for children to express their views on the Student Code of Conduct and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through suggestion boxes, SAT team meetings and feedback sessions.

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Echuca Primary School will listen to children and take their ideas or concerns seriously particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for safety or the safety of other children.

Further information

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>

Key activities of a school child safety officer/leader role

A school leader for child safety should have sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate), to undertake the role effectively

Broad areas of the role are to:

Provide authoritative advice

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
- Liaise with the principal and school leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety.
- Lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

Raise awareness

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
- Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.

Train

Being authoritative in providing advice by:

- keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years
- having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so

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- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.
- Gayle Bedford is our nominated child safety officer

Evaluation: Child Safe Standards One was endorsed by School Council on: **29/04/2019**

