



PRAHRAN
HIGH
SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE POLICY

RATIONALE

The Victorian Government, and the Prahran High School community, is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report, in 2016 there is a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by new compulsory [Child Safe Standards](#).

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

As a new school, Prahran High School is committed to developing clear and rigorous policies and procedures to keep children safe. Prahran High School is also committed to ongoing improvement in this area.

The Prahran High School Council and staff have zero tolerance for any, and all, examples of child abuse in any form. This commitment is led by the Prahran High School Council and implemented in word and action by the school Principal and staff.

This policy is informed by the content of [Ministerial Order 870](#).

AIMS/PURPOSE

To maintain and strengthen Prahran High Prahran High School as a truly child safe organisation, in which all of the Child Safe Standards apply. The Standards which are fully implemented are:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
3. a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Key Definition: What is Child Abuse?

The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations. Under [the Act](#), child abuse includes four categories of abuse as outlined below.¹

While the standards apply specifically to child abuse, organisations should look to promote children's health and wellbeing in a broader sense.

¹ These definitions are based on the Victorian [Child Protection Practice Manual](#): www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/practice-context/child-protection-program-overview/1008-abuse-and-harm-legal-and-practice-definitions>

Physical violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Possible physical indicators:

- Unexplained bruises
- Burns and/or fractured bones

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
- Fear of specific people
- Unexplained absences
- Academic problems

Sexual offences

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.²

Possible physical indicators:

- Presence of sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age
- Difficulty sleeping
- Being withdrawn
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains
- Fear of specific people
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Displaying aggressive behaviour

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

² A new grooming offence commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014. Further information is available on the [Department of Justice website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/grooming-offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/grooming-offence>

Possible physical indicators:

- Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development
- Physical signs of self-harming

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Exhibiting low self-esteem
- Exhibiting high anxiety
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful
- Self-harming

Serious neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Stealing food
- Staying at Prahran High School outside of school hours
- Aggressive behaviour
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Academic issues

Further Information about child protection services can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](#)

Implementation

There are many vital components to Prahran High School's full implementation of the Child Safe standards. The implementation impacts all aspects of this organisation and the steps taken are outlined here in this policy. Many of these steps are detailed further in other connected policy documents.

Further supporting this Child Safety policy is the [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#).

Staff at Prahran High School:

1. Everyone connected to our Prahran High School has a role to play to help children be safe.
2. We have zero tolerance for any abuse of children.
3. We have many policies and processes in place to protect the care, safety and welfare of children. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, these will be strengthened all the time to ensure a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.
4. All staff will complete an annual, compulsory Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse learning module through the DET
5. There are clear boundaries about how staff may interact with the children at our Prahran High School.
6. This Child Safe policy and the Child Safe standards apply to all Prahran High School staff (including volunteers and contractors), visitors and students' family members.

7. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Different people at our Prahran High School have different roles and responsibilities for ensuring children's safety. These roles are clearly defined.
8. A broad cross-section of staff will be involved in strategy development and review of policies and procedures associated with the Child Safe standards.
9. At Prahran High School, the regular staff team meetings will include 'Child Safe Concerns and Conversations' as part of their normal meeting agendas, to reinforce the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
10. There will be an annual whole staff meeting to launch and re-engage with the Child Safe standards, to outline roles and responsibilities, and confirm the whole Prahran High School's commitment to protecting children
11. Staff recruitment and induction to Prahran High School will have child safety as an explicit part of induction to this safe school culture.
12. The Prahran High School will post child safety information on relevant notice boards within the school, as well as ensuring that all relevant electronic communication is shared widely
13. The Prahran High School Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines clear behavioural expectations for all staff

Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors at Prahran High Prahran High School

Volunteers and contractors may often be engaged in work at Prahran High School. Their involvement may be for long or short periods of time.

1. This Child Safe policy and the Child Safe standards apply to all Prahran High School staff (including volunteers and contractors), visitors and students' family members.
2. No contractor or volunteer is permitted to enter the Prahran High School site without first signing in; undertaking an induction and presenting a current Working with Children check.
3. The Prahran High School provides clear advice on the website about what to expect if working with or volunteering at the Prahran High School
4. The Prahran High School includes child safety information in volunteer and contractor advice
5. The Prahran High School includes detailed child safety information on the Prahran High School website.
6. The College Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines clear behavioural expectations for all visitors to the Prahran High School.

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was written in July 2018. It is scheduled to be shared with Council in May 2019.

This is a critical school policy and will be formally reviewed and re-ratified every year. This will thus first occur in February 2020.