THE CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

Preamble

Cambridge Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Cambridge Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Cambridge Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Cambridge Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

1. Aim:
The child safe environments policy sets out the school’s approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe and provides the policy framework for the school’s approach to the Child Safe Standards.

2. Implementation:

- The school will work with families and the wider community to ensure all of our students are protected from harm.
- This policy will apply across a range of school settings and forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours and to all staff, volunteers, contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.
- The community will be made aware of the policy and the school’s underlying philosophy towards the care of children.
- The school’s culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.
- School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and expected behaviours in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school’s Code of Conduct and staff will be provided professional learning opportunities and resources.
- The school’s Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we employ the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check, in which Cambridge Primary School is a registered organisation for work/volunteering.
- Staff will be required to complete the annual online ‘Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting’ module with all certificates being filed electronically.
- The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns, and reporting concerns to DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency. The leadership

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team will support staff members take action to respond to concerns over child safety. The school’s policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the school’s computer network (staff share, student welfare ,how to make a report) and is also provided to all staff as part of the induction process.

- The School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures. The school’s approach to Child Safety risk reduction and management can be found on the website at [http://www.cambridgegps.vic.edu.au/](http://www.cambridgegps.vic.edu.au/) under the resources tab and at the following school policy/ies; School camps, Working With Children Check, Student Welfare and Discipline, Sun Smart, Swimming, Ant-bullying, Transition, Raising Concerns and Complaints, Visitors to the School, Risk Management, Yard Duty, Critical Incidents, Mandatory Reporting, Duty of Care, Emergency Management, Excursion and Incursions, Dispensing Medication, Attendance, Confidentiality, Asthma Management and Anaphylaxis Management.

- The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. The school encourages child and parent/ care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

- When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint or disclosure about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant’s account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parent/carer) informed about the progress of the disclosure.

- This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Confidentiality Policy.

Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

- **Child abuse** includes—
  - any act committed against a child involving:
    - a sexual offence or
    - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
  - the infliction, on a child, of:
    - physical violence or
    - serious emotional or psychological harm
    - serious neglect of a child.

- **Child-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

- **Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

- **School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:
  - a campus of the school
  - online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
  - other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
  - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

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3. **Evaluation:**
To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents and the school community.
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

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4. **Resources:**
DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework
School Privacy Policy (update expected in June 2016)