

# *Valkstone Primary School, No. 4778*



**VALKSTONE STREET, EAST BENTLEIGH 3165**

Telephone: 9570 3986

Facsimile: 9579 4423

Homepage: [www.valkstoneps.vic.edu.au](http://www.valkstoneps.vic.edu.au)

Email: [valkstone.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:valkstone.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au)

*Address correspondence to P.O.Box 101, East Bentleigh 3165*

## **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

### **1. Definitions:**

- 1.1 DET – Department of Education & Training
- 1.2 DHS – Department of Human Services
- 1.3 WWCC- Working With Children Check

### **2. Purpose:**

- 2.1 To outline our commitment to child safety.

### **3. Guidelines**

- 3.1 Valkstone Primary School is committed to Child Safety.
- 3.2 All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.
- 3.3 We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- 3.4 We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- 3.5 We have zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- 3.6 We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- 3.7 Valkstone Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- 3.8 Valkstone Primary School has robust human resources, recruitment practices and induction programs for all staff and volunteers.
- 3.9 Valkstone Primary School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- 3.10 We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- 3.11 We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
- 3.12 The Principal, Assistant Principal and the Student Wellbeing coordinators are responsible for leading the development of a culture of child safety and are responsible for addressing concerns regarding student safety at Valkstone Primary School.

## **4. Implementation**

### **Our children**

- 4.1.1 This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants at Valkstone Primary School. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
- 4.1.2 We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation. People from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
  - promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

### **4.2 Our Staff and Volunteers**

- 4.2.1 This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.
- 4.2.2 All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

### **4.3 Training and Supervision**

- 4.3.1 Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- 4.3.2 Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- 4.3.3 We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.
- 4.3.4 New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Valkstone Primary School's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

### **4.4 Recruitment**

- 4.4.1 We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Valkstone Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- 4.4.2 We actively encourage applications from all candidates regardless of race, gender, sex, sexuality, disability, religion or cultural background.
- 4.4.3 All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the WWCC website [workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) for further information

4.4.4 We carry out reference checks and ensure that police record checks are current via VIT registration for teachers and WWCC for other employees. We do not employ teachers who are not VIT registered or staff who do not have a current WWCC. Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

#### 4.5 Fair procedures for personnel

4.5.1 The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be in line with DET guidelines and advice will be sought from Conduct and Ethics or Legal Branch where necessary.

4.5.2 We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form available from the principal. All records are securely stored.

#### 4.6 Privacy

4.6.1 All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form available from the principal. All records are securely stored.

#### 4.7 Legislative responsibilities

4.7.1 Valkstone Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

**Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

**Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form available from the principal. All records are securely stored.

#### 4.8 Risk management

4.8.1 In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

4.8.2 We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child on social media).

#### 4.9 Allegations, concerns and complaints

4.9.1 If there is a belief a child is at immediate risk of abuse the school will phone 000.

4.9.2 Valkstone Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

4.9.3 We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

4.9.4 We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

5. **Review**

5.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur.

**This policy was last ratified by School Council on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2016**