



# GOOD LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

## RATIONALE

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children<sup>1</sup> to have strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements. Protecting children from abuse is everybody's business, and an organisation's leadership is essential to instilling a child safety culture.

## LEADERSHIP IN A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities.

At Meeniyian Primary School we protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout our organisation so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.

A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. Meeniyian Primary School fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults should 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 children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.<sup>2</sup>

## GOVERNANCE IN A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

At Meeniyian Primary School Leadership takes preventative, proactive and participatory approaches to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children is a paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Leadership responsibilities

Leadership is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety at Meeniyian Primary School, including using the below tools. Leadership takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, when made aware of child abuse allegations and risks and takes responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

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

<sup>1</sup> For a [list of the organisations in scope](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards) for the child safe standards, please see the Department of Health and Human Services website: <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards)>.

<sup>2</sup> 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): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)>.

### Identify and analyse risk of abuse

Meeniyan Primary School has approaches to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our organisation identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

### Develop a child safe policy

Meeniyan Primary School has a child safe policy which outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

### Develop codes of conduct

Meeniyan Primary School has a professional code of conduct for teachers. We also have a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working, volunteering and interacting with children.

### Choose suitable employees and volunteers

Meeniyan Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children, checks face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager.

### Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

Meeniyan 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. The Child Safety Officer is the Principal who has knowledge of child safety issues, and is a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

### Promote inclusion

Meeniyan Primary School is inclusive to all children and families and supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal 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 your organisation is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

### Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making

Meeniyan Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. We listen to children and take them seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their 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](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>

Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, [An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](#), has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\_\_\_data/assets/word\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\_overview.doc>

Note for registered schools: a forthcoming Ministerial Order under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* will contain the minimum actions that schools must take to meet each of the child safe standards. There will be a lead in time before regulation will commence to allow schools time to prepare. The Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority will provide information and materials specifically for schools to assist with capacity building and compliance.

Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training:  
[child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Early childhood services operating under the *National Quality Framework* or *Children's Services Act 1996* should contact: [licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415