



Flowerdale Primary School

Small Schools Are Great Schools

CHILD SAFE VOICE AND EMPOWERMENT POLICY

Definition:

Rationale:

In 2013, the Victorian Parliament held an Inquiry into the 'Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations,' resulting in the 'Betrayal of Trust Report.' This report demonstrated that children are vulnerable to abuse in organisations where there is little or no culture that promotes child empowerment or voice.

The report found that more could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety. In response, the Victorian Government brought in child safe standards for organisations that work with children, including schools.

Aims:

This policy aims to put in place a culture where child voice is raised and empowerment valued through agreed beliefs and strategies. Children learn best when they feel safe, respected, empowered and have a voice in the school's decision making processes.

Implementation:

What we will see in classrooms:

- A set of agreed rules and protocols for each classroom based on shared beliefs between the children and teacher
- The school values of Respect, Personal Best, Team Work, Compassion and Bouncing Back are clearly displayed and referred to
- Adult /child conversations that are respectful, kind and compassionate

Chaplaincy Program

- Students who have obtained parental permission may organise meeting times with the School Chaplain to discuss issues or concerns
- Students may be invited to participate in small group teaching sessions in social and emotional learning conducted by their School Chaplain

What we will see in the curriculum:

- All teachers to conduct weekly lessons using the Bounce Back program of social and emotional learning
- F-6 developmentally appropriate regular lessons that relate to child abuse – recognition, reporting and dealing with trauma
- 'Bravehearts,' will be used to assist teachers in F-2
- The sexual education curriculum will include age appropriate lessons on sexual grooming and how to recognise sexual abuse
- The eSmart curriculum will include age appropriate lessons on cybersafety

What we will see in school organisation:

- A 'Child safety Officer,' and nominee, appointed each year
- Child safety policies and protocols explained to staff and community at the start of each school year
- 'Child Safe' policy agreement signed by all adults working with children at the school
- Children, families and staff made aware of how to report instances of child abuse
- Policies relating directly to Child Safety Ministerial Order 8702: Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Staff Recruitment, Child Safe Incident Template
- Policies to support child safety: Camps, Excursions,
- Structures to ensure children have a voice: Agreed school leadership positions Yr 5/6, Student Representative Council, Year 3-6 Leadership Groups, assembly protocols (children MC the assemblies), 3 Way Interviews,
- Regular student surveys – Kids Matter
- Analysis of Yr4/ 5/6 Student Opinion surveys and prompt action on issues raised
- Senior / junior class buddy programs and peer tutoring
- Regular review and discussion as to how child voice and empowerment can be raised throughout the school
- Child input to be sought on all extra curricula events that affect them – Yr 6 Graduation Dinner, School Celebrations, special assemblies, school picnic, fundraising opportunities, School Master Plan Committee

Evaluation:

This policy was last ratified by School Council in July 2017

