



# Flowerdale Primary School

## Small Schools Are Great Schools

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE POLICY

**Definition:** For the purposes of this policy, and in reference to the child safe standards, child abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect – see Appendix A for examples. All reporting is confidential and must be reported, on the attached template, to the 'Child Safety Officer' or their nominee if there is a conflict of interest.

**Rationale:** The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have processes for responding to, and reporting, suspected child abuse within the organisation.

**Aims:** To ensure that all members of the school community know how to identify, and report, instances of child abuse committed within the school organisation.

### **Implementation:**

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an applicable entity to which the standards apply must have:

**Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**

**Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.**

**Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**

**Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**

**Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.**

**Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.**

**Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.**

- At the start of each school year the principal will ask for volunteers from the school Leadership Team to undertake duties as the Child Safety Officer.
- The Child Safety Officer is to ensure that all staff are given regular professional development around the child safe standards throughout the year.
- Staff document folders are to contain the Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Reporting Child Abuse policy.
- When an incident of child abuse is alleged, the witness will be given support to fill out the Reporting of Child Abuse form that will be handed to the Child Safety Officer, or their nominee where there is a conflict of interest:

### **If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you**

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.

- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to your manager or your organisation's child safety officer, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

**If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern**

- Explain that your organisation has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
  - Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
  - Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
  - Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
  - Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the organisation's management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
  - Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
  - Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
  - Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
  - Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
- The Child Safety Officer, or their nominee, will notify the child's family, and investigate the alleged incident as quickly as possible.
  - All parties to the alleged incident will be ensured confidentiality throughout the process.
  - Where the alleged abuse is confirmed, and committed by a staff member, the staff member involved will be disciplined according to the department's misconduct guidelines.
  - Where the alleged abuse is confirmed, and committed by a volunteer or service provider, the Department of Education's legal service will be contacted to determine the most appropriate course of action.
  - Copies of all allegations, notes and outcome statements will be kept in a locked confidential file marked, 'To Be Opened by the Principal Only.'

<b><u>Evaluation:</u> Following each incident of report</b>		
---	--	--