

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

POLICY

RATIONALE

As part of the Victorian Government's expectation that Victorian schools will form part of the society's expectation that all children will be protected and supported if in need, Upper Plenty Primary School has developed 7 Child Safety Standards as required. These standards are to be read and used in conjunction with the many policies and programs that this school has developed and been running in its quest to provide a safe, supportive and engaging environment that allows the children under its care to become independent, resilient and self-motivated people.

These standards will be incorporated into staff meetings, staff professional development, and become embedded into our schools Culture.



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 1:

STRATEGIES TO EMBED AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY, INCLUDING THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Upper Plenty Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. The whole school community has a commitment to child safety through the development of a child safety program.

Upper Plenty Primary School drives to have continuous improvement so that protecting children from all forms of abuse becomes embedded in everyday actions and thinking of the School Community. Also to raise awareness and access to organisations that can become part of the process of the creation of a culture of child safety.

NB: This statement is to be used in conjunction with the Upper Plenty Primary School Policies for Student Engagement, Student Welfare, Mandatory Reporting and Duty of Care.

In Upper Plenty Primary School's commitment to providing the School Community with strategies to make child safety as part of its culture we will:-

1. Appoint a Child Safety Officer to support, advise and give expertise to staff in the Child Safety area and to oversee the development of Child Safety Standards within the School Community.
2. To bring the importance of Child Safety to the forefront of the safety culture being developed in the School Community. To keep the Principal/Leader informed in Child Safety issues
3. The Child Safety Officer will provide coordination of communication of the issues arising in the School Community, monitoring of the policy and follow the success or otherwise of the change to the culture of child safety.
4. Make all policies known and available to the School Community and aware that referrals can be made to authorities by the school.
5. Train staff and increase the culture of child safety, keep staff updated with appropriate training on a bi annual basis. If necessary support staff if a case is to be reviewed by an appropriate authority.
6. Maintain detailed, accurate, secure written records of concern and any referrals
7. Make staff aware of available PD opportunities referring to child safety culture and the school community.
8. Develop strategies to identify, reduce or remove risks of child abuse in the school community
9. Develop strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children with Child Safety within the School Community.



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2: CHILD SAFE POLICY & STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Upper Plenty 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. This statement is to be used in conjunction with the Upper Plenty Primary School Policies for Student Engagement, Student Welfare, Mandatory Reporting and Duty of Care.

Upper Plenty Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Upper Plenty Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people 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.

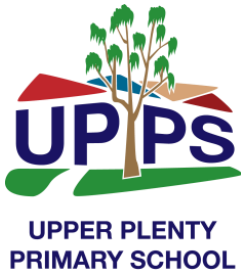
Every person involved in Upper Plenty Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In addition, the Statement of Commitment may describe the school's principles for child safety. For example¹:

“In its planning, decision-making and operations *Upper Plenty Primary School* will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.”

¹ Adapted from Our Community (2016) *Child Protection Toolkit: What every not-for-profit organisation must do now.*



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3: Child Safety Code of Conduct July 2016 Rationale

Upper Plenty Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development. These values are reflected in our School values, Strategic Plans and Annual Implementation Plan.

NB. This statement is to be used in conjunction with the Upper Plenty Primary School Policies for Student Engagement, Student Welfare, Mandatory Reporting and Duty of Care.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and teachers of Upper Plenty Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and teachers Upper Plenty Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times [Include <and adhering to the school's child safe policy> when the school has a policy in place]
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership [Include <or child safety officer's> if school has assigned someone to this role]
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes²

² SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy³ or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Upper Plenty Primary School Code of Conduct covers, where applicable, all school activities, including camps, excursions, provision of counselling services, delivery of first aid, bus travel and the delivery of specialised support services. The school recognises the difficulties of ensuring two staff are available with every child interaction and will work diligently to protect the safety and wellbeing of all students. All staff will be made aware of this policy at the beginning of the school year.

REPORTING AND RAISING CONCERNS

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is reliant upon respectful relationships with staff and appropriate interaction with volunteers and contractors.

- All staff have a duty of care to report or raise any concerns they have in relation to a child’s safety and/or wellbeing
- All staff have a duty of care to report or raise any concerns involving a staff member, volunteer or contractor

Failure to disclose

All adults, not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16. Failure to disclose the information may amount to a criminal offence unless you have a “reasonable excuse” or have an “exemption” from doing so.

To read more information about the ‘failure to disclose’ offence, see: Department of Justice and Regulation – Failure to disclose offence

Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

Failure to Protect

The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation. In a school context, this may include Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals. To read more information about the 'failure to protect offence', see: Department of Justice and Regulations – Failure to protect offence.

For more information about managing and responding to the risk of abuse see: Responding to Student Sexual Offending and Risk Management under Department resources below. See also, the Four Critical Actions on the PROTECT portal.

The process for raising concerns are outlined in the flow chart below.

³ SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet

UPPS REPORTING CONCERNS

Child Safety and Social and Emotional Wellbeing

You have a suspicion/concern about a child's social and emotional wellbeing or safety because you have:

- observed a considerable change in behaviour over a period of time*
- received information regarding a change in the child's home environment*
- received a disclosure from a child about emotional, physical or sexual abuse or other types of abuse or neglect*
- observed indicators of physical or sexual abuse or other types of abuse or neglect*
- been made aware of possible harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role*

↓ YES

Do your concerns relate to a child in need of immediate protection, or have you formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm? If your concerns relate to physical and sexual abuse, then it is **mandatory to make a report based on all known facts.**

↓ YES

Discuss your concerns with the :

- School Principal
- Student Wellbeing

They will support you in contacting your local protection intake provider to report your concerns about

any physical or sexual abuse.

Make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the school's response to this.

DHHS Child Protection

Have notes ready with your observations, together with child and family details.

Please note that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

↓ NO

Do you have other concerns about a child's social and emotional wellbeing?

↓ YES

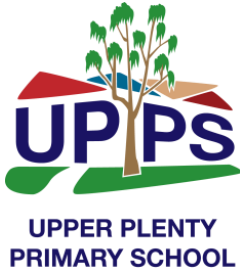
Refer the matter to the principal or Wellbeing Coordinator who will filter concerns by providing the following supports where necessary:

- hold meeting with parents
- refer the matter to school psychologist
- discuss concerns with SSSO
- provide support to classroom teachers in writing referral letters to outside agencies
- organise any relevant assessments
- work alongside classroom teacher to support child and/or family where necessary

If you have a suspicion/concern about the behaviour of a staff member, volunteer or contractor discuss these concerns directly with one of the following members of school leadership:

- school principal
- member of school leadership team
- student wellbeing coordinator

This Code of Conduct was endorsed/approved by the Upper Plenty Primary School Council in October 2018



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4: SCHOOL STAFF SELECTION, SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR A CHILD-SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Upper Plenty Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. The whole school community has a commitment to child safety through the development of a child safety program.

The use of human resources to promote Upper Plenty as a child safe school and reduce the risk of child abuse is of paramount importance. Upper Plenty Primary School has developed a set of policies and procedures that support a child safe school environment through correct recruitment, supervision, training and management procedures in the school community incorporating all school employees.

NB: This statement is to be used in conjunction with the Upper Plenty Primary School Policies for Student Engagement, Student Welfare, Mandatory Reporting and Duty of Care.

In Upper Plenty Primary School's commitment to providing the School Community with strategies to make child safety as part of its culture we will:-

1. All new positions advertised for Upper Plenty Primary School include the standard "Child Safe Environments" clause from the Recruitment in Schools guide.
2. Provide applicants for any school positions that involve working with children a statement of the school's child safety practices.
3. Gather, verify and record information about a person whom it proposes to be employed for work with children.
- 4. Ensure that Proof of Identity is provided by new employees.**
5. Appoint a Child Safety Officer who must ensure that there is supervision and support arrangements for the induction of new school staff to make them aware of policies, codes, practices and procedures in place governing child safety.
6. Continue to monitor and assess any employee's suitability to work with children and to maintain a full understanding of all school policies regarding child safe standards.
7. School Council will oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan (Standard 1) and School Child Safe Environments Policy (Standard 2)

Document for all new employees is

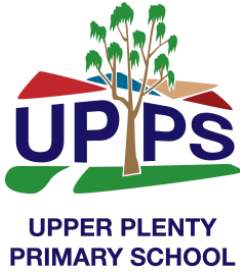
"Employment in a Government School" Validation of Personal information

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/Employment-application.pdf>

This clause BELOW is put on any job advertisement

**Child Safe
Standards**

Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, in accordance with their legal obligations including All schools have a Child Safety Code of Conduct consistent with the Department's exemplar available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 5:

IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO ALL FORMS OF ABUSE IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS.

For Standard Five, Upper Plenty Primary school will refer directly to the Protect Booklet entitled “Identifying and Responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools. This booklet is regularly referred to in staff meetings and is available in the staff room or at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/chilsafestandards.asp>

x



UPPER PLENTY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 6:

STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE OR REMOVE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE

Rationale

Child Safe Standard 6 requires that this school develops, implements, monitors and evaluates risk management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

[Ministerial Order No. 870](#) provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 6:

“(1) The school governing authority must develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environments.

(2) The school’s risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

(3) If the school governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

(4) As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school governing authority must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

(5) At least annually, the school governing authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:

- a) individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;*
- b) child abuse risks in the school environment; and*
- c) the school’s current child safety standards.”*

Process for identifying and reducing or removing risks of child abuse

Managing risk at Upper Plenty Primary school will typically involve the following steps and considerations.

1. Identify the school’s child safety risks across the range of school environments (including excursions, camps, online). A sample risk assessment can be found as an attachment to this document. And will be revised yearly.
2. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures or existing controls.
3. Assess and rate the school’s child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.
4. If the risk rating is more than the ‘acceptable level’, identify further risk management strategies through additional treatments or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then re-assess the risk (once in place these treatments will then become controls).
5. All policies at Upper Plenty Primary School will be followed, which will ensure approaches, teaching strategies and methods, along with School Culture will foster an environment that ensures Child Abuse is seen as abhorrent, unacceptable and will be acted upon according to both school and government policies
6. The risk management process will take place at a full staff meeting and be documented and recorded. Effective risk management strategies are dynamic and change over time as new risks arise and others may no longer be relevant.

Resources and References

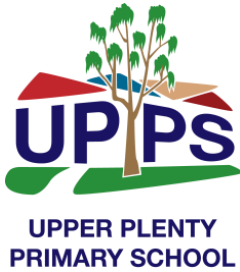
- [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0*.
- Department of Education and Training (2016) *School Policy Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy*, and associated tools:
 - School risk register which can be edited and has automatic tools embedded is available, see: [Risk Management in Schools – Risk Register](#).
 - Subordinate risk registers for specific activities such as overseas travel/excursions or projects, see: [Risk Management in Outdoor Education – Education Outdoor tools](#).
 - Online risk management module: [Risk Management - Online Risk Module](#)
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module
- State of Victoria (2010) *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools.
- Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*, Ministerial Order No. 870.
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (2016) *Child Safety Standard 6: Child safety risk management strategies*

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 6: RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

A key part of a risk management strategy is a risk assessment. Risk assessments can take many forms. An example is provided below. Risk assessment resources form part of the *School Policy & Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy*. An example is provided below to assist schools in their risk assessment.

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Severe	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available 	Principal, School Council	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures Performance Management procedures	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module 	Principal, School Council	Low
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module 	Principal	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Processes updated to require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal history search Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety 	Principal	Low
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train students and staff to detect 	Principal	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety				inappropriate behaviour Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies		
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	• Refresher training for frequent contractors	Principal	Low
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	• Refresher training for frequent contractors	Principal	Low



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7: STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHILD EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Upper Plenty Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. The whole school community will focus on promoting positive standards of behaviour which will include resilience and a healthy, respectful relationship with others.

Upper Plenty Primary School has a zero policy to bullying and a total commitment to providing children with strategies which empower them in a positive and inclusive school environment. Respectful relationships are discussed and encouraged as a school community we recognise and challenge any negative forms of harassment or discrimination, which may help stop situations escalating further. We value all members of our school community.

NB: This statement is to be used in conjunction with the Upper Plenty Primary School Policies for Student Engagement, Student Welfare, Mandatory Reporting and Duty of Care.

In Upper Plenty Primary School's commitment to empowering children and having children participate in making positive decisions about relationships we will

1. Focus on helping students in Prep to Year 6 challenge negative attitudes such as discrimination and harassment that can lead to violence and or discrimination.
2. Help children identify and relate to what a healthy and respectful relationship is and how to be part of a positive environment.
3. Model positive behaviour among the School Community which allows for individual differences and opportunities to discuss these differences in a safe environment.
4. To promote a positive environment where children are valued and any absences are followed up, parents consulted, counsellors contacted when required and the school community takes an active role in each student's education.
5. During disciplinary decisions the school leadership and staff promote a culture of respect, fairness and quality to foster respectful relationships.
6. Make school-wide and classroom expectations and consequences clear for student problem behaviour.
7. Allow multiple opportunities for students to take responsibility and be involved in decision making that effect their lives in the school and home community.
8. Form a clear structure within the school community where there is always social, emotional and educational support for any of the community that are deemed at risk despite the reason.
9. Encourage and nurture contributions made by the school community that helps provide a feeling of belonging and connectedness.
10. Use School Survey data to monitor levels of student engagement and wellbeing, review results and identify areas for improvement.
11. Make access to child empowerment and participation strategies available on the web site, articles in the weekly newsletter and have a receptive and positive approach at the school level for all or any concerns raised.