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CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

RATIONALE:

All Victorian schools are required to meet the Child Safe Standards as outlined in Ministerial Order No 870 together with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Cranbourne West Primary School is committed to the safety and well-being of all children in its care. Our school has zero tolerance for child abuse which includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm and the serious neglect of a child.

A child safe environment applies to all school environments [inclusive of physical and online environments] and includes all school excursions, camps, competitions and other events. Cranbourne West Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children feel safe and are confident their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Every person involved in Cranbourne West Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure the well being and safety of all children. This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers, visitors and contracted service providers working at the school in paid or non paid positions.

STANDARDS

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, organisations 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 behaviours 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

AIMS:

The Cranbourne West Primary School Child Safe Environment Policy outlines the school's approach to creating a child safe organization and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards. These Child Safe standards together with this policy will be the primary focus of the school's care and decision making, with particular emphasis on 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 in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Section 32.

In its planning, decision making and operations, Cranbourne West Primary School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behavior towards children
- Engage high quality staff and provide regular and relevant professional development
- Ensure appropriate volunteer supervision
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to appropriate authorities
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers
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IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Standard 1: School Culture:**

Cranbourne West Primary School will support, encourage and enable school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters thus making it difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. Appropriate reporting processes are in place for child abuse which includes overseeing outcomes. The school will also support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspect child abuse.

The school implements the following processes, procedures and policies to ensure an effective culture of child safety through effective leadership arrangements:

- Appointment of a full time Wellbeing Officer
- Appointment of a part time Parent Liaison Officer
- Appointment of Chaplaincy support
- Use of SSSO staff through the network
- Visitor and contractor induction including OHS
- School Council review and approve/ratify all policies on a timely cyclic basis
- Mandatory Reporting procedures included in both the Staff Information and the Staff Induction booklets
- Whole staff briefing [commencement of each year] to outline their responsibilities and obligations under the guidelines regarding reporting suspicions of child abuse or change in behavior
- VIT professional responsibilities of teachers and staff

- Consistent dialogue when talking to students

- Standard 2: Child Safe Policy

Cranbourne West Primary School has developed and ratified a Child Safe Policy which includes a statement of commitment to child safety. This policy is supported by the following school wide statements:

- Policy Rationale
- Vision, Mission and Values statements
- Learning Vision

- Standard 3: Child Safe Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers and visitors will comply with the school's Code of Conduct which clearly outlines the differences between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The Principal Class officers together with the Wellbeing Officer, will ensure that all personnel understand their role, responsibilities and behaviors expected in protecting children from abuse and neglect.

This Code of Conduct is also supported by:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Restraint of Children Policy

- Standard 4: Screening, Supervision and Training

Cranbourne West Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. All prospective teaching staff are required to hold a valid VIT registration which includes a records check. All other staff and volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check. Induction, education and training programs are provided to ensure staff and volunteers understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.

The school implements the following processes, strategies and policies re the screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

- Working with Children Checks for all staff and volunteers
- Merit and equity processes for all staff including reference checks
- Staff Induction Booklet
- Volunteer Induction Booklet
- Clear processes and instruction for all staff in reporting of suspicions of child abuse
- Visitors Policy
- Staff Induction Policy
- VIT Professional responsibilities and standards [System Expectations]
- DET Conduct and Ethics notification of any allegations made against staff [System Expectation]

- Standard 5: Response and Reporting

Cranbourne West Primary School is committed to the child safety standards and expects that all allegations of child abuse are taken seriously. The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child who may be in need of protection [Refer Mandatory Reporting Policy] Any member of staff who receives information about possible child abuse is obliged to report this to the Wellbeing Officer or directly to Child Protection, who will ensure that the relevant authorities are informed.

The school implements the following processes, strategies and policies for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse:

- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Anti Discrimination Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Restraint of Students Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Students Welfare Policy
- Student Induction Policy

- Standard 6: Risk Reduction

The Wellbeing Officer will regularly conduct risk management assessments and report to the PCO team. He/She will also ensure child safe strategies and preventative measures continue to be developed and enhanced through the ongoing review of the effectiveness of practice. The PCOs together with the Wellbeing Officer will monitor the school's adherence to this policy and the Ministerial Order No 870 on an ongoing basis.

Cranbourne West Primary School also provides programs directed towards students to emphasise their right to be safe, respected and have healthy human relationships and develop appropriate skills and knowledge in this area.

The school implements the following processes, strategies and policies to reduce or remove the risk of child abuse:

- Reference: Protecting the Safety and Well Being of Children and Young People of Children and Young People 2010
- Reference: A joint protocol of DHS, Child Protection, DET, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools Protecting Children
- Reference: Mandatory Reporting DET 2001
- Reference: Responding to Child Abuse DET 2001

- Standard 7: Empowerment of Children

Cranbourne West Primary School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children and their parents/carers. Both students and parents/carers are encouraged to engage with the school in order to develop their capabilities to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Students are made aware of how to detect and report inappropriate behaviour and who to report it to.

The school implements the following processes, strategies and policies to promote the participation and empowerment of children:

- Student Leadership processes and implementation through a member of staff and the wellbeing team

- Student Representative Council
- House system
- Values and Value Statements for all staff, parents and children

- Confidentiality and Privacy:

High importance is placed on safe guarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. Cranbourne West primary School uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. *[Please refer to the school's Privacy Policy]*

- Definitions and Related Documents:

A full list of definitions for Ministerial order No 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe

It includes:

Child Abuse includes –

- Any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence
 - an offence under section 49B[2] of the Crimes Act 1958 [grooming]
- The infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
 - serious neglect of a child

Child Connected work means work authorized by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present

Child Safety encompasses ,matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School Environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorized by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments [including email and intranet systems]
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use [including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events]

School Staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority: a volunteer or a contracted service provider [whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary]; or
- a minister of religion

School Policy Advisory Guide – Duty of Care

School Policy Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations

DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework

EVALULATION:

This policy will be reviewed on a cyclic basis to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement.

Office Use only:

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