CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Rationale:

Wandin Yallock Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. Wandin Yallock Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Wandin Yallock Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment, both physical and online, 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 all children, including Aboriginal children, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. Every person involved in Wandin Yallock 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.

All Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:
- the principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- the actions the school proposes to take to:
    - o demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy;
    - o support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
    - o support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- Ensure that child safety is considered in the recruitment, selection and management of staff (includes contractors and volunteers)

Aims:
Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. We promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability

Our staff and volunteers

This policy informs our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which is detailed in our Inclusion, Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Definitions

Ministerial Order No. 870 (available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe) outlines the following definitions:

child	means a child enrolled as a student at the school.
child-connected work	means work authorised 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 abuse	includes-
	(a) any act committed against a child involving (i) a sexual offence; or

	(ii) an offence under section 498(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming); and (b) the infliction, on a child, of- (i) physical violence; or (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and (c) serious neglect of a child.
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 authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including: (a) a campus of the school; (b) online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and (c) 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 governing authority means:	(a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or (b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or (c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

Implementation:
General
- Staff, volunteers and visitors must abide by our Code of Conduct, outlined above, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
- At the beginning of each year staff will revisit relevant Child Safety policies and procedures. Throughout the year staff will participate in professional learning to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse; mandatory reporting, child protection and other matters that affect children and young people (annually).
- School Council will be made aware of relevant Child Safety policies and procedures annually. The school community will be informed about child safety practices and policies via the newsletter and school website.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including parent volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check (see Volunteers, visitors and employees policy). Further information about Working with Children Checks is available from *www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au .* They must wear a Wandin Yallock visitor badge which will be given once they have signed in at the office. Teachers/ESS are to wear their 'school identification badge' at all times when accompanying children out of the school, such as excursions. Staff are to approach anyone not wearing a visitor pass and direct them to the office.
- Strategies will be put in place to promote participation and empowerment of children, e.g. through Community Time and Jigsaw.
- Students will participate in school programs that will promote safe behaviours and outline processes for reporting their concerns, such as: Cyber Safety programs at the start of each year, Family Life, Life Education (F-6), drug education programs through the curriculum, Jigsaw program and regular community time discussions in classrooms.

Responding to allegations, concerns and complaints (Refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for more detail)
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.
- The school takes all allegations seriously and works to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice

inappropriate behaviour. We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:
- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour
- All allegations of abuse and safety concerns must be recorded using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.
- *Failure to disclose offence*: In addition to mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations, any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence except in limited circumstances, such as where the information has already been reported to Child Protection or the child is over 16 when the belief is formed. *Note: DET policy is that mandated staff must also report reasonable belief of a sexual offence to Victoria Police as well as Child Protection.*
- *Failure to protect*: 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. The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation, including Principals, senior school staff, regional directors and other senior managers.

- All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure the employment of appropriately skilled and suitable people to work with children at the school. We identify selection criteria through Recruitment Online which clearly demonstrates our commitment to child safety. The school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We carry out reference checks to ensure that we are addressing the person's suitability for the job and working with children. VIT registration is compulsory for all teaching staff and we require proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications. All new employees and contractors will undergo induction and receive a copy of our Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.
- The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.
- All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected and will disclose how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Risk management
- In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, swimming), and online environments.

Evaluation:
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle

This policy was last ratified by Wandin Yallock Primary School Council in **OCTOBER 2016**