

Child Safe Standards

Menzies Creek Primary School

As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, there is a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by new Child Safe Standards.

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the Child Safe Standards apply must have:

- strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Ministerial Order No. 870, which operationalises the Child Safe Standards in all Victorian schools, comes into operation on 1 August, 2016. This is available for you to read at:

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf>

In order to ensure our school meets these requirements you will be find a copy of Menzies Creek Primary School's Child Safety Policy, which was approved at School Council on July 20th, on our school website. It is a requirement that all staff, School Councillors and members of our school community who volunteer at Menzies Creek Primary School (Cool Cats Room, assisting in classrooms, Plot to Pot, attending excursions, attending sporting events, attending school camps, etc.) need to sign this form. These can be collected from the Office or will be available in each classroom or specialist area. This will ensure we meet the Child Safety requirements and that we are able to confidently show we have established clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children, which is enforced at our school.

In this Ministerial Order, for the first time, it clearly states that school staff selection must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:

- (a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
- (b) Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
- (c) Person's history of work involving children; and

(d) References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

It is very important that all school volunteers are aware that in this order: school staff means in a Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

(i) employed under Part 2.4 of the ETR Act in the government teaching service; or

(ii) employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act;
or

(iii) a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

It also states that 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. So what does this mean for you, our amazing volunteers who we love having in our school?

◆ Become familiar with our Child Safety Policy

◆ Read and return the Child Safety Code of Conduct

◆ Make sure you hold a current Working With Children's Card (WWCC) and ensure we have a copy of it here at the school. These can be obtained at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>