

OVERVIEW:

It is important for schools to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse. At Hume Valley School, we foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target schools. We believe that robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, we provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures. Hume Valley School reinforces our commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

CHILD SAFETY TEAM:

Employees and volunteers are supported through the appointment of an individual child safety officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist us in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with (Department of Education and Training) DET legal requirements and policies and procedures.

The designated child safety officer also provides a single contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with your organisation.

TRAINING AND INDUCTION:

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Hume Valley School's employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will be provided support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff provided support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that Hume Valley School meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

Our staff is committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by signing Hume Valley School's Code of Conduct. Training provided will enhance the skills and knowledge of our employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

Employees and volunteers working with children will receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Hume Valley School's policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy)
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
- cultural awareness training

Training can be formal such as:

- higher education training and accreditation
- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training meeting key objectives

Training can also be informal such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching

Supervision:

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members are present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision.

As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including Hume Valley School's internal reporting procedures (such as your child safety team and leadership), the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

Performance and development review:

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve employees and volunteers skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance is measured against Hume Valley School's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

Code of Conduct and Disciplinary procedures:

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within Hume Valley School. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Our Code of Conduct is be publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Hume Valley School's disciplinary procedures clearly outline what employees or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Ratified By Hume Valley School Council	October 2016
Review Date:	October 2019

Further information

Further information on [child safe standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>.

Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, [An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](#), has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms:

<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415