



## School's Response to Standard 4: Ensuring screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Burwood Heights Primary School is committed to ensuring a child-safe environment. Our human resource practices are designed to reduce and remove the risks of child abuse by new and existing staff, volunteers and members of the community.

### **New staff, volunteers and community members:**

All advertised new jobs will include the standard 'Child safe environments' clause, as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' guide. All job descriptions and advertisements will contain the following child safe message: Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, in accordance with their legal obligations including child safe standards. 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>

We use Recruitment Online to employ prospective employees. There is a structured recruitment procedure for all positions – paid, contractor or volunteer positions. No employee, however senior or junior, will have a "back door" entrance into the organisation. The Recruitment Online process requires candidates to provide their employment history, including any work with children, and professional referees. School panels will then plan structured interviews where candidates will be asked a range of behavioural and values-based questions that are designed to elicit information that would help the panel determine a candidate's suitability for the position, and uncover any potential risks to children. Particular attention will focus on answers that suggest a lack of professionalism around working with children.

Members of selection panels will ensure valid character and professional references are sought after interviews, yet prior to job offers being made. Members will examine candidates' work history relating to working with children, prior positions and reasons for leaving job roles. Employment will be conditional to Police or Working With Children Checks and VIT registration where applicable. A selection panel will not accept letters of reference without follow up with a minimum of two verbal references. Referees are to be directly asked questions on the candidate's character and whether there are any concerns regarding the person's suitability for working with children. All Department of Education and Training processes are to be followed in preparation of employment contracts and terms.

Following employment, all newly appointed staff and volunteers will receive a formal induction into the workplace. All new staff and volunteers will receive an induction book and policies manual, where all school policies, codes, practices and procedures upholding child safety and promoting a child-safe environment are discussed thoroughly with a member of leadership. Clear work expectations will be set, relating to child safe practices in the school environment. Frequent follow-up meetings will be held with new employees with mentor teachers, to ensure adequate training, understanding and compliance of the school's child safe policies and practices. Volunteers will complete an induction each year and will provide a copy of their Working With Children's Check and relevant identification to the office manager. This includes anyone interacting directly with or within close proximity to children in our education and care, exempting delivery officers and parents/guardians bringing and collecting their children daily.

### **Existing staff, volunteers and community members:**

Each job or category of jobs for school staff has a clear statement that highlights the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; in addition to the job occupant's essential and relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety. Frequent training and compliance is organised and monitored with existing members of staff to ensure all existing staff continue to understand and adhere to the school's child safe policies and practices.

We will ensure all staff are up to date with Mandatory Reporting Training, and are knowledgeable about their obligations and confident to implement the 4 Critical Actions Flow Chart, according to incidents that could occur regarding reporting abuse and supporting victims. All staff will complete regular update training sessions to remind all staff of their obligations to the school's child safe strategies, policies and code of conduct, and their duty of care regarding reporting. School volunteers will be supported to complete induction training sessions and updates as required, and will have access to information regarding identifying, understanding and reporting child abuse or unsafe child-related matters.

Whilst we ensure staff, volunteers and members of the community obtain Working With Children Checks and Police Checks, we recognise that these measures are only valid for small periods of time, and must be repeated within three or five years. All teachers must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching at all times. We will not have an over-reliance or trust in Working With Children Checks or Police Checks, as we believe that they do not guarantee a person's suitability to work with children, but rather indicate whether a person has been caught and convicted of child abuse. Rather, we will trust in our robust screening, supervision and training regimes when ensuring the suitability of prospective and current staff, volunteers and community members for working with children safely.