



Safe Environments Policy



PURPOSE

Leadership and staff acknowledge the importance of an environment that contributes to the health and wellbeing of all staff and students.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

- providing a safe, inclusive and empowering school environment for students, families, staff and visitors
- delivering safety education in one or more learning key areas of the curriculum as a part of a whole school approach to health and wellbeing
- ensuring families, students and staff are key partners in promoting a safe environment.

As a health promoting school, we will promote the safety and wellbeing of children, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions. It is applicable to all students and staff.

POLICY

Background

Schools should be a safe place for everyone including students, teachers and other staff, families and members of the local community. The involvement and commitment of the whole school community is required to achieve a culture in which safe and respectful schools are everyone's concern and responsibility.

It is essential that all schools promote and provide a supportive learning community where all students feel, and are safe. Students have a fundamental right to learn in a safe, supportive environment and to be treated with respect. School staff members also have the right to teach, work and participate in an environment that is safe and supportive. Similarly, parents and other local community members have a right to feel safe, supported and respected in the school context.

Definitions

Safe Environments- the health priority area focussing on supporting physical safety, cultural safety and cyber safety.

Physical safety- Protection from harm and hazards that can cause injury. Identified risks are managed and minimized.

Cultural Safety- An environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; "where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who

they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together.”¹

Williams, R. (1999). Cultural safety – what does it mean for our work practice? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 23(2), 213-214.

¹
Cyber Safety/Online Safety/Internet Safety/E-safety: The safe and responsible use of technology including use of the internet, electronic media and social media in order to ensure information security and personal safety. There are 3 main areas of risk to safety:

- “Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interactions with other users (including bullying)
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm”.

² Kodo Education (2015). *Safeguarding Essentials: What is E-Safety*, retrieved from <https://www.e-safetysupport.com/stories/166/what-is-e-safety#.WydANdlzaUI>

PROCEDURES

Healthy policies

- Staff, families and students are involved in guiding the development and implementation of the whole-school safe environment policy and are provided with information about policy requirements.
- If a student is suspected of being at risk of or experiencing social, emotional, behavioural or bullying difficulties the school will act swiftly to gather relevant information, and establish contact with parents or caregivers to address issues, including problems, solutions, and plans for maintaining safety and wellbeing going forward. Where possible, conversations and actions will take place within a ‘restorative justice’ context and process.

Healthy physical environment

- The school provides a welcoming and inclusive physical environment, which reflects the diversity and interests of the students, families and staff.
- Students and visitors are appropriately supervised and sign-in and out of the office.
- The school ensures the use of appropriate personal protective equipment when necessary to reduce risk.
- Buildings, facilities and equipment are well maintained and any safety issues are responded to promptly.
- The school takes action to minimise hazards from road traffic, particularly during pick up, drop off periods and other high risk times.
- The school takes action to minimize risks, remove hazards and protect students from harm within and outside the school grounds and for excursions.

Healthy culture

- The school provides a safe, inclusive and empowering social environment that promotes a culture of respect, fairness and equality.
- There are clear expectations for safe, respectful and responsible behaviours at the school and online for students, staff and families.
- Staff and families recognise that they are role models and are encouraged to demonstrate behaviours that promote safety.
- Clear processes are in place to identify, report and respond to unsafe behaviours.

Student Teaching and Learning

- Social and emotional learning, safety education and related health messages are incorporated across the curriculum from Prep to year 6 and are delivered in one or more key learning areas of the curriculum. Including road safety, correct use of protective equipment, correct use of facilities and equipment, identifying and responding to safety hazards, cyber safety and respectful online behaviour.
- Collaborative group activities that encourage inclusion, participation, team-work and cooperation are incorporated in the curriculum.

Supported Staff

- OH&S guidelines are met to ensure a safe work environment for staff.
- Safety information and policy requirements are included in staff orientation and induction.
- Staff are encouraged to work with local health professionals, services and organisations to increase the school's capacity to deliver safety initiatives and promote safe environments.
- Staff are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote safe environments and behaviours, including cultural safety, cyber safety and physical safety.

Family and Community partnerships

- Families, students and staff are key partners in developing and supporting safety initiatives and are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies on a regular basis to support safety in the school and at home.
- Partnerships are established with relevant organisations and health professionals to support safety practices where appropriate.
- Processes are in place to seek support from specialist organisations if issues of safety are identified.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related documents and school policies

- National Safe Schools Framework
- Bullying Prevention
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Staff Health and Wellbeing
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The safe environments policy will be monitored and reviewed by the staff, school council, student representatives and the health and wellbeing team every three years.

Endorsed by school council: This policy was last updated on 21st October 2019 and is scheduled for review in October 2021