



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

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1 Rationale

Melbourne Chinese Ethnic School is committed to child safety and to our student to being principled, caring, balanced and being a responsible member of our community. MCES has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when child's safety is a concern. The School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks and all staff undertake Mandatory Reporting training.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers and are committed to the cultural safety of children from diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

2 Aim

Melbourne Chinese Ethnic School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

MCES has zero tolerance for child abuse.

MCES is committed to providing a child safe environment 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 Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Melbourne Chinese Ethnic 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 and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

3 Implementation

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

The school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and students) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse, neglect or child safety concerns.

For all jobs that require child related work there will be an induction process providing explicit information about the job's requirements, duties, and responsibilities and the school's child safety practices, including the code of conduct, employment agreement.

We also support our staff and volunteer through on-going professional development and also assist staff and volunteer to support them with any needs to: develop their skills to protect all children from abuse, and promote cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

4 Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ appropriately skilled people to work with children. We identify selection criteria through recommendations by teachers and via our school website. We strictly follow child safety protect standards <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection>. The school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check. Please see the <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/> website and for more information. We carry our reference checks to ensure that are addressing the person's suitability for the job and working with children. VIT registration teachers are welcome to work at MCES and we also require proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.

5 Fair procedures for personnel

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.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

6 Privacy

All personal information recorded at MCES are 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.

7 Legislative responsibilities (refer to the Child Protection Policy)

At Melbourne Chinese Ethnic School we take our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.
- **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.
- **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.

8 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.

9 Allegations, Concerns and complaints

At Melbourne Chinese Ethnic School we take 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

10 Evaluation:

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

This policy was last ratified by School committee in	1 st July 2018
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