# Weeden Heights Primary School

# Human Resources Practices for Child

# Safe Organisations

**The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services or facilities for children to have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing board members, staff and/or volunteers. This resource is designed to assist organisations to incorporate robust human resources practices that help protect children from abuse.**

**Overview**

It is important for organisations to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse.

Weeden Heights Primary school fosters a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations. 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, Weeden Heights provides 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.

Weeden Heights Primary School reinforces our commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

**Screening**

Strong recruitment and selection practices help to ensure that only the most suitable applicants are employed by Weeden Heights PS. This includes designing and adhering to a recruitment and safety screening process that:

* references our commitment to child safety in selection criteria and recruitment advertisements
* identifies factors that may indicate a risk to child safety, such as an applicant’s reluctance to undergo a Working with Children Check
* demonstrates an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal cultures, cultural and/or linguistic diversity and the needs of children with a disability
* incorporates face-to-face interviews, police record checks, personal identification checks, reference checks, qualification checks, Working with Children Checks and other legislated screening processed where required
* identifies the applicant’s prior conduct, including any disciplinary action, investigations and/or findings of improper or unprofessional conduct made by a previous employer, law enforcement agency or any relevant statutory bodies
* specifically welcomes applications from Aboriginal people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability
* ensures that an applicant’s understanding of child safety is uncovered through interview questions
* during interviews, emphasises the culture of valuing child safety and the expectation of staff responsibilities
* uses a probation period to assess a new staff member’s performance and suitability.

**Supervision**

Supervision of staff and volunteers should be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. This may include asking specific questions about the staff member or volunteer’s understanding of child safety protocols during performance review processes.

As a matter of good practice, new staff and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure that they understand their role and to confirm that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs of inappropriate behaviour should be reported through appropriate channels, including our internal reporting procedures (such as informing your child safety officer and/or management), Child Protection or police if you believe that there is an imminent risk to a child.

**Training**

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone’s responsibility. Weeden Heights PS provides staff, volunteers, families and children with ongoing training that includes:

* definitions and indicators of child abuse
* how to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse
* our policies and procedures including the child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety and the code of conduct
* legislative requirements such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
* how to handle an allegation, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse including your organisation’s reporting guidelines and compliance with the reportable conduct scheme where applicable
* how to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and providing safe environments for children with a disability
* what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children such as sexualised play, bullying and fighting
* what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children and adults with reference to the code of conduct
* supporting staff to build resilience and cope with child abuse incidents.

Staff or volunteers should receive a comprehensive induction that incorporates the information above. Existing staff or volunteers may also benefit from refresher training on these topics, particularly when changing roles within the organisation.

Formal training may include higher education accreditations, training offered by external organisations or on-the-job training. Informal training on child safety may also be appropriate in certain circumstances and may include:

* inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or events
* 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.

Weeden Heights PS tracks implementation and regularly assesses the child safety training needs of their school council members, staff and volunteers. This can be evaluated through questionnaires or as part of regular performance review processes.

**Child safety officer**

Employees and volunteers could be supported through the appointment of a child safety officer or ‘champion’. A child safety officer is a person within Weeden Heights PS who has knowledge of child safety issues and has child safety duties in their job description. Their role includes being informed of all allegations of child abuse or safety concerns and providing a single point of contact for children, parents, staff and volunteers who are seeking advice or support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with Weeden Heights PS. This will assist us to ensure that child safety is prioritised and that any allegations or concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with the legal requirements, policies and procedures of Weeden Heights Primary School.

**Performance and development review**

Weeden Heights PS uses proactive performance development strategies to improve the skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers regarding child safety. This is also an opportunity for staff and volunteers to raise concerns about child safety and to recognise and respond to suspected abuse.

Performance should be measured against the organisation’s code of conduct and standards of care to ensure that staff and volunteers meet expected outcomes.

**Disciplinary procedures**

Disciplinary procedures should be accessible and transparent. These procedures should be followed where an allegation of child abuse is made or where a breach of the organisation’s code of conduct is known or suspected.

Council members, staff and volunteers should be aware of reporting obligations and how to communicate concerns regarding improper behaviour of any person within Weeden Heights PS. All members of WHPS, including families and children, should be encouraged to raise any concerns they have about the behaviour of any person without fear of repercussions.

**Further information**

Further information about the [Child Safe Standards](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/ child-safe-standards> can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) website. This includes additional resources that have been designed for organisations that are funded and/or regulated by the department. In particular, an [overview of the Victoria Child Safe Standards](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/overview-victorian-child-safe-standards-word) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/overview-victorian-child-safe-standards-word> has information to help organisations to understand the requirements of each of the Child Safe Standards.

All organisations may also refer to the information and resources available on the [Commission for Children and Young People website](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/>.

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