



JOHN MONASH SCIENCE SCHOOL

CHILD SAFE HANDBOOK

2019

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CHILD SAFETY – CHILD PROTECT

Child Safety and preventing child abuse is everyone's responsibility. At John Monash Science School (JMSS) it must be embedded into our attitudes and practices. At JMSS we are committed to protecting our students from abuse and committed to Child Safety.

This is underpinned by Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards- managing the risk of child abuse in schools; outlining the seven Child Safe Standards. To create and maintain a child safe school, we will comply with the following standards:

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety
2. A Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
3. A Staff Code of Conduct
4. Screening, supervision, training and other HR practices that reduce the risk of child abuse
5. Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment.

Child Safe Standards (1-7) will be continually reflected upon, developed and discussed for refinement to ensure that it is easily accessible, easy to understand and user friendly to students and the wider community.

All school staff and people working in a child connected capacity will have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child appropriate behaviour.

John Monash Science School meets the guidelines as underpinned by Ministerial order 870, also meets the guidelines as set out in Ministerial Orders 382 (Work Experience). In complying with the child safe standards above, we will be mindful of the diversity of students and school communities and include the following inclusion principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability

STANDARD 1: STRATEGIES TO EMBED AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FOR CHILD SAFETY:

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities.

JMSS will act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We do this by providing a culture of child safety embedded throughout our school so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. This culture has been achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of JMSS.

Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. At JMSS, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Governance in a child safe environment:

Leadership at JMSS takes preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

Leadership Responsibilities:

Leadership at JMSS is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety, including the use of the tools provided by the education department. The leadership team takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, and are aware of child abuse allegations and risks, and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

JMSS will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

JMSS adopts an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our school identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

- In liaison with the wider school community, a JMSS Statement of Commitment and Code of Conduct Policy that addresses the School's vision, mission, values and objectives in regards to child safety and incorporated measures to prevent child abuse are established.
- JMSS has a Child Safe Officer who is appropriately trained and supported.

- Established, in consultation, the processes for induction and training for the school community in recognising and responding to child abuse and new legislative requirements affecting processes, policies and protocols for staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Building responsibility for embedding an organisational culture of safety; including knowledge and understanding of staff obligations and what to do if an allegation is made.
- Advertising of employment positions on Recruitment On-line will include reference to our Child Safe Standards and Code of Conduct; including reference that John Monash Science School promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability. That our school is culturally safe for Aboriginal children and those from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- John Monash Science School will institute and maintain adequate record keeping of child safety issues and responses to any incidents. Strict processes of communication and associated paperwork linked to DET processes and protocols will be observed.
- Publish information and Child Safe policies on the school website and making the school community aware of child safety strategies via the School Newsletter.
- JMSS will adjust any processes and protocols for improvement according to DET, DHHS instructions, and inform the wider community to the change.
- The School Council communicates that it has zero tolerance of child abuse in any form.
- Child safety is listed for discussion at all formal meetings (e.g. School Council / Leadership Committees and Executive).
- Child safety strategies are developed, rigorously reviewed and adjusted to meet legislative needs.
- The school will maintain awareness of Child Safety- Staff Code of Conduct policy and child protection reporting requirements to all school staff; including ongoing training and induction of new staff to John Monash Science School.
- John Monash Science School will ensure all staff have current VIT (with Criminal History validation) and Working with Children checks, with a register to current validity and photocopies of staff VIT / WWCC cards placed on file.
- Clear processes on child safety practices are widely communicated and understood.
- All CRTs listed for employment at John Monash Science School to supply VIT registration in advance of offer of work. CRTs, volunteers and / or contractors to be provided with John Monash Science School's 'Child Safe Code of Conduct' document, affirming our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all young people at our school.
- All CRTs, volunteers and / or contractors will need to sign a register acknowledging their reading and understanding of requirements prior to

commencing their child-connected work within John Monash Science School. John Monash Science School has a Child Safe video for their induction.

- Child Safety is listed for discussion regularly at staff meetings, House Mentors meetings.
- Staff are provided with professional development to detect inappropriate behaviour.
- Provide an environment of openness, transparency and approachability on Child Safety processes.
- Students will be made aware of how to report inappropriate behaviour.
- Students can approach and discuss issues associated with child safety with School Counsellors, House Leaders.
- All reports must be made to the Child-Safety Officer (Assistant Principal - Student Empowerment).
- The school employs two Student Counsellors, who provide counselling and resources to support our students.

(Strategies adapted from DET and VRQA websites and Department of Health and Human Services).

STANDARD 2: A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD-SAFETY

John Monash Science School (JMSS) is committed to maintaining the safety and wellbeing of all its students whilst at school and participating in any school related events. JMSS actively encourages an environment that fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness.

JMSS wants its students (and other students who are on-site such as visiting students, students on exchange programs and Emerging Science Victoria students) to be safe.

JMSS is committed to the safety of all students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the safety of gender diverse students and providing a safe environment for students with disabilities.

JMSS is committed to the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards to prevent child abuse, including encouraging the reporting of abuse and appropriate responses to all allegations.

At JMSS we ensure that our staff:

- are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all students.
- are in compliance with the JMSS Staff Code Of Conduct and that all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently within our policies and procedures.

- are aware of, and understand their legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when worried about a student's safety.
- are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and /or reducing these risks.
- regularly attend training and education about child abuse risks

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

1. Communicate the Statement of Commitment and Child Safe Policy / Standards publicly to the JMSS school community. Communication will be via the JMSS website, newsletters and recruitment advertisements.
2. Communicate the Statement of Commitment and Child Safe Policy in other languages where appropriate.
3. Ensure that the School Council, staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of the school's Child Safe Policy and the commitment to their duty of care (through Staff Meetings / Briefings, Professional Development and On-Line Professional Development (where appropriate)).
4. Ensure that the Child Safe Policy / Standards and Procedures will be part of the Staff / Volunteer / Contractor Induction Program.
5. Ensure that students, parents and staff at JMSS understand that student safety is everyone's responsibility through training for staff, education for students and information through newsletters / websites for parents.
6. Train staff, volunteers and contractors to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect students from abuse; and promote the safety of all students including: Aboriginal students, students from linguistically / ethnically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, gender-diverse students and sexual orientation.
7. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the nature and urgency of the matter.
8. All reasonable steps will be taken to employ skilled people to work with students. Selection criteria and advertisements will be developed which clearly demonstrate JMSS's commitment to student safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our school understands that when recruiting staff, volunteers and contractors, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
9. All staff, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information.

10. Reference checks will be conducted to ensure that JMSS is recruiting people appropriate for the job. Police record checks are conducted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).
11. The safety and wellbeing of all students is the school's 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 and based on evidence.
12. All allegations of abuse and safety concerns will be recorded using our Incident Reporting Form, including investigation updates. All records will be securely stored.
13. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, JMSS will provide updates to the student(s) and parents on progress and any actions that JMSS will undertake.
14. All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved (staff, volunteers, contractors, parents or students). We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure all personal information is protected. Individuals involved are entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.
15. JMSS takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:
16. Reporting child sexual abuse, and that reporting of the abuse is a community-wide responsibility. NB: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age have a legal and moral obligation to report that information to the police.
17. Personnel of authority in our school will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
18. All staff are mandated to report all student concerns and must comply with their duties.
19. In addition to general Occupational Health and Safety risks, JMSS proactively manage risks of abuse to our students. 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 and online environments.
20. This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. JMSS will ensure that families and students have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities, people with a disability and people with gender diversity and sexual orientation.
21. JMSS takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place (Child Safe Standard 3 – Code of Conduct).

STANDARD 3: CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE:

The John Monash Science School (JMSS) Code of Conduct outlines expected standards for appropriate behaviour with and in the company of students, including online conduct. This Code of Conduct applies to all JMSS personnel including members of staff, volunteers and contractors who work with our students.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect students and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community in student-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

The JMSS Staff Code of Conduct will be:

- part of the Induction Program for new leadership members and staff
- part of the JMSS Professional Development calendar for all staff
- communicated to the JMSS community to inform parents/guardians and students what behaviour they can expect from the school's leadership and staff
- used in support of reporting procedures should breaches of the Code be suspected or identified
- included in employment advertisements and contracts to ensure compliance.

All staff of JMSS are required to observe Child Safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of students, as noted below:

All staff of JMSS are responsible for supporting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of students by:

- adhering to JMSS Child Safe Policy and to ensure student safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)
- treating all students with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another student have been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with: racial, religious, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, gender diversity, and sexual orientation.
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- ensuring as far as practicable that staff and volunteers are not left alone with a student
- reporting any allegations of child abuse and student safety concerns to the JMSS Child Safety Officer (Assistant Principal – Student Empowerment) and ensuring all allegations are reported to the police or Child Protection Services.
- ensuring (as quickly as possible) that the student(s) is / are safe when an allegation is made.

Staff, volunteers and contractors are not to:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour
- exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical, and not justified by the educational or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of delivering the education curriculum
- discriminate against any student because of his / her disability, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexual diversity or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where the communication is related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or urgent matter
- photograph or video a student in a school environment except in accordance with the school policy or where required for school purposes
- consume alcohol or drugs in the presence of students in the school environment.

STANDARD 4: SCREENING, SUPERVISION, TRAINING & OTHER HR PRACTICES THAT REDUCE THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE

Overview

JMSS fosters a culture of openness and inclusiveness and will ensure that all personnel who work with students will undergo Human Resources Practices (training and supervision) to remove any possibility of abusive behaviour (including sexual grooming behaviour).

JMSS provides opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This supports staff and other service providers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

Child Safety-Officer

Employees and other service providers are supported by John Monash Science School with information regarding the implementation of Child Safe policies and procedures that are led by the Assistant Principal (Student Empowerment) who has the designated role as the Child Safety Officer. All allegations or concerns regarding the safety of the students at JMSS will be reported to the Child Safety Officer.

The Child Safe Officer provides a contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of students associated with JMSS.

Training and induction

Staff at JMSS will receive induction and ongoing training regarding Child Safe policies and procedures.. New staff at JMSS will receive support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff will attend structured professional development programs to develop new skills and knowledge in order to meet the roles and responsibilities of their positions.

Training and support also promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care that are required to be met by employees and other educational providers to ensure that JMSS meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

All staff are required to commit to promoting the safety and wellbeing of the students by meeting all the expectations and requirements as stated in the JMSS Code of Conduct.

Professional development and training will be provided to enhance the skills and knowledge of JMSS employees, contractors and volunteers, to reduce exposure to risks.

Employees, contractors, other educational providers and volunteers working at JMSS will receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- JMSS policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Commitment to 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
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including JMSS's reporting guidelines
- cultural, gender and disability awareness training.

Training can be formal such as:

- Compulsory training for all new staff as part of their Induction Program
- Training developed and delivered internally
- Training offered by external organizations

Training can also be informal such as:

- Inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- Inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organizations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- Inviting local culturally and/or linguistically, gender or ability diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- Internal mentoring and coaching.

Supervision

Team teaching is generally employed at JMSS, meaning that two staff members are present for subject classes with children. Children with a disability may require additional supervision and assistance.

New employees and volunteers are assigned a mentor/ supervisor to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards the students is appropriate.

Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including the JMSS Child Safety Officer for internal reporting procedures, 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

JMSS have a proactive performance development strategy where performance is measured against the Department's Standards of Professional Conduct to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with the Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of JMSS and appropriate behaviour.

JMSS Recruitment checklist for child safety:

JMSS has robust recruitment processes to ensure the best applicants are employed. From advertising through to conducting interviews and checking the background of applicants, JMSS is committed to ensuring that each step is done consistently and thoroughly.

Below is a checklist for the JMSS recruitment practice of staff:

- advertising which includes a statement of JMSS Child Safe commitment
- Selection Criteria
- Face-to-face interviews
- [Working with Children Checks](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>
- [police record checks and identity checks](http://www.police.vic.gov.au) <www.police.vic.gov.au> (including international police record checks where necessary)
- Reference checks with recent line managers
- In the recruitment practice of staff, JMSS will utilize some of the resources (from Department of Education and Department of Health & Human Resource) presented in the resource below:

DET / DHHS Resources: used by JMSS for Recruitment purposes:

Selection criteria

Developing appropriate selection criteria for the position is a valuable first step to reducing the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. It will also ensure that applicants have the specific knowledge and skills required for the position.

Examples of appropriate selection criteria may include:

'Must have experience working with children.'

'Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children.'

<i>Does your selection criteria clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant?</i>	
<i>Does your selection criteria outline the supervision and accountability processes in place which support child safety?</i>	

Remember to ensure your selection criteria provides for the safety of all children. Your applicants should have the opportunity to indicate their understanding of, or any experience they have in working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds.

Does your selection criteria include a demonstration of the needs of children with a disability?

Does your selection criteria include a demonstration of Aboriginal cultural safety and awareness?

Does your selection criteria include a demonstration of cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds?

Advertising

Planning your advertisement and its placement provides a good opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to safeguarding children and deter would-be offenders.

Does your advertisement include a message about your organisation's commitment to child safety?	
Does your advertisement include reference to your code of conduct and child safe policy?	
Does your advertisement inform applicants that appropriate rigorous reference and background checking will be undertaken, including a Working with Children Check and police record and identity check?	

It is imperative that your organisation promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability. A suggested approach may be:

'This organisation promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability. Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children with a disability.'

Has your job advertisement included a statement about your organisation's commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability?	
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It is important that your organisation be culturally safe for Aboriginal children, and encourage participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children. A suggested approach may be:

'This organisation promotes the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, and encourages applications from Aboriginal peoples.

Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with Aboriginal children and/or communities.'

Has your job advertisement included a statement about your organisation's commitment to cultural safety, inclusion and empowerment of Aboriginal children, their families and communities?	
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It is important that your organisation promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children

'This organisation promotes the safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and encourages applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.

Applicants are welcome to elaborate on experience they may have working with children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.'

Has your job advertisement included a statement about your organisation's commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds?

Interviews

The interview process is a very important step in selecting the right people for your organisation and in identifying any people who may pose a risk to children. Give yourself sufficient time to plan and prepare for the interview process, and form an interview panel with the right mix of experience and skills to carry out the interview, ensuring that all panel members are clear on what the position requires. You may want to consider including Aboriginal peoples, people from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and people with a disability on the interview panel.

An open-ended style of behavioural-based questioning will give you insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. Some useful questions may include:

'Tell us about why you want to work with children?'

'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?'

'Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?'

Have you prepared a list of open-ended questions which will determine how the interviewee will behave in certain situations?	
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Take notice of your own thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant. Ask for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.

Did you notice any warning signs such as:

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| • Unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history | |
| • The applicant says they do not value or 'need' supervision | |
| • The applicant is evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers | |

Pre-employment screening

Screening applicants (including for paid and volunteer positions) is a good tool for helping to prevent people who may abuse children from entering your organisation.

Police checks

It is important to be upfront and ask the applicant if they have any criminal convictions, formal disciplinary action taken against them, or any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct. This could involve the applicant signing a declaration as part of an application form.

You could also cover this in a face-to-face interview. This may be challenging for the interview panel, particularly if the person is already known to you, but the applicant's response should demonstrate a sufficient level of professionalism as well as an understanding of your obligations. To help introduce this difficult topic, you could say to the applicant that you have some specific questions about child safety because your organisation takes child safety seriously.

<i>Have you included a question about whether the applicant has any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal or pending cases, including formal disciplinary action, which may affect their suitability to work with children?</i>	
<i>If addressed during a face-to-face interview, did you take notice of how the applicant responds to questions with regard to his or her words and body language?</i>	
<i>Have you undertaken a police record check (which includes identity check)?</i>	

Working with Children Check

Under the Working with Children Act 2005, people who are doing child-related work, and who are not exempt, need a Working with Children Check. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers. Full details of the [Working with Children Check process](#) can be found on the Working with Children website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>.

<i>Does the applicant hold a valid Working with Children Check, if required? Have you checked the validity of their Working with Children Check <online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/checkstatus.doj>?. OR If the applicant does not hold a valid Working with Children Check, and it is required, has the applicant provided evidence that they have applied for a Working with Children Check, and does your organisation have processes to follow up pending applications?</i>	
<i>Has the applicant provided you with evidence of their Working with Children Check, or evidence of their application for a Working with Children Check?</i>	

Referee checks

You should always talk to at least two referees as this can provide insight into the applicant's character and skills. Line managers, particularly the most recent, are likely to provide you with the most accurate reference. Where possible, referees that can provide insights into the applicant's experience working with children should be contacted.

<i>Do the referees provided by the applicant include line managers who can be objective, rather than colleagues or friends?</i>	
<i>Has the applicant provided their most recent line manager as a referee? If not, have they provided you with a satisfactory reason?</i>	
<i>Have you spoken to at least two of the referees by telephone? Did you confirm with them their name and position provided to you by the applicant?</i>	

When speaking with the referees, you should seek to establish the referee's relationship with the applicant, including:

- how long the applicant and referee worked together*
- the specifics of the position*
- the applicant's perceived strengths and weaknesses*
- whether the referee would hire the person again, particularly in a role working with children, and whether they have any concerns about the applicant working with children.*

You should ask referees directly about any concerns they may have about the applicant working with children. To help introduce this difficult topic, you could say you have some specific questions about child safety because your organisation takes child safety seriously.

Take note of any pauses or gaps in the referee's responses.

Ask behaviour-based questions like:

• 'What did the applicant do when...[for example, they had to comfort a distressed child]?'	
• 'Do you have any concerns about the applicant's attitude towards Aboriginal peoples / people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds / people with a disability?'	
• 'Do you have any concerns about the applicant working with children?'	
• 'Would you employ this person again?'	

Additional checks

Additional checks will confirm the identity of the applicant and that their responses have been truthful.

<i>Have you checked the identity of the applicant (for example, that their driver's licence/passport has the same name they have provided you)?</i>	
<i>Did you see a certified copy of the applicant's qualifications (if required)?</i>	

STANDARD 5: PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. In schools, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidents involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

School staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action.

The aim is to ensure that children's rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Implementation:

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs or risks of harm, disclosures of abuse or neglect, or a reasonable belief a student is subjected to sexual abuse or physical harm.
- Mandatory reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection.
- All other staff members who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person:
 - is in need of protection, should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police
 - is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection
- If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person they should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST.
- In cases where staff have concerns about a child or young person, they should also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually.
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- If a belief has been formed by a staff member that a mandatory report must be made, a “Mandatory Reporting Information Sheet” available from the Principal must be completed and filed in the Principal’s office.
- The teacher and/or the Principal class officer will contact the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification.
- Members of Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.
- All “Mandatory Reporting Information Sheets” remain filed in the Principal’s office.
- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.

- While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect; teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.
- Students, who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff to the principal.

STANDARD 6: STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE OR REMOVE THE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE

Description:

JMSS has adopted a risk management approach by identifying and considering child safety risk(s) based on a range of factors including the nature of activities undertaken with children, physical and online environments and the characteristics of children - including the cultural safety for Aboriginal children; children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability. It covers both 'business as usual' risks at school and risks posed by specific activities such as excursions and overnight trips and camps. Where risks are identified, JMSS institutes measures to reduce or remove them.

Rationale:

JMSS has an active approach to its duty of care in protecting children and tend to have a risk management approach and a commitment to continuous improvement. Additionally, implementation of a risk management approach is part of JMSS's recognition of its legal responsibilities to ensure the safety of children.

JMSS Implements this standard by:

- Ensuring clear and accessible processes for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities appropriate to JMSS, its size and resources, physical and online environments, and the characteristics of its children.
- Developing, recording and communicating clear processes for removing risks to children (for example, rules on online communications – included in the Internet and Anti-bullying and Anticyber bullying policies).
- Providing relevant staff and volunteers with training in identifying child abuse risks, for example blocked-off/out-of-sight spaces (especially rooms with doors that can be locked), overnight stays, and opportunities for physical contact, such as sports coaching and personal care.
- Engaging methods for continual improvement in how risks are managed by learning from past lessons, including policy review and staff training.
- A risk management approach driven through endorsement and ownership by management, including responsibility for risk identification and response in position descriptions.

- Ensuring supervision requirements for staff and volunteers who work with children.
- Instituting processes for periodic review of risk management approaches and/or processes and following any incident.
- Recognising and adapting to the needs of particular children and communities, including Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability. For example, acknowledgement that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed for some children with a disability.
- Recognising and addressing risks to Aboriginal children which might exist because of their experiences, for example if a child does not feel safe identifying as Aboriginal, or if there is an inadequate response to self-identification.
- Recognising and addressing risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, which might exist because of their experiences, for example increased communication with families may be necessary to build trust and understanding of organisational activities.
- Recognising and addressing risks for children with a disability, for example communication barriers when telling an adult they feel unsafe.
- Having a central reporting and advisory contact (Child Safety Officer) for staff to raise concerns and get advice about what to do if they need to report suspected abuse.
- Including statements about shared responsibility for management of risks in all position descriptions.
- Having a consistent risk management approach across the school.
- Including discussion about apparent risks or 'near misses' in staff/team meetings and areas for improvement.
- Rostering staff with appropriate experience and qualifications to manage high risk environments
- By successfully implementing this standard JMSS will be a school in which:
 - Situational risks are considered and understood by all staff
 - Steps are put in place to reduce risks where possible
 - Risk management approaches are regularly reflected on and improved
 - Specific risks to Aboriginal children are identified, assessed and mitigated
 - Specific risks to children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background are identified, assessed and mitigated
 - Specific risks to children with a disability are identified, assessed and mitigated

STANDARD 7 – STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE AND EMPOWER THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN

DESCRIPTION:

JMSS ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. We have implanted a simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All staff at JMSS will have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

RATIONALE:

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. Some organisations do not have simple and accessible processes assisting children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

JMSS WILL IMPLEMENT THIS STANDARD BY:

- Providing children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. Information can be included in our information sessions and posters, as well as on the school website.
- Ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children.
- Ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisation to review information and processes.
- Considering access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.
- Translating school information (including information about children's rights, child safe policies, statement of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages if appropriate.
- Gathering feedback from children, for example through surveys, focus groups, and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implement improvements based on this feedback.
- Enabling children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. For

example, views could be gathered through suggestion boxes and feedback sessions.

- Ensuring services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops if required.
- Training relevant staff and volunteers on methods of empowering children and encouraging children's participation.
- Ensuring Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other school activities, such as decision making.
- Raising awareness in the community about children's rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites and newsletters.

We aim to successfully implement this standard so that JMSS is a school in which:

- reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible for all children
- children understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
- children feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- children feel empowered to contribute to the school's understanding and treatment of child safety
- children's reports of concern are responded to appropriately
- all staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation

APPENDIX: CHILD SAFE JMSS INCIDENT REPORT

The Child Safe standards require that schools provide processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. This template is to be used by a student or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern at JMSS. All staff, contractors and volunteers at JMSS can also use this resource to record disclosures.

This report will be submitted to the JMSS Child Safe Officer – Assistant Principal (Student Empowerment)

All incident reports will be stored securely.

Incident details

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of student (s) involved:	
Name(s) of staff/ contractor / volunteer involved:	
Details of any first-aid administered	

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' 'yes' if applicable)

☐

Yes,
Aboriginal

☐

Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

Please describe the incident

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	
What did you see?	
What action, if any, was taken at the time, or since?	
Other information	

School use:

Date incident report received:	
Staff member managing incident:	
Follow-up date:	

Has the incident been reported?

Child Protection	
Police	
Another third party (please specify):	

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes

☐

No

☐

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>

Note for registered schools: a forthcoming Ministerial Order under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 will contain the minimum actions that schools must take to meet each of the child safe standards. There will be a lead in time before regulation will commence to allow schools time to prepare. The Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority will provide information and materials specifically for schools to assist with capacity building and compliance.

Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au

Early childhood services operating under the National Quality Framework or Children's Services Act 1996 should contact: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

Disclaimer

This document provides general guidance only on the child safe standards. The Department of Health and Human Services does not guarantee that the examples provided in the document are sufficient for the purposes of an organisation's compliance with existing regulatory or government funding requirements.

To receive this publication in an accessible format email
childsafestandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au

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Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation. Throughout this paper we refer to 'Aboriginal peoples' rather than 'Aboriginal people' to reflect the plurality and diversity of Victorian Aboriginal communities.
Available at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards