



# HALLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Hallam Primary 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.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, and will respond rigorously.

Hallam Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Hallam Primary School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Hallam Primary Schools is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, vulnerable children (eg OoHC) and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

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

### Our Children

Students are vital and active participants at Hallam Primary School. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance at Hallam Primary School, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

### Our Staff and Volunteers

All of our teaching staff are Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered, and are checked against the Department of Education and Training's (DET) Suitability to Teach requirements, prior to employment. Volunteers must provide evidence of a current, satisfactory Working with Children

Check, undertake a Volunteer Induction and agree to abide by our Code of Conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. School Council approval of the volunteer is also required. The Code of Conduct is developed and approved by School Council.

## Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in Hallam Primary School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Hallam Primary School's culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers 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 induction, professional development and supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be professionally developed, and supervised regularly to ensure they understand Hallam Primary School's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through the appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Department of Education and Training (DET) and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements, which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Hallam Primary School understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All teachers are required to provide evidence of current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration, which includes a national police records check, prior to employment at Hallam Primary School. All other employees and volunteers are required to provide evidence of a current, satisfactory Working with Children Check prior to employment at Hallam Primary School. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)> for further information

We carry out a rigorous selection process, including reference checks, to ensure that we are recruiting the most appropriate people. If, during the recruitment process, a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

## 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 follow the Department of Education and Training (DET) processes and procedures, and be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form<sup>1</sup>, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

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<sup>1</sup> See resource seven in this toolkit.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

## Privacy

All personal information 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. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Hallam Primary School will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## Legislative Responsibilities

Hallam Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

**Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.<sup>2</sup>

**Failure to protect:** People of authority in Hallam Primary 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.<sup>3</sup>

Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#)

<[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)>.

<sup>3</sup> Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#)

<[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)>.

<sup>4</sup> Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), Principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](#)

<[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first)>.

## 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 (for example, any doors that can be locked), and online environments (for example, no staff member or volunteer is to have contact with a child on social media).

## Regular Review

This statement will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents, if they occur. We will ensure that the Hallam Primary School community will have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

## Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Hallam Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work 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 (see information about failure to disclose above).

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 suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was updated in 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2023.

<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Hallam Primary School Council</b>
<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>15.08.2019</b>
<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	<b>Principal / Assistant Principal / Leadership Team / School Council</b>
<b>Next Review</b>	<b>2023</b>