



Swifts Creek

P-12 SCHOOL

Courage, Joy, Kindness

Child Safety Standards

Including Child Safety Policy

Ratified by Council: 28th March 2019



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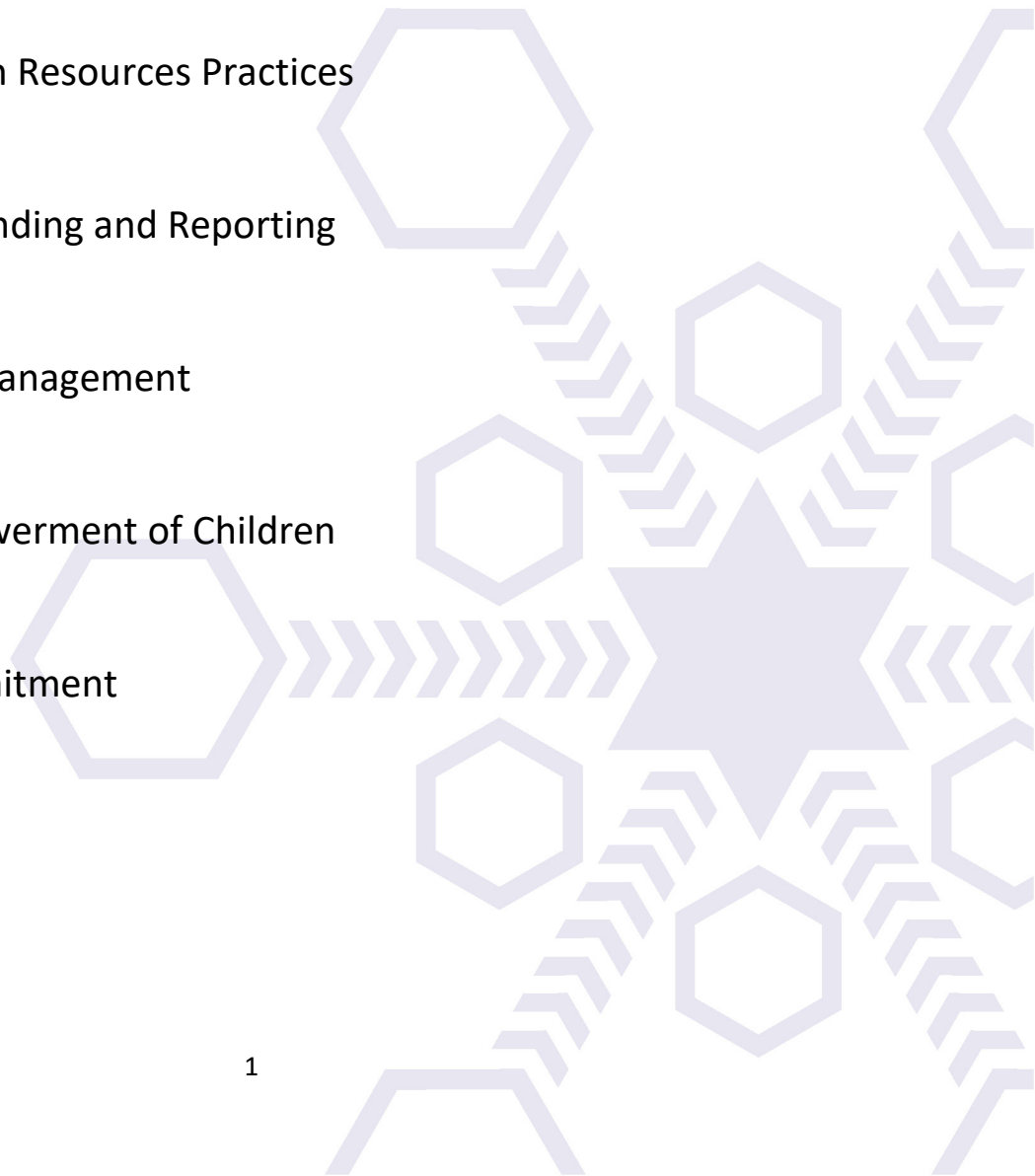
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Organisational Structure

Review:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will review the school's child safe practices across each of the Standards and identify priorities.

Address:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will address gaps and priorities by developing an Action Plan, including allocating responsibilities to school leaders for completing the actions.

Determine:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will determine timeframes for meeting gaps identified. This will include allowing time for new policies or procedures to be considered and approved by School Council.

Update:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will update their school statement of philosophy, mission and vision to acknowledge the importance of child safety and protecting children from abuse.

Create:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will create a child safety officer/leader position or role in the school to promote the Action Plan and review and report on its delivery.

Conduct:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will conduct briefing sessions for school staff members to ensure a high degree of awareness of the Standards and school strategies.

Child Safety Policy

Swifts Creek P-12 School embraces the values of Courage, Joy, Kindness, working together, being the best you can be and global citizenship. We aim to have students recognise their fullest potential through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values in an environment where they learn and grow to enjoy a productive, rewarding and fulfilling life. In support of this

***At Swifts Creek P-12 School,
we have a zero tolerance to child abuse.***

Rationale:

All Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

- the principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- the actions the school proposes to take to:
- demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy;
- support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
- support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- Ensure that child safety is considered in the recruitment, selection and management of staff (includes contractors and volunteers)

Ministerial Order No. 870 (available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes) states that Child abuse includes –

- Any act committed against a child involving –
 - A sexual offence or
 - An offence under section 49 B (2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
- The infliction, on a child, of –
 - Physical violence or
 - Serious emotional or psychological harm
- Serious neglect of a child.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with the whole school community as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Rationale:

Swifts Creek P-12 School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children 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, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Swifts Creek P-12 School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Swifts Creek P-12 School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-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.

To promote child safety in the school environment we acknowledge the following:

All students have a right to:

- Take part in learning programs that meet their individual needs.
- Feel secure and to be safe in a caring and supportive environment.
- Work and play without interference in an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation.
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness.
- Have learning continued without disruption in a supportive environment.
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity.
- Expect the school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.
- To be safe in every aspect of daily life at school, including Out Of School Hours Programs, camps and excursions.

All students have a responsibility to:

- Care and value themselves, others, teachers and the school community.
- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others.
- Treat others with respect and good manners.
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour, modelling and supporting school rules.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.

Child Safety Standards

- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others.
- Explore their full potential in their learning.

School staff adheres to the following standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children:

- School staff provide opportunities for all students to learn
- School staff treat their students with courtesy and dignity
- School staff work within the limits of their professional expertise
- School staff maintain objectivity in their relationships with students
- School staff are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate

Child Safety Standards

- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes¹
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy² or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

¹ SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

² SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx> . The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet

Implementation:

Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.

Reporting a belief

Mandated staff members (*Teachers and Principals*) must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection.

Staff members, **whether or not mandated**, need to report to the principal or assistant principal their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties.

A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report.

Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures Policy 2014 for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse.

These procedures do not:

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

- Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies:
- *Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures Policy 2014*
- *Student Engagement Policy 2014*
- *Duty of Care Policy 2014*
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the Department Mandatory Reporting online Professional Development
- Ensure that we follow the staff selection checklist before any staff member is offered employment.
- Ensure that our Out of School Hours Care provider has a copy of our school policy.
- Provide a safe environment that staff can come and discuss their child safety concerns with the Principal.
- Provide students regularly with exposure to numbers such as Kids Helpline through the mechanism of our eSmart curriculum.

References:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx>

If the school identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

- As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
- At least annually, the school must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school staff about:
- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
- child abuse risks in the school environment; and
- the school's current child safety standards.

Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

- The school authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.
- The school must promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with the whole school community as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Staff Selection

Rationale:

Strong human resources practices promote child safe school environments and reduce the risk of child abuse. Child Safe Standard 4 requires schools to use policies and procedures for recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that support a child safe school environment. These must comply with Ministerial Order 870.

Implementation:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will:

- ensure that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the standard 'Child Safe Environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.
- identify the actions the school proposes to take, per Standard 1, to promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3 [this is to address Requirement 1 for existing staff].and articulate the timeframe for this.
- determine the timeframes for the School Council to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2].
- adhere to all DET requirements listed in the table below

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
1. <i>Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have clear statements regarding the child safety requirements of the role and the expectations of the occupant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated and requires that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the following standard 'Child safe environments' clause: "Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website." • In the near future, position descriptions generated in Recruitment Online (ROL) will be automated to include a standard clause regarding child safety. • The Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions include the standard 'Child safe environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide. • For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3. • Note that the Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include reference to the Standards, and all contracts offered on or after 1 August will include the revised wording.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
	<p>include the text italicised in the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preamble: The aims of the Department include: “ ... the provision of a child safe environment” - Schedule B – Accountabilities of a principal – Student Support: “Pt 2) Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general well-being of all students in attendance at the school including compliance with the Child Safe Standards “ <p>This will apply for future contracts.</p>	
<p>2. <i>All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school’s child safety practices (including the code of conduct).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
<p>3. <i>In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Recruitment in Schools’ Guide has been updated to include that, the Principal, prior to an external applicant commencing employment, must be satisfied that the person: <i>“meets the Child Safe Standards.”</i> (insert link to CSS site” This can be found here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant <i>meets the Child Safe Standards</i> prior to the applicant’s employment.
<p>4. <i>The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information about a particular</i></p>		

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
<i>individual within the previous 12 months</i>		
5. <i>The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to induction and continuing suitability for child connected work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on alignment of/ changes to Induction will be developed in 2016. • Advice on alignment of/ changes to Performance and Development will be developed in 2016, with changes to be determined for the 2017-18 Performance and Development cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that further advice on requirements related to Induction and Performance and Development will be developed in 2016 to ensure schools fully meet this Standard.
6. <i>The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Councils to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2]

Resources and References :

- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation*, Version 2.0.
- Department of Education and Training (2016) *Recruitment in Schools*
- Department of Education and Training (2016) *Suitability for Employment*
- Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*, Ministerial Order No. 870.
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (2016) *Child Safety Standard 4: Staff Selection Checklist*

Child Safety Officer

Rationale:

A school leader for child safety should have sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate), to undertake the role effectively

Broad areas of the role are to:

Provide authoritative advice

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety.
- Liaise with the principal and school leaders to maintain the visibility of child safety.
- Lead the development of the school's child safety culture, including being a child safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

Raise awareness

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately.
- Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.
- Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school in this.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers.
- Encourage among all staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.

Train

- Being authoritative in providing advice by:
 - keeping their skills up to date with appropriate training carried out every two years
 - having a working knowledge of how the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Community Service Organisations conduct a child protection case conference to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child safety policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff.
- Make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest DHHS and DET policies and guidance.

Implementation:

The Child Safety Officer will be appointed by the principal. The Child Safety Officer will undertake the role for a period of 2 years and will be reviewed bi-annually at the beginning of each school year.

Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Rationale:

As professionals who work with children, staff at Swifts Creek P-12 School play a vital role in protecting children from abuse by responding and reporting any incidents, disclosures or suspicions. Staff are often best placed to identify signs and behaviours that may indicate that a child has been subject to abuse, or that a school community member or a school staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse.

Implementation:

- All staff at Swifts Creek P-12 School will be reminded of their obligation to report any suspicion of child abuse to a member of the leadership team on a regular basis.
- All staff at Swifts Creek P-12 School will be reminded of their obligation to report any suspicion that a school community member or a school staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse to a member of the leadership team on a regular basis.
- All staff at Swifts Creek P-12 School will be required to complete Mandatory Reporting training annually using the DET online module <http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/schools/>
- All staff at Swifts Creek P-12 School School will be provided with the “Four Critical Actions for School” poster as a reference for reporting incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.
- All staff at Swifts Creek P-12 School School will be required to complete an incident report in the case of a suspected child abuse incident or a suspicion that a school community member or a school staff member may be a perpetrator of abuse.
- All new staff at Swifts Creek P-12 School School will be made aware of their mandatory reporting obligations and Child Safety Standards during their induction at the beginning of the school year (or their contract start date).
- All staff and volunteers (such as parent helpers, LAP helpers etc) must have a current police criminal records check and/or a Working With Children Check.

Appendices:

- “Four Critical Actions for School” poster
- Incident Report – Staff
- Incident Report – Leadership
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Induction Handbook

Risk Assessment

Rationale:

Victorian Government schools have an important responsibility for keeping children safe. They need to **Assess, identify** and **document** the school's risks in relation to child safety, and plan and document risk management strategies where necessary.

Implementation:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will adopt the following Process for identifying and reducing or removing risks of child abuse;

1. Identify the school's child safety risks across the range of school environments (including excursions, camps, online) using the DET risk assessment template.
2. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures or internal controls.
3. Assess and rate the school's child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.
4. If the risk rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further risk management strategies through additional controls or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then re-assess the risk.

The risk management process will be documented, recorded and reviewed periodically. Effective risk management strategies are dynamic and change over time as new risks arise and others may no longer be relevant.

Effective risk management strategies need to be transparent, well understood and diverse, to take account of the increased level of risk associated with the specific nature of some activities and the vulnerability of particular groups.

Resources and References:

- [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST](#)
- Department of Education and Training (2016) *School Policy Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy*, and associated tools:
 - School risk register which can be edited and has automatic tools embedded is available, see: [Risk Management in Schools – Risk Register](#).
 - Subordinate risk registers for specific activities such as overseas travel/excursions or projects, see: [Risk Management in Outdoor Education – Education Outdoor tools](#).
 - Online risk management module: [Risk Management - Online Risk Module](#)
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module (log-in required)

Child Empowerment

Rationale:

Children have the right to give their views and opinions about decisions that affect them and to be listened to. Empowerment is about helping children to have their say. Children are more likely to speak up about their concerns about feeling unsafe, or make a complaint, if they feel their views are valued and welcomed.

Implementation:

Swifts Creek P-12 School will develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

Swifts Creek P-12 School will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

Swifts Creek P-12 School delivers appropriate education about **Standards of Behaviour** by

- ensuring clear expectations for appropriate and inappropriate behavior are monitored using the school's "Standards of Behaviour and Expectations" matrix
- having an up to date Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- involving students in decision making through our School Delegates.

Swifts Creek P-12 School delivers appropriate education about **Healthy and Respectful Relationships** by

- implementing "Catching on Early" health and sexuality education program
- implementing a comprehensive Health and Physical Education program
- promoting mental health and wellbeing through Personal Development sessions.
- involving students in decision making through our student leadership process.

Swifts Creek P-12 School delivers appropriate education about **Resilience** by

- promoting, modeling, teaching, acknowledging and celebrating resilience through our Personal Development program P-12.

Swifts Creek P-12 School delivers appropriate education about **Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention** by

- implementing "Catching on Early" and Respectful Relationships, health and sexuality education programs
- relevant information for parents and community published in the school newsletter
- holding parent information sessions on a needs basis when appropriate

Statement of Commitment

Swifts Creek P-12 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.

Swifts Creek P-12 School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Swifts Creek P-12 School 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 Swifts Creek P-12 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.

Implementation:

In its planning, decision-making and operations Swifts Creek P-12 School will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. 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;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with the whole school community as part of the school's three-year review cycle

- This policy was adopted at the School Council meeting held at Swifts Creek P-12 School, on March 28th, 2019.

Signed

School Council President

Principal