



**MELBOURNE  
RUDOLF STEINER  
SCHOOL**

Our School is a place of sanctuary for childhood.

Here we know that every child is a sacred gift to the world.

We, the adults, are entrusted with their care.

Each of our thoughts, words, and deeds are to be beneficial to their wellbeing.

Our task and responsibility is to nurture the young people, and to help them accomplish their growth to full human freedom.

To this end the school has its existence



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## **Child Protection and Safety Policy**

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School has developed the following Child Protection and Safety Policy. This policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse. This policy and the School's approach are intended to be proactive, preventative and responsive. It is an assumption, as we endeavour to comply with changes in the regulatory environment in which we operate, that the School already regards child safety as being of utmost importance and that we provide a safe environment for the children that we teach. While compliance with the Child Safety Standards is mandatory and every member of our staff bears a real responsibility for this compliance, achieving a culture of child safety is an active and ongoing process which should be reflected in every aspect of our school, rather than stored in documents to be periodically reviewed and consulted.

<b>Staff member(s) responsible:</b>	Art Curl
<b>Date last reviewed:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2018
<b>Next major review:</b>	2019

## *School Commitment*

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

*Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School has zero tolerance for child abuse.*

*Melbourne Rudolf Steiner 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 Melbourne Rudolf Steiner 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.*

In its planning, decision-making and operations *Melbourne Rudolf Steiner 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.

## *Policy*

At Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to creating a culture of safety for children that reflects the finest qualities of humanity. The School regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Safety Program designed to keep children safe.

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our School practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our *Child Safety Code of Conduct* and are the subject of review by the College of Teachers and training on curriculum days
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child-safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community.

7. Procedures are in place to screen all new staff, volunteers who have contact with students, third party contractors and other education providers (extra lesson, after school care) who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all staff and volunteers\* who have contact with children.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

*\*Examples of volunteers who have contact with children may include volunteers involved in School camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.*

## ***Child Safety Program***

This program provides the framework for:

- The development of practices, policies, roles and procedures that promote child safety within the School;
- The creation of a positive and robust child safety culture;
- The promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the School; and

- Complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety in Victoria.

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safety Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and digital environments and the characteristics of the student body. Our Child Safety Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- Clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated risk indicators;
- Clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- Strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, third party contractors, other education providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- Procedures for recruiting and screening, staff and volunteers;
- Pastoral care strategies designed to support students and keep them safe;
- Policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;
- A child protection training program;
- Information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
- Guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;

- Policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards); and
- A schedule for reviewing and changing the systems.

As a part of Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School's induction process, all staff and volunteers are required to complete an induction on the content of our Child Safety Program.

All staff and volunteers are provided with ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, volunteers, third party contractors and other education providers are supported and supervised by the College of Teachers to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child safety.

## *Responsibility*

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School all members of the staff, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

### *Board of Directors*

Each member of the Board of Directors is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Safety Program to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for working with the College of Teachers to ensure effective implementation.

### *The College of Teachers*

The College of Teachers is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the School's Child Safety Program are implemented effectively, reviewed regularly and that a strong and sustainable child safety culture is maintained within the School.

### *The School's Child Safety Coordinators*

A number of staff members are nominated as the Child Safety Coordinators, but the responsibility is understood to be shared by all staff. In some cases, including the Class Teachers, the role of Child Safety Coordination will be understood to be a normal part of their responsibilities rather than a further role to be performed. Our School's Child Safety Coordinators will receive additional, specific training with respect to child safety issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also given responsibility for promoting and maintaining a culture of child safety within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

### *Staff Members*

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Coordinators.

### *Volunteers*

All volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to

be aware of risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Coordinators.

### *Third Party Contractors*

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Program. All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment. The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the contractors.

### *Other Education Providers*

An Other Education Provider for the purpose of the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy is any organisation that the School has arranged to provide any element of the education provided by the School, to a student or students enrolled at the School. The delivery of such may take place on School premises or elsewhere. All Other Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Program. All other education providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment. Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

Our Child Safety Program provides detailed guidance for members of the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Safety Coordinators. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, other education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School's Child Safety Coordinators or a member of The Administration Group. Communications regarding child safety will be treated confidentially.

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.**

### *Child Safety Code of Conduct*

A Child Safety Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everyone is aware the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the School environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct set out below is designed to stand-alone. It can also be incorporated in whole or part into broader Codes of Conduct that are developed within the School, including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the School. The Code is made available to all staff, volunteers, families and students.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the School environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal. The Administration Group of the College of Teachers will be responsible, as delegated by the College and the Directors, for

receiving, investigating, making findings, reporting and recommending action to the College in respect of any alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct. It is understood to be normal practice for the Administration Group to seek comprehensive professional advice on matters of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. The School will review the Code annually.

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students within our School community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, volunteers, third party contractors, other education providers and parents/carers.

These include:

- Behave as a positive role model to children.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to child safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for students.
- Comply with School policies with respect to child protection.
- Treat all children with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse children.
- Use positive and affirming language toward children.
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.

- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards others or acting in an unkind humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report any breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the School's Child Safety Coordinators and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure, as quickly as possible, that the child involved is safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety.
- Respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

*DO NOT:*

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards children or expose students to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with children.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children or discriminate against any child based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of children.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a child including making sexually suggestive comments or sharing sexually suggestive material.

- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a child including unreasonably rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a child serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a child that is not your own child.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a child through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a child.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a child without parental / carer consent.
- Post online any information about a child that may identify them, such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

## *Reporting Child Abuse*

The Program also includes information about to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Safety Coordinators.

Potential reports may be of:

- an offence against a child

- an offence by a staff member of the School
- an offence by another adult in the School Community or beyond
- an offence by another child
- the suspicion of an offence
- a risk that may contribute to an offence occurring

It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities. **It should be noted that reporting a matter internally does not release you from other legal and regulatory obligations that you may have.** Please see the School's *Duty of Care in Relation to the Reporting of Sexual Offences Policy* for more information

Third party contractors, other education providers, volunteers, students, parents or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School's Child Safety Coordinators.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know' basis.

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted immediately on 000.**

Our Child Safety Staff - Make a Report or discuss an issue...

Name	Position (role)	Phone	Email
Damian Stone	Leading Child Safety Coordinator (Student welfare)	0428 307553	damo@mrss.com.au
Art Curl	Child Safety Coordinator (Outdoor education)	0428 342224	arthur.curl@mrss.com.au
Deb Albrecht	Child Safety Coordinator (Support Ed)	0421 800356	deborah.albrecht@mrss.com.au
Ali Staley	Child Safety Coordinator (Primary)	0419 949664	Ali.staley@mrss.com.au

End of Policy