



Child Safe Environment Policy 2017

Purpose

All Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

As part of the broader child safety approach, the Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe Schools) Act 2015 requires that all Victorian schools adopt minimum child safe standards to improve the protection of children, and consistent policies for responding to allegations of abuse.

The child safe environment policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Scope

All staff, volunteers and contractors who work directly or indirectly with JSA students within and across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online, excursions) and outside of school hours are expected to comply.

This policy will be shared with all external agencies who provide short term (e.g. contractors) and long term (e.g. Mee's Bus, ANZUK, Daniher's) services to JSA school and our students.

Commitment:

Jacana School for Autism has zero tolerance for child harm and abuse or neglect and holds child safety as a top priority.

Jacana School for Autism 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.

Every person involved in Jacana School for Autism 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 Jacana School for Autism 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,

19 - 39 Landy Road, Jacana VIC 3047

Phone 9309 6258 Fax 9309 6426

jacana.school@edumail.vic.gov.au

<http://www.jacanaschoolforautism.vic.edu.au/>

- 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.
- Use the Statement of Commitment and policy to direct school procedures and practice and inform other child safe related policies in the school (Social Media Policy, Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy)
- Ensure regular and consistent communication which models the values and principles articulated in the Child Safe Policy
- Review and update the policy in response to emerging thinking, evidence and practice about the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

We are committed to ensure staff are well prepared to protect children from abuse, harm and neglect. There are a number of policies that contain elements of child safety standards however this policy will consolidate current policies and complete areas that are not covered.

Aims & Procedures

JSA aims to create and maintain a child safe environment for our students in accordance to the Ministerial Order No. 870 and its child safe standards

Child safe standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

- Develop a strong and clear governance to drive and lead the focus and commitment for child safety within the school.
- Leadership set a high expectation for staff commitment to child safety and facilitate staff awareness and staff education in regards to child safe practices

Child safe standard 2: A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

- In addition to the Child Safe Environment Policy, JSA ensures all existing policies and practices clearly communicate a commitment to child safety & the expected procedures/practices required to achieve a child safe environment
- Commit to ongoing practice of creating a child safe environment by regularly reviewing policies, procedures and practice within the school.

Child safe standard 3: A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

- A Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships
- JSA ensures all staff adhere to the school's code of conduct as well as those governed by professional bodies (e.g. Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Ethics, Professional code of practice)

Child safe standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

- All JSA staff adheres to policy and procedures for recruitment and selection processes, supervision, training and managing the performance of staff
- JSA maintains records of all staff, volunteers and contractors hold a working with children's check. Additionally JSA maintains a register of employee and prospective employees police checks.
- All advertised positions state a commitment to child safety in order to attract the most suitable persons, and deter those unsuitable

- All JSA positions are documented with clear roles and responsibilities & commitment to child safety
- Create and provide opportunities for all staff to engage in training, professional development and discussions regarding creating child safe practices.
- JSA is committed to developing cultural competence that is embedded in our governance, policies, programs, service delivery and practice
- JSA is committed to inclusive education practices as outlines in the Inclusive Education Policy.

Child safe standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

- The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection as stated in the Mandatory Reporting Policy.
- JSA understands that everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse and teachers are legally required to make a report to Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.
- All staff are provided opportunity for training regarding Mandatory Reporting through the Department of Education and Training e-learning module.

Child safe standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

- The School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to students and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.
- The school's risk management plan is comprehensive in identifying and assessing risk of harm & strategies to mitigate the risk/s of harm to students across school activities s.
- Risk assessments include the following factors:
 - a. Unintentional/accidental harm
 - b. Psychological abuse
 - c. Physical abuse
 - d. Neglect
 - e. Cultural abuse
 - f. Sexual abuse
- JSA ensures the staff understand the risk of harm through use of technology and online forums (e.g. cyber bullying, online grooming etc) are minimised in accordance to our E-learning policy.

Child safe standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

- The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with students and their parents / care givers.
- We encourage child and parent/ care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of students and parents/ care givers to understand the rights of a child
- JSA is committed to ensure the voice of our students is heard and valued and enables the participation of students in school decisions through activities such as:
 - Student council representation
 - School Rules
 - Awareness and learning programs such as:

Additional and supporting policies, documents and procedures outlining the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards can be found in Appendix A.

Review and Evaluation:

This policy that will be reviewed in one year to review the progress of the action plan. Once the additional implementation actions have occurred and the policy will be reviewed in the regular 3 year cycle.

Ratified By JSA School Council:	August 2017
Review Date:	Term 3 2018

Resources and References

- State Government Victoria Commission for Children and Young People (2015). *A guide for creating a child safe organisation*. Version 2.0. Melbourne.
- 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 Qualification Authority (2016) *Information Sheet. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety*
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation*, Version 2.0.
- A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST [hyperlink]
- Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people [hyperlink]
- Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations - elearning module {log-in required}
- State of Victoria (2010) *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools*

**APPENDIX A
ADDITIONAL AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO ENSURING CHILD SAFETY**

Standards - providing	Supporting Documents and Policies
<p>STANDARD 1 Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JSA governance policy • School Newsletter • Staff briefing notes provides opportunity for staff to feedback on policy • Training and professional development register • Inclusive Education Policy
<p>STANDARD 2 A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safety Policy • All school policies & procedural documentation are reviewed to include state a commitment to child safety • School website • Advertised positions with a commitment to child safety statement
<p>Standard 3 A code of conduct that established clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty of Care (pg 15 SAM) • Duty of Care policy • VIT Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct • Teaching and Learning Protocols • Professional Code of Practice • Student Engagement policy guidelines – Section 3 rights and responsibilities • Behaviour Policy
<p>Standard 4 Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIT code of ethics • VIT annual registration • Mandatory Reporting policy • School Leadership code of conduct • Application of Merit & Equity recruitment procedures to all advertised positions • Staff, volunteer & contractor police check & WWCC register & induction • Staff mentoring/coaching • Annual Staff Professional Development Plans (PDPs) • Professional practice schedule • Mandatory training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DET Disability & discrimination Act training ○ DET Mandatory reporting training ○ Behaviour management professional development (e.g. PBS framework training) ○ Medical support training (e.g. anaphylaxis)
<p>Standard 5 Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Reporting Policy • DET Mandatory Reporting training (annual)
<p>Standard 6 Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E learning policy • E- smart school accreditation • Student wellbeing Policy • Excursion risk assessment

Standards - providing	Supporting Documents and Policies
Standard 7 Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Representative Council