

Human Resources Practices

RATIONALE:

Barwon Heads Primary School has embedded screening, supervision and training practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing staff. It is important for Barwon Heads Primary School to have strong human resources practices in place to help protect children from abuse.

Barwon Heads Primary School will foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as be aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations. Robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, our school needs to provide opportunities for staff to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety such as the - Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations Online Module, which is required to be completed by all new staff in Term 1 of the school year, and every second year for returning staff. This will support our staff to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

We will reinforce our organisation's commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of all our staff and external providers in keeping children safe and protected.

Child Safety Officer (see PROTECT Child Safe Standard 1 - School Child Safety Officer)

Barwon Heads Primary has an appointed Student Guidance Officer that whose role will include that of Child Safety Officer, with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist our school in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with our legal requirements, policies and procedures.

The designated Student Guidance Officer will provide a single contact for children, parents, staff and external providers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with our school.

Training and Induction

At Barwon Heads Primary School training and education is an important tool to help staff understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Staff and external providers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

This will be provided each year through induction (beginning of year/prior to students returning) and ongoing training. New staff will need support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff might need to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

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

Training should enhance the skills and knowledge of our staff and external providers as a prevention to reduce exposure to risks. Staff and external providers working with children will receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Barwon Heads Primary School Child Safety policies and procedures
- Legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including the Barwon Heads Primary School Child Safety Reporting Process
- Cultural awareness training.

Training may include formal opportunities such as:

- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally

Training may include informal opportunities such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching.

Supervision

Supervision of staff and external providers will be managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed.

As a matter of good practice, new staff and external providers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs will be reported through appropriate channels and following Barwon Heads Primary School's internal reporting process as included in the staff induction folders, including contacting the Student Guidance Officer and Principal, the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

A proactive performance development strategy will be used to improve staff skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance will be measured against Barwon Heads' Commitment to Safety (Standard 2) and Code of Conduct (Standard 3) documents and care taken to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards must align with those of the code of conduct and child safe policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

The Barwon Heads Primary School Staff Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures are transparent and accessible to all staff on our shared school drive, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be enacted if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Staff and external providers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within the school. Staff should also be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Children and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported. Our school's disciplinary procedures clearly outline what staff or external providers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

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.")

PROTECT

