

Yarra Ranges Commitment to Child Safety SDS Statement

Our Commitment

At Yarra Ranges Special Developmental School we consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people to be our highest priority. Our school has a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse. We support and respect all children as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at our school at all times. We are dedicated to protecting the children and young people in our school and have undertaken training and developing our policies in line with this.

Safeguarding children underpins our policies and procedures in relation to the protection of children and young people and guides the following:

- The screening and recruitment of our personnel
- The behaviour of our staff towards children and young people
- The induction and training of our staff about safe guarding children and young people
- Our open and effective communication with children and young people and their parents
- Our response to the abuse and neglect of children if it occurs
- Our maintenance of a safeguarding culture in our school

Our staff are required to:

- Undergo an extensive screening process including a National Criminal Records Check and/or a Working with Children Check.
- Behave professionally and respectfully and with care towards children and young people including not acting outside the boundaries of their duties, or using their position with the school to solicit work or initiate contact with children and young people who are attending our school.
- Understand the important responsibility they have to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation either by staff, or anything that occurs outside the scope of our school.
- Continue to create and maintain a child safe culture.

We are dedicated to protecting the children and young people in our school and have undertaken training such as elmolearning.com. Protecting the Safety of Children and Young People, Mandatory Reporting Professional Learning module, as well as working with organisations such as DHHS and the Australian Childhood Foundation.

Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations

We consider any form of child abuse including emotional, physical and sexual abuse, family violence, grooming or neglect as intolerable under any circumstances.

We have a legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people, and will ensure that any incident of suspected child abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with.

When responding to child allegations the staff at Yarra Ranges SDS must follow the PROTECT – “Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse” Guidelines, the link is available below:

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf

Our staff are required to report any suspected child abuse to the Principal, Child Protection or the police. Yarra Ranges SDS will cooperate with child protection and police and any other agencies to protect children and young people from harm.

Yarra Ranges SDS Practice and Behaviour guidelines

Our staff and any volunteers, students on placement, and visitors are required to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct towards children and young people.

The following guidelines underline our practice and behaviour.

Transport

Students attending our school are to be transported only with prior consent to use the Crown School bus service provided by DET, or by prior authorisation from a parent/guardian for their child to travel with a carer/relative, agency, or with a staff member.

Staff are required to submit details about the proposed journey, form of transport, and details of other staff who will be present to the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Overnight camps

Overnight camps occur only with the authorisation of the School Council, Principal, and a parent/guardian.

Standards of conduct that must be observed include:

- Providing children and young people with privacy with any bathing and dressing, or assisting them with personal care
- Not leaving children or young people under the supervision or protection of unauthorised staff
- The right of young children or young people to talk or indicate by their behaviour, that they feel unsafe or distressed during the stay, and their parents may need to be contacted.

Physical contact with Children and Young People

Any physical contact with children or young people must be appropriate to the delivery of the programs and services based on the needs of the individual rather than the needs of any staff.

Positive Behaviour Support

We support our students to be as independent as possible. We promote the practice of positive behaviour support strategies by all staff to ensure a safe and positive learning environment and the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and staff at our school. We have developed a Yarra Ranges Positive Behaviour Resource for all staff to follow as well as any new staff. All strategies are fair, respectful and appropriate to the situation and the developmental stage of the children and young people involved.

No staff member is to take action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

Professional Boundaries

Our staff are advised not to act outside the confines of their duties, as specified in their position description when working with students to deliver educational programs. Staff are to follow At Yarra Ranges SDS we discourage staff to engage with students who attend the school, in activities outside of school hours, such as baby-sitting. Staff need to make the Principal aware of any such activities.

Photographs of children and young people

Students are only photographed by our staff while engaged in programs or activities if:

- Prior consent from parents/guardians has been obtained
- The context is directly related to participation in educational programs
- The child is appropriately dressed and posed

Use of electronic communication

Any use of electronic communication is to be restricted to the delivery of our educational programs and services. Please refer to the Yarra Ranges acceptable use of ICT policy.

Date Implemented	September 2016
Author	Matt Shakespeare
Approved By	School Council
Approval Authority (Signature & Date)	
Date Reviewed	
Responsible for Review	Assistant Principal
Review Date	September 2019
References	