# GOOD LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE IN A CHILD SAFE SCHOOL
## Watsonia North Primary School
## (Child Safe Standard 1)

### Leadership in a Child Safe Environment

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities. Watsonia North Primary School will act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We do this by providing a culture of child safety, embedded throughout our school, so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice. This culture has been achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of Watsonia North Primary School.

Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. At Watsonia North Primary School, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

### Governance in a Child Safe Environment

Leadership at Watsonia North Primary School takes preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

### Leadership Responsibilities

All staff at Watsonia North Primary School are responsible for embedding a culture of child safety, including the use of the tools provided by the education department. The leadership team has responsibility for taking the lead in protecting children from abuse, are aware of child abuse allegations and risks, and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Watsonia North Primary School will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police by calling 000 and/or child protection by calling 1300 664 977.

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### Identify and Analyse Risk of Abuse

Watsonia North Primary School adopts an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our school identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

**Please note:** The Department of Health and Human Services provides risk management tools for school use.

## In demonstrating our commitment to Child Safety Standards, Watsonia North Primary School has:

### 1. Developed a Child Safe policy

This Child Safe Policy outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

Refer to Watsonia North Primary School:

- *Child Protection Policy*

### 2. Developed a Code of Conduct

Watsonia North Primary School has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) developed the Code of Conduct as required by Part 2.6 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. The Code of Conduct is a set of principles or standards for the behaviour and conduct of all Victorian teachers in the Victorian Government Teaching Service and the non-Government sector.

The following principles are of particular relevance when using social media tools:

- Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

- Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.

- Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

Watsonia North Primary School also has developed a specific Code of Conduct that encourages appropriate behaviour between children called the Student Code of Conduct.

Refer to Watsonia North Primary School:

- *Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy*
- *Statement of School Values and Philosophy*

## 3. Chosen Suitable Employees and Volunteers

Watsonia North Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, our recruitment process will ensure it includes:

- ➢ Selection criteria in job descriptions
- ➢ Police record and identity checks
- ➢ Working with Children Checks where required
- ➢ Face-to-face interviews
- ➢ Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager, outlining the individual's capacity to work with children.

Refer to Watsonia North Primary School:

- *Employment Policy*
- *Visitors Policy*
- *Volunteers Policy*

## 4. Supported, Trained, Supervised and Enhanced Performance

Watsonia North Primary School ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse. In particular, the Principal and the leadership team understand their responsibilities. The leadership team at Watsonia North Primary School has knowledge of child safety issues, and is a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

## 5. Promoted Inclusion

Watsonia North Primary School is inclusive to all children and families/carers. In particular, we establish and maintain a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations.
- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters, when required.

- the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring that Watsonia North Primary School is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

Refer to Watsonia North Primary School:

- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*
- *Equal Opportunity Policy*

6. **Empowered and Promoted the Participation of Children in Decision-Making**

Watsonia North Primary School promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. Our school provides opportunities for children to express their views on student behaviour through our School Wide Behaviour Expectations, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through circle time and campus meetings; suggestion boxes and feedback sessions. The Student Representative Council provides a forum for students to express their views and opinions.

Watsonia North Primary School endeavours to listen to children and take their ideas or concerns seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.

## Further information

*Further information on child safe standards can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>*

*Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, [An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards](), has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>*

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