

## **HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES**

### **Watsonia North Primary School (Child Safe Standard 4)**

### **Overview**

It is important for schools to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse. At Watsonia North Primary School, we foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target schools. We believe that 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, we provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures. Watsonia North Primary School reinforces our commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

### **Implementation**

Employees and volunteers are supported through the Principal Class Team, School Leadership Team and School Support Officers Team 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 us 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 (Department of Education and Training) DET legal requirements and policies and procedures.

The Principal Class Team also provides a single contact for children, parents/carers and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with our school.

### **Training and induction**

Education and training is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Watsonia North Primary School's employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will be provided with support and information when they commence in their new role, and existing staff provided

## **Implementation** *(continued)*

with ongoing support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that Watsonia North Primary School meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

### **Employees and volunteers working with children will receive training in the following areas:**

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks.
- Watsonia North's Primary School's policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy).
- 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 our school's reporting guidelines.
- cultural awareness training.

### **Training can be formal such as:**

- higher education training and accreditation.
- training offered by external organisations.
- training developed and delivered internally.
- on-the-job training meeting key objectives.
- email updates on specific resources.

### **Training can also be informal such as:**

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or events.
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders and/or Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and school events.
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events.
- internal mentoring and coaching.

### **Supervision:**

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members are present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision.

## **Implementation** *(continued)*

As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are 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 should be reported through appropriate channels, including Watsonia North Primary School's internal reporting procedures (such as the Principal Class Team, School Leadership Team and School Support Officers Team), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

### **Performance and Development Review**

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve employees and volunteers 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 is measured against Watsonia North Primary's School's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards 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.

### **Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures**

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within Watsonia North Primary School. Members of our school will also be made 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.

Our Code of Conduct is publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Watsonia North Primary School's disciplinary procedures clearly outline what employees or volunteers 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.

## **Further Information and Resources**

- Watsonia North Primary School Employment Policy
- Watsonia North Primary School Statement of School Values and Philosophy

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