Child Safe Standards 2016 CHILD SAFETY POLICY	WARATAH SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTAL SCHOOL

*Waratah SDS takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).***

Purpose

The Child Safety Policy sets out Waratah SDS's approach to creating an environment where all children are safe and protected, and there is zero tolerance for child abuse; it provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards and adherence to Ministerial Order No. 870.

Scope

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors, whether or not they are in direct contact with children or young people, and applies across the school environment, including camps and excursions, and both inside and outside of school hours.

Statement of Commitment and Principles

Waratah SDS is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Waratah SDS has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people feel safe and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Waratah SDS 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 Waratah SDS will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.

2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.

3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.

4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.

5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.

6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.

7. Ensure children know whom to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.

8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.

9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.

10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Policy and Procedures

Ministerial Order No. 870 contains specific clauses that must be met to ensure Child Safe Standards are met. The Policies and procedures outlining Waratah SDS's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below.

Roles and responsibilities/Code of conduct
School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's *Child Safety Code of Conduct*. The school's *Child Safety Code of Conduct* sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Human resources practices and training
The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint
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. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint. The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found in the **Mandatory Reporting Policy**.

Risk reduction and management
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 children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

Child empowerment and participation
The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. The school, through its Student Engagement Policy, is committed to students' understanding the standards of behaviour for attending the school. Similarly, the school is committed to enhancing students' understanding and development of pro social, emotional, and wellbeing actions and concepts, including resilience, and healthy and respectful relationships.

Confidentiality and Privacy
This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy.

Policy evaluation and review
To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

Definitions
Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:

Child abuse includes—
- any act committed against a child involving:
– a sexual offence or
– an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)

- the infliction, on a child, of:
– physical violence or
– serious emotional or psychological harm o serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:
- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)

- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:
- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority; a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

Links and documentation
Duty of Care
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/dutyofcare.aspx

Child Protection – Reporting Obligations
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/childprotection.aspx

Student Health and Safety
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/default.aspx

Information Privacy
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/privacy.aspx

Ratification
This policy was ratified by the School Council on September 8th, 2016.

References

VRQA Website http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html

DET Website
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx

Commission for Children and Young People Website
http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/