

CHILD SAFETY-POLICY

Bhavani School is committed to the safety of every child enrolled as a student at our school. Children have the right to a safe environment at School. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

PURPOSE

This policy provides an overview of the key elements of our approach to child safety at our School.

BHAVANI SCHOOL:

- ✓ Has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- ✓ Actively works to listen to and empower children.
- ✓ Has systems to protect children from abuse and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures.
- ✓ Is committed to promoting physical, emotional, and cultural safety for all children.
- ✓ Is committed to providing a safe environment for all children.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students and the wider School community who are engaged in child-connected work.

School staff are all individuals working in our school environment who are directly engaged or employed by School, such as our teachers, administrative staff and non-teaching staff, and contracted service providers.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Principal and School Council are responsible for developing strategies that embed an organizational culture of child safety. These strategies will give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education, and wellbeing.

The School Council will monitor the school's adherence to this policy through its council meeting and sub-committee processes and from regular reports by school staff, including the Principal. The Principal is also responsible for compliance monitoring through a dedicated risk management team who will ensure and report on compliance and implementation of our child safety policies and procedures.

We are committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. Our policies and procedures will provide the name and contact details of staff who have specific responsibilities in relation to child safety and who may receive reports of suspicion of child abuse.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the emotional, physical, and cultural safety of all children and to providing a safe environment for their learning.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff, and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

OUR CHILDREN

Our strategies will empower children who are vital and active participants in our organization and provide them with opportunities to give us feedback and ensure that they feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse.

OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organization.

All our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Child Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organizational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/careers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimize risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

New employees and volunteers are briefed on commencement and provided with information to ensure they understand our organization's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behavior towards children is safe and appropriate.

Any inappropriate behavior will be reported through appropriate channels.

RECRUITMENT

At Bhavani School we take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organization understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people aged 18 and over engaged in child-related work.

We carry out thorough reference checks and pre-employment screening to ensure that we are recruiting with child safety in mind.

All public advertisements for job applications with our School will emphasize our commitment to child safety.

FAIR PROCEDURES

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored by the School Counselling team, with a secure copy held in the Principal's Office.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organization take.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents, or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

At Bhavani School we take our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organization will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Bhavani School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and with urgency. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations and our volunteers are informed on how to report an allegation.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff, and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behavior.

