

# **Mount Erin College supports Child Safe Standards in the following ways:**

## **Child Safe Standards**

Mount Erin College is a Child Safe School. Our College is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We value all students as individuals and their diversity. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.

Mount Erin College is committed to providing a Child Safe environment where children and young people are valued and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Our College takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to Child Safety to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to. Mount Erin College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

## **Child Safe Standard 1**

### **Strategies to Embed an Organisational Culture of Child Safety**

Mount Erin College has a culture of Child Safety that:

- prioritises the safety and best interests of all students
- understands the nature and risks of Child Abuse and takes deliberate steps to protect children
- is committed to removing all barriers to reporting child abuse
- is role modelled by the Principal and all members of the Leadership Team to embed a culture that makes Child Safety paramount
- applies strong governance, documenting how Duty of Care responsibilities to children will be met
- makes Child Safety a top priority in the College's operations
- takes a zero tolerance approach to Child Abuse
- respects, embraces and supports the diversity of children

There are a number of ways in which Mount Erin College will demonstrate its continuing commitment to Embedding a Culture of Child Safety, including:

- Developing and implementing all Child Safe Policies and Procedures
- Annual Mandatory Reporting Training for all staff
- Implementing the College's Respectful Relationships Policy
- Ensuring that the Principal Team, Leadership Team, the Wellbeing Team, Student Services Wellbeing Team all regularly monitor the effectiveness of Mount Erin College's Child Safe Policies and Procedures
- Promoting the safe use of social media and technology including by being an ESmart School
- The Principal ensuring that the College Board is informed of the Child Safe Standards and oversees the development of Relevant Child Safe Policies and Procedures
- Publishing all Child Safe Policies, Procedures and Support Materials on the College website

## **Child Safe Standard 2**

### **A Child Safety Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Mount Erin College recognises that everyone in society has a moral responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from harm. A Statement of Commitment to Child Safety helps raise awareness about the

importance of child safety in the school and the community and affirms the organisation's commitment to child safety and expectations.

Our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety describes the values and principles that will guide Mount Erin College in developing procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment, and protect children from child abuse.

There are a number of ways in which Mount Erin College will demonstrate its continuing commitment to Child Safety, including:

- Developing and implementing a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Allocating roles and responsibilities to ensure that the College fulfils its Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Using the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety to shape school procedures and practices and inform other Child Safe related Policies in the school including the Social Media Policy, Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy
- Providing Professional Development to staff to build deeper understandings of Child Safety and the prevention of abuse
- Ensuring regular and consistent communication to staff and our school community which models the values and principles articulated in the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- The College Board will oversee the regular review and updating of the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and College practices in response to emerging thinking, evidence and practice about the prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Incorporating the Statement of Commitment and policy in ongoing staff, volunteer and contractor induction processes and maintaining records of this process

### **Child Safe Standard 3**

#### **A Child Safe Code of Conduct**

Mount Erin College's Child Safe Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists school staff to understand how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement Child Protection Legislation, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

Mount Erin College will support staff to effectively implement its Child Safe Code of Conduct via:

- Providing Professional Development each year to staff to build deeper understandings of Child Safety and the prevention of abuse
- Promoting proactive staff behaviour, via the College Leadership Group role modelling and via Professional Development. The objective is to guide school staff in identifying and regulating their own behaviour and the behaviour of other school staff, and to protect children from abuse in the school environment.
- Ensuring that staff understand how the Unacceptable Behaviours, as identified in the Child Safe Code of Conduct, are detrimental to student safety and wellbeing and therefore need to be avoided.
- Including the Child Safe Code of Conduct in employment advertisements and service contracts to ensure compliance
- Promoting Student Voice through groups such as MESEM and the College's Diversity Group
- Reviewing the child Safe Code of Conduct on an as needs basis. As a minimum the Code will be reviewed every 3 years.

The College Leadership Team will develop a Child Safe Code of Conduct after consultation with all sections of the College community and submit it to the College Board for endorsement.

The Principal, with the support of the College Board, will ensure that the importance of the Child Safe Code of Conduct and how it is consistent with College Values is promoted with staff and the College community.

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct will be widely disseminated and visible within the school community including via the College website, College Newsletters and posted in prominent school locations as well as included in staff, volunteer, and contractor induction Handbooks.

## **Child Safe Standard 4**

### **School Staff Selection, Supervision and Management for a Child Safe Environment**

Mount Erin College has a number of recruitment and screening practices that reduce the risk of child abuse. These practices apply to all school employees.

- The Principal will ensure that position descriptions for all new positions include the standard 'Child Safe Environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.
- For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3.
- All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's Child Safety Practices by including the Child Safety Code of Conduct as part of the vacancy.
- The College Principal will implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant meets the Child Safe Standards, via the interview process and Referee Check, prior to the applicant's employment.
- Mount Erin College will ensure that all staff have provided the College with either a current VIT Registration Card or Working with Children Check and maintain a record of this information.
- Mount Erin College will provide all staff with Professional Development and other relevant information as well as providing newly appointed members of staff and Casual Relief Teachers with relevant Induction Information to ensure Mount Erin College fully meets this Standard.
- The College Board will oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2] to ensure that appropriate processes to promote and protect Child Safety are being implemented.

## **Child Safe Standard 5**

### **Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse**

Mount Erin College will work with all school staff members to help them understand that they have a moral and legal obligation and a Duty of Care to protect any child under their care from foreseeable harm and that they must respond to any reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused by following the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse

Recent changes to Victorian legislation create additional legal obligations in relation to reporting suspected sexual child abuse. Failing to meet these obligations can constitute a criminal offence, including a:

- failure to disclose a sexual offence
- failure to protect a child where it is known that a person associated with their organisation poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing children.

Mount Erin College will implement strategies to respond to and report allegations of suspected abuse including:

- Providing Professional Development each year, based on the Principles of Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse, to staff to assist them to identify and effectively respond to all forms of Abuse and to be aware of their moral and legal obligations to report any reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused. These 4 Critical Actions include:
  - Responding to an Allegation of Child Abuse
  - Reporting to Authorities
  - Contacting Parents and Carers
  - Providing on going Support
- Ensuring that all College staff complete the Mandatory Reporting module each year and keeping records of their satisfactory completion
- Developing a clear set of Guidelines / Procedures for reporting and acting on disclosures or concerns about Child Safety
- Developing procedures concerning record keeping requirements, confidentiality and privacy that are consistent with Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that students are aware of who they can make reports to
- Publishing relevant information such as Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools on the College **Network 5 Drive in the Child Safe Folder**

## **Child Safe Standard 6**

### **Strategies to Identify and Reduce or Remove Risks of Child Abuse**

Child Safe Standard 6 requires schools to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate Risk Management Strategies to ensure Child Safety in school environments.

Mount Erin College will implement strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of Child Abuse including:

At least annually, the Principal will ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the College Board and school staff about:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of Child Abuse
- Child Abuse risks in the school environment
- the school's current Child Safety Standards.

Mount Erin College's Risk Management Assessment and Strategies involves the following steps and considerations:

- Identifying the school's Child Safety Risks across the range of school environments, including Excursions, Camps, Online using a Risk Assessment Template
- Identify any existing Risk Mitigation measures or internal controls.
- Assess and rate the school's Child Safety Risks given the existing controls in place taking into account the likelihood of risk and the likely consequence of the risk.
- If the Risk Rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further Risk Management Strategies through additional controls or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then reassess the risk.

Our Child Safe Risk Management Process will be documented, recorded and reviewed periodically.

## **Child Safe Standard 7**

### **Strategies to Promote the Participation and Empowerment of Children**

Child Safe Standard 7 requires schools to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate Strategies to ensure Promote the Participation and Empowerment of students in school environments.

Mount Erin College will implement strategies to increase Student Participation and Empowerment including:

- Respectful Relationships Policy
- Developing and implementing our Student Code of Conduct
- Developing and implementing our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Being a member of the Safe Schools Coalition
- Supporting our Diversity Group
- MESEM Student Leadership Program
- Supporting the effective implementation of our Child Empowerment Policy
- IAspire Program
- Health and Physical Education Program including Sexuality