MERRI RIVER SCHOOL

DUTY OF CARE POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Principal.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain to our school community the non-delegable duty of care obligations that all staff at Merri River School owe to our students and members of the school community who visit and use the school premises.

POLICY

"Duty of care" is a legal obligation that requires schools to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include personal injury (physical or psychological) or damage to property. The reasonable steps that our school may decide to take in response to a potential risk or hazard will depend on the circumstances of the risk.

Our school has developed policies and procedures to manage common risks in the school environment, including:

- Anaphylaxis
- Bullying Prevention
- Camps and Excursions (including local excursions)
- Child Safe Standards
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting)
- Complaints
- Critical Incident Planning
- Digital Learning (Internet, Social Media and Digital Devices) — previously called Digital Technologies
- Emergency Management
- First Aid (includes arrangements for ill students)
- Health Care Needs
- Medication
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement
- Visitors
- Volunteers
- Yard Duty and Supervision

Our school acknowledges we are required to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation.

Staff at our school understand that school activities involve different levels of risk and that particular care may need to be taken to support younger students or students with additional needs. Our school also understands that it is responsible for ensuring that the school premises are kept in good repair and will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of members of our community suffering injury or damage because of the state of the premises.

School staff, parents, carers and students are encouraged to speak to the principal to raise any concerns about risks or hazards at our school, or our duty of care obligations.

External Providers

Staff at our school acknowledge that, as our duty of care is non-delegable, we are also required to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm when external providers have been engaged to plan for or conduct an activity involving our students. Our *Visitors Policy* and *Camps and Excursions Policy* include information on the safety and care of our students when engaged with external providers.

Our school also takes steps to ensure student safety when they are engaging in off-site workplace learning programs with external providers, such as when students are participating in work experience, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, structured workplace learning and any other workplace learning program involving external providers. Our School will follow all applicable Department of Education and Training policy and guidelines in relation to off-site learning and will ensure that the safety and welfare of the students engaging in these activities is paramount. The Department's guidelines in relation to Workplace Learning are available at the following link:

https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/structured-workplace-learning/policy

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Provided to staff at induction and included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our school website
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): Duty of Care
- the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): Structured Workplace Learning

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2028