

DARNUM P.S. CHILD SAFE POLICY

A Culture of Child Safety

The Darnum Primary School Child Safe Policy demonstrates a strong commitment of the **Principal, School Council, staff and volunteers to Child Safety**. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and practices we have developed to keep all children, particularly children who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities, or Indigenous, cultural or linguistic background, safe from any harm, including abuse.

This policy was developed in collaboration with staff, volunteers, parents and students, and applies to **all school activities** including excursions, camps and Out of School Hours Care program. All children, including **Aboriginal** children, children from **different cultural backgrounds** and children with **disabilities (emotional, social and physical)** are welcomed and supported at DARNUM.

All staff complete **Mandatory Reporting** training requirements and other **professional development** deemed necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of all children. The DARNUM Child Safe policy should be read in conjunction with the following DARNUM policies-

- Duty of Care
- Student Welfare and Well-being
- Working with Children Check
- Mandatory Reporting
- Positive Relationships/Anti-bullying
- Code of Conduct (Staff, Parent/Volunteers and Children)

Commitment to Child Safety

All children (**including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability**) who come to Darnum Primary School have a right to feel and be safe. The Principal and staff agree that the welfare of the children in our care is paramount. We have a **zero tolerance to child abuse** and are **committed** to acting in children's best interests, creating a **child safe** and child friendly environment. Ongoing professional conversations between staff at whole school and PLT meetings ensure that children's safety is a number one priority. Our **Child Safe Policy** is **reviewed and revised** every two years after comments and recommendations from all stakeholders are considered.

Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we-

- promote the **cultural safety**, participation and empowerment of **Aboriginal** children and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from **culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds** and their families

- welcome children with disabilities and their families and act to promote their participation
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Darnum Primary School applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of all staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require **police checks** and **Working with Children Checks** for relevant positions. Our commitment to **Child Safety** and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Darnum Primary School seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so everyone feels valued, respected and fairly treated. We follow a Code of Conduct which provides guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code of Conduct in our Induction program. New staff members are allocated mentors to ensure they are aware of our Code of Conduct practices.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

The Principal will have the responsibility to respond to any complaint made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints processes are outlined in the DARNUM Mandatory Reporting Policy.

Code of Conduct (Staff, Parent/Volunteers and Children)

The Code of Conduct policies outline appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards all children (**including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability**). These policies are available on the school website, in enrolment packs and are regularly referred to in the school Newsletter.

The Code of Conduct policies aim to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. They also help staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. All staff and volunteers are required to comply.

All DARNUM staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by-

- adhering to our Child Safe Policy, and other policies
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive

- respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way
- modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- reporting and acting on any breaches of these Codes of Conduct, complaints or concerns
- complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children
- working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
- respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know

DARNUM staff and volunteers must **NOT**-

- seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- engage in rough physical games
- discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone

Employment and Training of new and existing DCEPS personnel

The DARNUM Staff/Volunteer Selection and Induction Policy clearly outlines job descriptions, duty statements and the roles and expectations of staff to ensure that a **child safe** environment is provided at our school. It clearly states-

- the organisational context
- duties and tasks of the role
- qualifications, experience and attributes a person must have
- the level of responsibility and supervision associated with the position
- a valid Working with Children Check and Police Check is mandatory. (See DARNUM Working with Children Check Policy if necessary).

During the interview process, **additional information** is sourced to ensure an understanding of the importance of providing a **Child Safe Environment** for all

children at DARNUM. It is paramount that fair employment protocols are followed during this process. Additional information will include -

- motivation to work with children (**including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability**) (personal and/or professional)
- relevant and verifiable experience
- understanding of children's physical and emotional needs
- understanding of professional boundaries
- communication skills
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness, and non-discrimination)
- responses from referees

All staff members and volunteers initially partake in an **induction program** that addresses all necessary processes to maintain and develop skills and capabilities including **understanding the risk of harm to children, the different types of harm, how to identify child abuse and relevant legislative requirements**. This includes a thorough understanding of the supporting DCEPS Policies and relevant professional development, i.e. Mandatory Reporting. These processes and requirements are regularly addressed through meetings and professional development to ensure that all staff and volunteers are well informed of the **Mandatory Child Safe Standards**.

Mandatory Reporting

All staff are required to regularly complete and update DET Mandatory Reporting eLearning modules. Along with DARNUM Mandatory Reporting Policy, these modules include -

- processes for reporting concerns about child safety
- staff responsibility to report concerns of harm
- record keeping requirements and confidentiality and privacy
- a complaints process for children and families
- a child friendly disclosure process

Refer to child safety reporting process in the **DARNUM Mandatory Reporting Policy**

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child harm or abuse to occur and use this to inform our policy procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to all children (**including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability**). As part of the two year policy review cycle, **risk minimisation** strategies are updated and implemented. Our **DARNUM Risk Management Policy** clearly outlines the processes and strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse or harm. Professional Learning Team (PLT) leaders, in consultation with the Principal or Assistant Principal, are responsible for completing **risk assessments** for all school activities. These are completed before all

school activities and housed on the school intranet for easy accessibility to all staff. Refer to the **DARNUM Risk Management Policy** and **Risk Assessment** documents.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

Darnum Primary School staff and volunteers encourage children **(including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability)** to express their views and suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We teach children to understand their basic human rights. This includes how to recognise and understand their feelings and knowledge about their safety in all environments. They investigate this through curriculum programs including

- F.R.O.G.S. cultural program
- E-smart Cyber Safety
- Positive Relationships
- Student Code of Conduct

We provide opportunities for children to act on their understandings and confidentially share their feelings about their well-being and safety through-

- Well-being surveys
- Confidential discussions with staff
- Attitudes to School surveys
- Educational Psychologist

Evaluation:

This procedure will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle.