



Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

Developing the capacity in children to raise concerns about their safety requires schools to have a focused and intentional commitment to cultural and structural change that has the empowerment of children as the goal. The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 7:

The school governing authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- *standards of behaviour for students attending the school;*
- *healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);*
- *resilience; and*
- *child abuse awareness and prevention.*

The school governing authority must promote the child safety standards required by this Order in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children (State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016).

In Brief standard 7 underlines the critical importance of schools fostering an environment of openness, inclusiveness and respect where children feel valued and 'have an awareness of [their] rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse' (State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2015). In such an environment, children are supported by being taught skills to maintain personal safety and simple processes for reporting abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety and they feel comfortable to do so.

At Our Lady Help of Christians Primary school we strive to be a welcoming and encouraging community that fosters positive relationships with thanks and forgiveness. Effective policies, proactive leadership and dedicated, supportive staff have created an environment which indeed reflects the school's vision. Our school leaders recognise the main challenge of our school will be to maintain and build upon the impressive safe learning environment they have so carefully established over recent years.

Policies have been developed and are regularly revisited to ensure that they meet the current needs of the school community such as:

- Student Wellbeing
- Anti Bullying
- Cyber-smart
- School Uniform
- Managing Complaints and Grievances
- Volunteers Within the School
- Supervision of Students
- Behaviour Management
- Mandatory Reporting

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Primary School fosters an environment of openness, inclusiveness and respect where children feel valued through a variety of events and programs such as:

- Constant Reminders/Posters & Actions/Behaviour for Anti-Bullying
- Buddy Programs: Preps/Seniors
- Focus on cyber safety with the continuing reinforcement of a Cybersmart policy and student contracts.
- Recognition of our volunteers and a protocol letter and code of conduct enforced.
- Focus on implementing Social and Emotional Learning with further exploration and auditing of the SEL framework as a staff.
- Our Social and Emotional Learning program continues to positively influence the culture of our school, as the values are becoming embedded in everyday interactions between students. Using the terminology has equipped students to build resilience and develop understanding of values in themselves and others.
- Implementation of the Respectful Relationships program across the school
- School wide School Representative Council (SRC)

- Transition program to ensure comprehensive handover of information from class to class, pre-school to Prep, and primary school to high school.
- Family Life night encouraging discussion within families about our physical development.
- School wide Peaceful Kids mindfulness program.
- Continuous reinforcement and collaboration of our school rules.
- Child Abuse awareness prevention for staff including online mandatory reporting modules.

Formal Inquiry units ensure our students understanding of the physical, emotional, social and spiritual components that contribute to human wellbeing and personal identity will develop. Students examine the links between a positive attitude, a strong sense of identity and connectedness, taking responsible risks and wellbeing. We aim for students to build an understanding of how and why individuals change physically and emotionally as they grow, and of the decisions that they can make to contribute to their own health and personal fulfilment. Exploratory questions include:

- How we understand the human lifecycle
- How do our choices affect our wellbeing?
- Why do we need to take care of ourselves?
- What makes us feel good and function well?
- Do we need to take care of others? Why?
- Why is wellbeing important?
- How do our choices affect the wellbeing of others?
- How do I make good choices?
- What does being happy mean?
- How does our own wellbeing contribute to the wellbeing of the community?
- How does our faith practise enhance our wellbeing?
- Who is responsible for making the choice?
- How do we live a healthy lifestyle?
- How does a positive attitude impact on our wellbeing?
- How do our choices affect others?
- What does wellbeing look, sound, feel like?
- Physiological, psychological and social change during adolescence.

School wide; the Personal and Social Capability curriculum of the Victorian Curriculum, aims to develop knowledge, understandings and skills to enable students to:

- recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions
- demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience
- develop empathy for and understanding of others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community
- understand how relationships are developed and use interpersonal skills to establish and maintain respectful relationships
- work effectively in teams and develop strategies to manage challenging situations constructively.

We are comfortable our school will demonstrate indicators of effective implementation of Standard 7. Typical features of a school where strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children are embedded are that:

- children in the school feel safe, respected and empowered to contribute to the school's understanding of child safety and to report an allegation or concern for their own safety
- all children in the school understand what child safety is, know their rights and can easily access reporting procedures when they feel unsafe
- staff in the school understand how to empower and encourage the participation of children in creating a child-safe school
- teachers in the school feel confident and prepared to deliver age-appropriate education about child-protection awareness including healthy and respectful relationships
- children and young people are consulted about child-safety matters
- concerns reported by children in the school are responded to appropriately and promptly (refer to Mandatory Reporting Policy)

Reviewed December 2020