

Standard 4 - Human Resources Practices

21 July 2020



**VIRTUAL
SCHOOL VICTORIA**

Overview

It is important for schools to have strong human resources practices to keep children and young people safe from abuse. At Virtual School Victoria (VSV), we foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that large numbers of our children and young people may be vulnerable to harm or abuse. We believe that robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, we provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

All staff, volunteers and contractors have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and wellbeing of students including:

- duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students;
- obligations under child protection legislation; and
- obligations under work health and safety legislation

Executive Leadership Team

Employees and volunteers are supported through the Executive Leadership Team with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist us in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with Department of Education and Training (DET) legal requirements and policies and procedures.

The Executive Leadership Team also provides a single contact for children and young people, parents/carers and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at the VSV.

Training and Induction

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. VSV employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training in child safety to enhance the skills and knowledge of our employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks. New staff will be provided support and information, and existing staff provided support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that VSV meets its duty of care when working with children and young people.

Our staff are committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by committing to the rights and responsibilities of teachers and the values of the school.

Employees and volunteers working with children and young people will receive training in the following areas:

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- VSV School's policies and procedures (including the VIT Code of Conduct and VSV Child Safe Policy)
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including VSV reporting guidelines
- Mandatory Reporting
- cultural awareness training

Training can be formal such as:

- higher education training and accreditation
- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training meeting key objectives
- email updates on specific resources

Training can also be informal such as:

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching

Supervision

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance. For instance, where practical, two staff members are present during activities with children and young people (e.g. student visits). In particular, children and young people with a disability may require additional supervision.

As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children and young people is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including the VSV internal reporting procedures (such as the Executive Leadership Team), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child or young person is believed to be at imminent risk.

Performance and Development Review

Performance is measured against the AITSL standards to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes.

Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

The DE&T procedures for Managing Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance for those employed in the Teaching and Public Service will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made.

Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within VSV. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Children, young people and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.



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