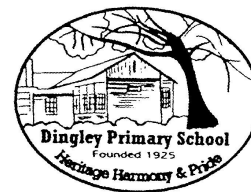


Dingley Primary School

Standard 7

Promote participation and empowerment of children.



September 2016

Description

Dingley Primary School ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. Dingley Primary School has simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety.

All staff have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

Participation at Dingley Primary School is:

- ethical.
- age appropriate and child-friendly.
- culturally respectful.
- inclusive of a diverse range of children.
- respectful for children of all ages, abilities, social and cultural backgrounds.
- positive and fun.
- voluntary and with informed consent.
- clear, honest and realistic about the boundaries of a discussion and what can change.
- a forum where children are listened to – they may have a very different view to us or what we expect.
- acknowledged, valued and the views put forward by children are taken seriously.
- facilitated by skilful adults.
- clear when the discussion will be confidential or if the outcomes will be made public.
- monitored as to how the consultation may have impacted on the children involved.
- supportive of any child who may be distressed as a result of their involvement or disclosure of concerns.
- prepared to provide feedback to children about how their views have informed decision-making.

How Dingley Primary School promotes participation and empowerment of children:

- Dingley Primary School has a Student Engagement Policy which provides the basis on which it develops and maintains a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment. The school's Student Engagement Policy articulates the expectations and aspirations of the school community in relation to student engagement, including strategies to address bullying, school attendance and behaviour. The school's policy was developed in consultation with the wider school community including school leaders, teachers, students and parents. The policy can be found at <http://www.dingleyps.vic.edu.au/documents/Student%20Wellbeing%20Policy%20DPS%202016.pdf>

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **September 2016**

- We provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. Information is included in welcome packs, information sessions and posters, as well as on websites and social media. 'Family Life' are employed to present sessions to Year 3 / 4 and 5 / 6 students which includes their body and their rights. We have 'Life Education' van visit the school bi – annually, their programs include safety for students issues. Students in Years 3-6 participate in the wellbeing programs: Revved Up for boys and MPower for girls.
- We ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children.
- We have access to professionals to translate information (including information about children's rights, child safe policies, statements of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages.
- We promote the notion of 'Upstanders' across the school where children are encouraged to stand up for others in a safe manner.
- Year 5 students apply to be trained as peer mediators who are able to resolve low level issues in the school yard.
- We gather feedback from children, for example ATTS survey, focus groups, circle time and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns. We implement improvements based on this feedback.
- We enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. For example, views are gathered through circle time, feedback sessions.
- We ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops, provide access to DET psych / Speech Specialists, outsource specific cases to agencies – OnPsych, Family Life, Oz Child, Family First, DHHS etc.
- We would ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were accepted when identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and that staff and volunteers would understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other organisational activities, such as organisational planning and decision making. For example – Student Leadership positions, L4D (Leadership For Dingley), SLIP (Student Leadership Induction Program), Student Leadership Conferences (GRIP), Reach Rookys, Dingley Community Resilience Sessions, 'Junior Mayor Competition', Junior School Council.
- We raise awareness in the community about children's rights, through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites, newsletters, Information Evenings, Parent Teacher Meetings, School Council.

By successfully implementing these strategies Dingley Primary School ensures:

- reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible for all children.
- children understand what child abuse is and their rights (age appropriate).
- children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police).
- children feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns.
- children feel empowered to contribute to the organisation's understanding and treatment of child safety.
- children's reports of concern are responded to appropriately.

- staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Review Date: 2020