



CHILD SAFE STRATEGY

Purpose

This Child Safety Strategy provides context to The Federation's commitment to child safety and promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. This document identifies current child safety policies and practices and outlines the ways in which The Federation will work in collaboration to improve child safety. It will respond to the Ministerial Order 870 by strengthening the capacity across The Federation.

About the Wodonga Federation of Government Schools

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools (The Federation) is a strategic collaboration between eight government member schools within the Local Government Area of Wodonga. It provides a variety of learning and developmental pathways to 60% of Wodonga's school aged children and young people. It employs over 350 teachers and 190 non-teaching staff and contributes over \$53 million to the local economy each year.

Established in July 2016, the Federation member schools include five primary schools, one middle years college, one senior secondary college and a special school. Each member school shares a commitment to the principles of education as outlined in the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, in particular, the principle of universal access to education for all children and young people.

Our Intent

The Federation is focussed on optimising the learning and developmental outcomes of all children and young people in Wodonga. Together The Federation ensures that there is a variety of learning and developmental pathways for all children and young people in Wodonga.

The Federation's Values

Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

We proactively share our expertise and information and willingly work with others

Outcomes

We always strive to do things better and deliver quality outcomes

Respect and Diversity

We respect others and value diversity

Empowerment

We enable individuals to reach their potential and maximise their contribution

The Federation's Child Safety Philosophy

The Federation has a strong commitment to providing a child safe learning environment where the interests and safety of all children is promoted and protected. The Federation has a zero tolerance of child abuse.

As part of the Federation Child Safety Philosophy, member schools adhere to the Child Safety Standards. This forms the basis for all strategies, policies, procedures and practices, allowing staff, volunteers and contractors to promote children's learning and wellbeing. The Federation recognises every child's fundamental right to learning in a safe environment and participation in decision making. Decision that the Federation makes are therefore guided by the children's safety needs and interests.

The Federation promotes an inclusive environment for all children, parents and staff. It believes every child, parent and staff member has the right to be valued and treated with respect and dignity. The Federation does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. It strives to promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families and culturally and/ or linguistically diverse children and families. The Federation welcomes children with disabilities and their families and their participation.

Staff within The Federation are trained in preventing and responding to child safety. All staff undergo 'Working with Children Checks' and sign a Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Federation's Child Safety Objectives

- 1.** To embed a culture of child safety within The Federation.
- 2.** To prevent child abuse occurring within The Federation.
- 3.** To ensure that all suspected abuse is responded to appropriately within the Federation.
- 4.** To ensure that all children, parents, staff, volunteers and contractors are given appropriate support regarding child safety within The Federation.
- 5.** To value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.

The Federation's role in Child Safety

- **Leadership and facilitation** - The Federation develops strategic collaborations to improve child safety by providing support, co-ordinating efforts and bring stakeholders together.
- **Information provider** – The Federation shares policies, practices, support material, research and data with our schools and community.
- **Advocacy** – The Federation (on behalf of its member schools) advocates the importance of child safety issues to the wider school community.

Profile

Key Stakeholders

- Member schools
- Students
- Staff
- School Visitor
- School Volunteers
- Contractors
- Student Support Service officers
- The Department of Health and Human Services
- Police
- Other community representatives as required.

Federation Profile

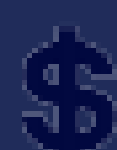
WORK FORCE

350

Teachers

190

Non-teaching staff



Contributes over
\$53 million to
the local economy

4318



students attend a
Federation School in
Wodonga

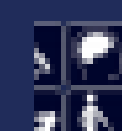
51.5%

of students are male

48.5%

of students are female

7.6%

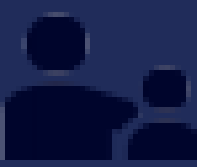


of students have a
disability

6.7%

Of students
identify as
Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander

31.5%



live in single
parent families

5 Primary Schools

1 Middle Years College

1 Senior Secondary
College

1 Special School

1 Flexible Learning
Centre

speak a
language
other than
English at
home

3.4%



3.6%

of students
are born
overseas

Data from MySchool and CASES 21

Context

Context:

The following initiatives inform and support the work of this strategy.

International Context

United Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC)

The CROC outlines the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. Australia is a signatory to the CROC. Article 19 of the CROC recognises that all appropriate measures must be taken to protect children from all forms of physical and/or mental harm. The CROC underpins this strategy.

State Context

Victorian Charter of Human Rights (the Charter)

The Charter outlines the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all Victorians. Under the charter all government authorities must act consistently with the rights in the charter. This includes being safe from violence and abuse.

The Betrayal of Trust report

In April 2012, the Victorian Government initiated an inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and other non-government organisations. The committee handed their final report, The Betrayal of Trust to the Victorian Parliament in November 2013. The final report made a number of recommendations that the Victorian Government have enacted. These include:

- Criminal law reform – offences relating to grooming, failure to protect and failure to disclose.
- Creating child safe organisations –
- compulsory child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme.
- Civil law reform – removal of the time limit on legal action.

National Context

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (the National Framework)

The National Framework provides a long-term approach to child safety and wellbeing. The National Framework has six supporting outcomes:

- children live in safe and supportive families and communities
- children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early
- risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing
- Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities
- child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented and survivors receive adequate support.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission)

The Royal Commission has investigated institutional responses to allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse and related matters. The Royal Commission's research and recommendations on best practice aims to provide guidance on strategies to prevent institutional sexual abuse and how to respond.

Child Safe Standards

Victoria's Compulsory Child Safe Standards

In response to the recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations the Minister of Education release Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

To meet the requirements of the Order schools must implement the minimum child safety standards:

- Standard 1: Strategies to Embed an Organisational Culture of Child Safety
- Standard 2: A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Standard 3: A child safety code of conduct
- Standard 4: School staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child-safe environment
- Standard 5: Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse
- Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Standard 7: Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

In implementing the child safety standards schools must comply with the following principle as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with a disability.

Local Data

Local child safety data

Crime where the victim was a child or young person (rate per 1000 children and young people aged 0-17)	Wodonga 17.4	Victoria 17.4
Child abuse substantiations per 1000 children aged 0-17 years	Wodonga 13.2	Victoria 6.7
Children on child protection orders per 1000 children aged 0-17	Wodonga 7.4	Victoria 5.4
Proportion of family violence incidents where children and young people are involved as other parties	Wodonga 36.0	Victoria 34.5
Children who feel safe	Ovens Murray 97.6%	Victoria 95.8%
Young people who feel safe	Ovens Murray 90.5%	Victoria 85.9%
Children who have someone to turn to for advice when you having a problem	Ovens Murray 98.8%	Victoria 97.0%
Young people who have someone to turn to for advice when having a problem	Ovens Murray 96.6%	Victoria 96.6%

Source: Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System Portal

All Day Workshops

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Strategic Direction

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Child Safety Strategy (2016-2020)

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Child Safe Documents

Child Safe Roles & Responsibilities
Child Safe Policy
Child Safe Code of Conduct
Child Safe Risk Management Plan
School Council Child Safe Induction Presentation
School Council Child Safe Implementation Plan
Child Safe Communication Plan

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Related Documents

Mandatory Reporting Policy
Visitors Policy
Working with Children Check Policy
Staff Handbook

Strategies

Standard 1: Strategies to Embed an Organisational Culture of Child Safety

Ministerial Order requirements

The school governing authority must:

Develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school;

- Allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
- Inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;
- Put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and
- Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practices and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

Existing Strategies to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

- Annually Federation Member School Councillors are inducted into the Child Safe Standards (School Council Presentation)
- Each Member School Council has Child Safe Standards as a standing agenda item and annually Child Safe Implementation Plan)
- Child Safe Roles and Responsibilities communicated to all staff, leadership and school councillors at the beginning of the year
- Child Safe Communication Plan
- Child Safe Webpage - Wodonga Federation of Government Schools

2019 Actions

Action	Completed
Implement Child Safe Communication Plan	
Agenda Child Safe for Leadership and Staff Meetings	
Complete Child Safe School Council Implementation Plan	
Prepare Child Safe Progress Reports quartely for School Council	

Strategies

Standard 2: A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Ministerial Order requirements:

The school governing authority must ensure that the school has a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

- The values and principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- The actions the school proposes to take to:
 - Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety or statement of commitment;
 - Support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
 - support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are other linked to suspected child abuse.

The school governing authority must inform the school community about the policy or statement, and make the policy or statement publicly available.

Existing Strategies to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Child Safety Policy (The Policy) has been approved by each member school council. (Child Safe Policy)
- The Policy is publicly available on The Federation's website
 - Member School's website
 - Wodonga Primary School
 - Wodonga West Children's Centre
 - Wodonga Middle Years College
 - Wodonga Senior Secondary College
 - A paper copy is available upon request.
- A series of newsletter articles have been published

2019 Actions

Action	Completed
School Council to implment the Child Safe Implementation Plan	
Produce Child Safe video for website and Facebook	
School Councils to review Child Safe Policy and provide recommendationss for update	
Federation Policy Development Action group to review Child Safe Policy	
School Council to endorse revised Child Safe Policy	
Implement Child Safe Communication Plan	

Strategies

Standard 3: A child safety Code of Conduct

Ministerial Order requirements:

The school governing authority must develop, endorse, and make publicly available a code of conduct that:

- Has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment;
- Sets standards about ways in the school staff are expected to behave with children;
- Takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff), and the needs of all children; and
- Is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

Existing Strategies to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Child Safety Code of Conduct (The Code of Conduct) has been approved by each member school council.
- A paper copy is available upon request.
- The Code of Conduct is publicly available on The Federation's website.
- Member school websites
- The Federation has common procedures for individual school staff, unaccompanied visitors, volunteers and contractors accepting the Code of Conduct and recording acceptance.
- All staff have access to the Child Safe Policy and sign the Code of Conduct annually.
- Visitors, contractors and service provider all sign the Code of Conduct annually. This is managed through our online visitor management system – Passtab.

2019 Actions

Action	Completed
School Council to review the Code of Conduct and provide recommendations	
Federation Policy Development Action group to review Code of conduct	
School Council to endorse revised Code of Conduct	

Strategies

Standard 4: School staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child-safe environment

Ministerial Order requirements:

- Subject to the requirements of the ETR Act, the school governing authority must ensure that the school implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this clause.
- Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child-connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
 - The job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety, and
 - The job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
- All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct)
- In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
 - Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
 - Proof of personal identify and any professional or other qualifications;
 - The person's history of work involving children; and
 - References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
- The school need not comply with the requirements in clause 10(4) if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in clauses 10(4)(a) to 10(4)(d) about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
- The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place relation to:
 - The induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
 - Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child-connected work.
- The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Existing Strategies to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

- All new position descriptions include a child safe statement.
- All existing positions have be notified in writing their child safety responsibilities.
- A checklist has been developed for all recruitment processes.

2019 Actions

Action

Review recruitment processes, prepare report with recommendations for Executive and School Council

Completed

Strategies

Standard 5: Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse

Ministerial Order requirements:

The school governing authority must have a clear procedures or set of procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with this clause and other legal obligations.

- The school governing authority must ensure that the procedures is:
 - Sensitive to the diversity characteristic of the school community;
 - Made publicly available; and
 - Accessible to children, school, and the wider community.
- The procedures must:
 - Cover all forms of 'child abuse' as defined in the ETR Act;
 - Apply to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment;
- Identify the positions of person or people who are responsible for:
 - Promptly managing the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously;
 - Responding appropriately to a child who makes or is effected by an allegation of child abuse;
 - Monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure; and
 - Managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if the person allocated responsibility under clause 11(3)(c)(i) cannot perform his or her role;
- Including a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse;
- Clearly describe the actions the school will take to respond to an allegation of child abuse, including actions to:
 - Inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting);
 - Protect any child connected to the alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved; and
 - Make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the school's response to it.
- The procedure must not:
 - Prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
 - State or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorises of the allegation;
 - Require staff to make a judgement about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
 - Prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

Strategies

Existing Strategies to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Child Safety Policy (The Policy) has been approved by each member school council.
- The Policy is publicly available on The Federation's website or member schools websites.
- A paper copy is available upon request.
- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Mandatory Reporting Policy has been approved by each member school council.
- The Mandatory Reporting Policy is publicly available on The Federation's website.
- A paper copy is available upon request.

2019 Actions

Action	Completed
Review procedures to ensure they are sensitive to the diversity characteristic of the school community	
Implement Child Safe Communication Plan	
Ensure all staff undertake Mandatory Reporting Training	

Strategies

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Ministerial Order requirements:

The school governing authority must develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environment.

- The school's risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.
- If the school governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the authority must make a record of those risks and specific the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).
- As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school governing authority must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.
- At least annually, the school governing authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:
 - Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
 - Child abuse risks in the school environment; and
 - The school's current child safety standards.

Existing Strategies to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

- Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Child Safety Risk Management Strategy has been approved by each member school council.
- The Child Safety Risk Management Strategy was reviewed on the 22 May 2018.

2019 Actions

Action	Completed
Review Child Safe Risk Management Plan at each member school	
School Council to review Risk Management Plan and minute risks and specific actions(s) the school will take to reduce or remove risk(s)	
Presentation to staff about Child Safe Standards and obligations	
Presentation to School Council about the Child Safe Standards and obligations	

Strategies

Standard 7: Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation

Ministerial Order requirements:

- 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;
 - 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.

Existing Strategies to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

- Member school have a Student Engagement Policy
- All member schools are implementing Respectful Relationships – A whole School Approach as well as the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Curriculum. Staff from each school attend curriculum training provide by Melbourne University.
- The Federation actively promotes Child Awareness and prevention week
- Member schools design the PROTECT posters around their school.
- Community Information night – My Underpants Rule
- Community Information night – Y-Safe

2019 Actions

Action	Completed
Implement Child Safe Communication Strategy	
Provide School Council evidence of delivering respectful relationships and resilience programs	
Implement Teach the Teacher	

Federation Structure

Federation Board

Provides Strategic Direction, Community Engagement, Resource recommendations, Performance and Accountability.



Advisory Committee

Provides advice to the Board on technical, implementation and broad policy issues. The committee also provides guidance and direction to the Action Groups and oversees the implementation of decisions made by the Board.

Action Groups

The Federation has nine Action Groups working together, they share resources, expertise, curriculum, data and best practice for evidence informed action.

Currently Priorities

The work of the Federation is optimising learning and developmental outcomes for children and young people in Wodonga. The following is a list of some of our major projects:

- Common online visitor and contractor management system
- Shared data management system
- Shared policies
- English Learning Centre
- Coordinated Respectful Relationships Education
- Student Achievement data analyses
- Digital Technology
- Child Safe

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools Board Members



Vern Hilditch
Wodonga Senior Secondary College Principal



Jocelyn Owen
Wodonga West Primary School Principal



Martin Butcher
Disability Information and Advocacy Service



Paul Thorpe
Wodonga Primary School School Council



Les Burr
Wodonga Institute of TAFE



Brendan Baxter
Baxter Concrete Deputy Chair



Guinever Threlkeld
LaTrobe University Chair



Collectively the same. uniquely different

Wodonga Federation of Government Schools