***STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:***

This school endeavours to promote a safe, healthy, supportive and secure environment for all students to raise awareness of what makes students resilient, develop strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and increase coping skills. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

***AIMS:***

* To create a positive, safe environment in which all staff assume responsibility for student wellbeing in all school related environments.
* Staff endeavour to provide successful experiences for all children, where a sense of belonging and wellbeing are strengthened. We empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
* We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
* Children develop positive social behaviours and problem solving skills.
* Staff are confident, skilled and proactive in the management of student wellbeing issues.
* Communication processes and protocols are clear and well known to ensure the effectiveness of student wellbeing support. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

***CHILD ABUSE:*** a definition:

Includes –

1. Any act committed against a child involving –
* A sexual offence; or
* An offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
1. The infliction, on a child, of –
* Physical violence; or
* Serious emotional or psychological harm; and
1. Serious neglect of a child.

***IMPLEMENTATION:***

* Student safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between school, staff, students, home and the community and is primarily guided by the following health and wellbeing practice principles:
* Principle 1 - Maximise access and inclusion.
* Principle 2 - Focus on outcomes.
* Principle 3 - Evidence - informed and reflective practice.
* Principle 4 - Holistic approach.
* Principle 5 - Person- centred and family sensitive practice.
* Principle 6 - Partnerships with families and communities.
* Principle 7 - Cultural confidence.
* Principle 8 - Commitment to excellence.
* All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
* The Assistant Principal will coordinate student safety and wellbeing across the school.
* All staff are aware of the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures and their responsibilities. (Refer to Mandatory Reporting Policy). We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
* Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations (Refer to *Mandatory Reporting Policy*).
* Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
* The school will adopt a proactive and strategic stance with issues of student wellbeing, rather than operating in a consistently reactive mode.
* The school will implement wellbeing support structures and programs which prioritise and address the identified needs of individual students or the school as a whole and that help implement the aims of the policy. Refer to the *Code of Conduct*, *Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy*
* All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone’s safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.
* The school will endeavour to implement and maintain programs such as: -
* Life Education Van
* Brave Hearts program
* Anti-Bullying Program
* Restorative Practices – check in and check out circles regularly
* Calmer Classrooms.
* Buddies program- Prep to Year 6.
* Student Awards, relating to school values.
* Transition programs.
* Productive play run by our Student Welfare Officer two lunch times per week
* Fortnightly student wellbeing meetings with AP and Student Welfare Officer

Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

* We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children.
* We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
* All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.
* We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. (If during the recruitment process a person’s records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.)

The school will provide the following support structures:

* Monitoring of, and responding to, protracted student absences.
* Trauma Management plan.
* Protocol for Mandatory Reporting.
* Student Support Groups for children in need.
* Safety Audit.
* Student Behaviour Tracker.
* Behaviour will be monitored and discussed regularly at Unit Meetings, and if required, at Leadership Team Meetings.
* Staff will continuously self-reflect on their implementation of Grovedale’s Child Safety Code of Conduct.
* Yard behaviour will be monitored daily by the yard duty teachers. Positive behaviours will be acknowledged. Unacceptable behaviour will be addressed and recorded at the time of the incident on an incident tracker.
* Entries will be reviewed by Leadership on a regular basis with trends, hot-spots and repeated offences measured for the purpose of monitoring our student wellbeing throughout the school.

The school will also access outside services to provide support for students and staff which include:

* Network School Support Services Officers and Visiting Teachers.
* Providing support for ‘at risk’ children, including teacher guidance and counselling.
* Department of Human Services case managers and support workers.
* Relevant DET support staff.
* School Nurse.

The school will endeavour to cater for children identified with specific welfare issues by:

* Creating support groups.
* Developing Individual Learning Improvement Plans (ILIPS) which may include reference to behaviour goals and Behaviour Management Plans.
* Monitoring performance and behaviour.
* Providing ongoing support.

***CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS:***

This policy sits within a framework that includes all of the child safety standards for school.

The Appendix outlines the school’s additional procedures for each standard.

***EVALUATION:***

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle, or at any time that DET policy changes influence practices in schools.

 **Ratified at School Council Meeting held August 1st, 2016.**

***VRQA CHILD SAFE STANDARDS:***

**STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**

* All school policies outline staff responsibilities to keep students safe.
* Employment of a Student Welfare Officer is a priority.
* Establishment of a Student Welfare committee which meets regularly.
* All adults sign in and wear a ‘Visitor’ badge to identify them whilst they are in the school.
* Staff and Students regularly practice lock down procedures.
* Security cameras have been installed around the school.
* All staff receive the Staff handbook each year.

**STANDARD 2: A child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety.**

* A Child Safety Policy has been established.
* The Child Safety Policy is provided for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings.
* All staff are given a copy of Ministerial Order 870.
* A Child Safe Policy has been created and endorsed by School Council.
* Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website.

**STANDARD 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**

* A Child Safety Code of Conduct has been established.
* The Child Safety Code of Conduct is provided for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings. This includes Non-teaching staff egg: External Music teachers, Canteen Manager, ICT staff and Maintenance staff are also given the document.
* All staff are given a copy of Ministerial Order 870, VIT Code of Conduct, and Extract Memo 199
* A Child Safe Code of Conduct has been created and endorsed by School Council.
* Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website or from the front office upon request.

**STANDARD 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**

* Staff induction program includes information regarding child safety encompassing matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
* Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers which clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant.
* CRT’s are required to provide VIT registration which is recorded.
* All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.
* External organisations working with students (eg: Police Officers, Speech Pathologists, NDIS workers) at our school are always supervised by a staff member or parent/carer.
* Professional Development is provided for staff in regards to trauma, abuse, behavioural issues, and disabilities.
* The Child Safety Code of conduct is publicly available on the school website. Children and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported. .

**STANDARD 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.**

* The School’s Mandatory Reporting policy is followed and reviewed regularly by staff.
* Staff update their knowledge via an on-line course every year.
* The Student Welfare Officer and AP will support staff to make mandatory reports.
* Staff are given contact details for Family First, DHS, and Geelong Police.

**STANDARD 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.**

* Teachers accompany students to and from specialist classrooms.
* Students always move around the school in pairs.
* Security cameras have been installed around the school.

**STANDARD 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.**

* Regular reference to the Positive Behaviour Matrix
* Brave Hearts program
* Anti bullying program
* Student Welfare Officer
* Puberty program
* Productive play room run by the Student Welfare Officer two lunch times per week
* Anti bullying audit conducted for years 5/6