



## Kamaruka Child Safe Commitment to Child Safety

*Kamaruka takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)***

Kamaruka is fully committed to child safety.

We want our students to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all students, as well as our staff and volunteers.

Kamaruka is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all students.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our clear policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a student's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Kamaruka is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

We have excellent human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Kamaruka is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all students, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable and to providing a safe environment for students with **the disability of social, emotional, behavioural disorders**.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

**If we believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse we will phone 000.**

## STUDENTS

This policy is intended to empower students who are vital and active participants at Kamaruka. 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 promote diversity and tolerance at Kamaruka, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable
- ensure that children with social, emotional, behavioural disorders are safe and can participate equally

### Student Safety and Participation

At Kamaruka, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views respectfully and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach our children about their rights and the school values, to support them to recognise and know what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers raise with us.

Our whole school approach to promoting participation and empowerment of children comes through the delivery of a rich and rigorous curriculum that promotes social emotional learning and is supplemented by programs and strategies such as:

- Student handbook
- Zones of Regulation program
- Anti-Bullying and Cyber Safety program
- SEAL program (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning)
- School Counsellor programs, supports and guidance
- Restorative approaches
- Martial Arts program
- Classroom Circles
- Student Awards relating to school values
- Transition programs
- Lunchtime activities

### We support student wellbeing and safety through support structures that include:

- Monitoring of and responding to protracted student absences
- Establishing Student Support Groups and Care Teams for children in need
- Developing Individual Education Plans (IEPS) which may include reference to behaviour or wellbeing goals and Behaviour Management Plans
- Monitoring play areas and classroom behaviours and implementing the school's behaviour management approach as necessary
- Recording incidents and monitoring behaviour and performance using the Compass management system

- Accessing support for students by connecting with therapists, psychologists, paediatricians and external stakeholders
- Involving outside services such as Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) case managers and support workers and other allied professionals as required
- Standing items on both staff meeting and Leadership meeting agendas with regards to students at potential risk or requiring ongoing care and monitoring

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with students at Kamaruka.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with students. All staff and volunteers, as well as students and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND SUPERVISION

Professional learning and supervision is important to ensure that everyone at Kamaruka understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

The culture at Kamaruka aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and students), to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Staff and volunteers are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable and the safety of children with **the disability of social, emotional, behavioural disorders**.

New employees and volunteers are supervised carefully to ensure that they understand Kamaruka's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to Kamaruka's code of conduct for further detail). Any inappropriate behaviour is reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Commission for Children and Young People and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## RECRUITMENT

We take all reasonable steps to employ qualified staff to work with students. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Kamaruka 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. Teachers are exempt but are required to be Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered.

Kamaruka carries out reference checks and police record checks (as applicable to position) to ensure that we are recruiting excellent staff. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

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.

## FAIR PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL

The safety and wellbeing of our students is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to students and families on progress and any actions that we as an educational organisation can take.

## PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or students, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

## LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Kamaruka takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our students.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

## ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Kamaruka 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.

We work to ensure all students, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

## POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and students have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and children with a disability including the **disability of social, emotional, behavioural disorders**.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next review:
September 2021	School Board	September 2023