

Wellbeing and Safety Policy and Procedures

Values

The Small School fosters the wellbeing and safety of children.

The Small School believes all children are born learners.

At The Small School, those most affected by decisions as far as possible make them.

All adults at The Small School exercise a duty of care and kindness to children.

Purpose

This policy describes the culture of wellbeing and safety of The Small School.

Wellbeing is at the core of The Small School's ethos and is reflected in all of the school's core values.

Wellbeing incorporates physical, mental and emotional health. Children learn best when they feel safe and secure across these dimensions.

Safety is both an objective state – we can be safe from harm – and subjective; we must feel safe in order to experience safety. A persistent feeling of unsafety, fear, can have a devastating effect on a child's learning.

For children, wellbeing is prerequisite to success at school and future lives. An overall experience of feeling safe is vital to wellbeing.

This policy sets out broad responsibilities and principles and is a guiding policy for the school's curriculum in health and wellbeing and for its Child Protection, Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management, and Administration of Medication policies. This policy also relates to the school's Codes of Conduct and approach to behaviour management and bullying.

While the policy focuses on child wellbeing and safety, a school culture of wellbeing and safety extends to staff

as set out in the Work Health and Safety Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities

The School Board is responsible for ensuring the school values in relation to wellbeing and safety are reflected in policy and practice across all dimensions of the school.

The School Manager is responsible for:

- Managing delivery of the School's wellbeing policies and evaluating their effectiveness.
- Meets at least annually with each staff member for performance planning and review (the Chairperson of the School Board carries out this duty in relation to the School Manager's performance planning and review).
- Managing a program of evidence-based staff development resources and activities on child wellbeing and safety, provided also to parents as appropriate.
- Working with parents at the time of enrolment and any other time it becomes necessary to develop new or revised plans to care for any aspect of a child's wellbeing, including Health Care Plans and Support Plans. These plans should be updated as required, and at least annually, and involve teaching staff for educational and developmental planning components of the plans.
- Facilitating whole-school meetings and other activities that promote inclusion and celebrate individuality, difference and diversity.

The School Manager and teachers champion wellbeing and safety at The Small School in accordance with this policy. The School Manager and the teachers:

- Ensure that all aspects of Health Care Plans and Support Plans are operationalised so that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to medication, medical emergencies and developmental support.
- Build relationships with external service providers and community organisations that can assist in Care Plans for children as needed.
- Provide opportunities for older children to mentor younger children at The Small School and for all children to have the opportunity to act as leaders in the school.
- Are responsible for creating and maintaining positive relationships with children so that children feel able to express themselves when feeling unsafe or unwell. Visual aids will be used to encourage children to be aware of and speak up about their feelings.

Teaching staff are responsible for curriculum aspects of wellbeing and safety, including garden, food and movement programs, relationship-building and conflict resolution programs, and understanding and acceptance of difference. These programs will always aid not hinder the wellbeing and safety of children at the school. Teachers are mindful of the wellbeing and safety of children in their care.

All staff are responsible for supporting the wellbeing and safety of children attending the school. Staff use gender-neutral language wherever possible.

Parents are responsible for ensuring the school can do its best to engender wellbeing and safety for children.

How the purpose is achieved

In line with the National Safe Schools Framework¹, across its activities, The Small School:

- Recognises that leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive school environment.
- Affirms the right of all school community members to feel safe at school, promotes care, respect and cooperation, and values diversity.
- Implements policies and programs to nurture a safe and supportive school environment.
- Sees parents as their child's first educators and works with parents to foster child and family wellbeing and safety, providing a parent education program where this can be helpful.
- Develops and implements policies and programs through processes that engage the whole school community.
- Ensures that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community are well understood in promoting wellbeing and safety
- Recognises the critical importance of pre-service and ongoing professional development in fostering wellbeing and safety for children as a result of having staff who are well-trained and well-supported within their school community.
- Provides opportunities for children to learn, through the formal curriculum, the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for positive relationships.
- Focuses on policies that are proactive and oriented towards prevention and early intervention.
- Regularly monitors and evaluates policies and programs so that evidence-based practice supports decisions and improvements.

- Protects children from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Mental and emotional health can be affected by experiences at school or elsewhere in a child's life. At The Small School, codes of conduct use language that is striving to ensure children, and staff and other adults, are kind and respectful to one another. Children will learn best by example of other adults in the school and especially older children. Behaviour management will seek to help children learn how to act kindly, while protecting all children from harm (see Behaviour Management Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy).

At school, a child's wellbeing will be affected by the wellbeing of staff and what happens to staff at school can impact their wellbeing and experience of safety. The School Manager is responsible for monitoring staff workloads and meeting annually with staff individually for performance planning and review purposes which include professional development planning and wellbeing planning.

Child wellbeing and resilience are enhanced when there is a focus on the links between teacher expectations and relationships, classroom practices, school policies, engagement with family and mental, emotional and social health. Thus, the school seeks to incorporate all aspects of school community life, from child physical, intellectual, moral, social and emotional wellbeing and development, to the safe and supportive environment provided by staff who are professionally and emotionally supported in their roles.

Pastoral care is most effective when there is a strong partnership between home and school. Clear, respectful two-way communication, reminders (at home and at school) of strategies to support progress, and early intervention in identifying and addressing problems are vital to the effective exercise of pastoral care.

All members of staff are providers of pastoral care. Teachers will use whole-school approaches, class or other group approaches, individual programs (eg. early intervention) and sensitive communication to provide a safe and supportive environment to enhance the child's emotional growth and development.

Staff will be provided with opportunities for professional learning that enhance their capacity to support children through well planned and engaging learning activities.

Where children with identified special needs are attending, all staff, led by the School Manager will ensure that appropriate support is provided to assist them with their schooling. The nature of the support required will take into account the specific needs (whether physical, emotional, behavioural or intellectual) of the child as well as available resources. The support approach will be designed in close collaboration with the parents/carers. As far as possible, support should entail minimal disruption to the general learning program.

The Small School has existing processes in place which ensure that amenities and the full range of learning spaces can be made accessible to all students including any student with special needs.

Children requiring health and/or medical services and support or medication will be assisted to access these as

required by Health Care plans.

Notification of concern for child welfare

When a staff member has a welfare concern regarding a child this matter should be discussed initially with the child's teacher.

The teacher can arrange a discussion with the child and dependent upon the outcome of that discussion will prepare an appropriate plan of action for the child.

This may include discussions with the family, further counselling, referrals to support services, adjustments to the learning plan of the child and other measures that supports the child within the school environment.

Where the welfare concern raised is due to potential risk to the safety of the child the staff member/teacher should refer to the School Manager and the Child Protection Policy for further guidance and action.