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Child Safe Policy

Policy Statement

Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre (MPLCC) is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. MPLCC has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We support and respect all children. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and any child from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background. We will provide a safe environment for children with a disability. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Scope

Reporting child sexual abuse is a legal community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under the age of 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

All MPLCC staff, volunteers, students, members and contractors are responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Early childhood educators, in daily contact with children and their families, are well placed to observe when a child appears to be at risk of harm arising from abuse or neglect. Services have a duty of care (refer to Definitions) to act immediately to protect and preserve the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care. Any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to Child Protection (refer to Definitions) (Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – refer to Sources).

The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (changes 1/10/17) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (changes 1/7/18) require that approved services protect children from any harm and hazards, and to adequately supervise children at all times. Adult supervision is a key factor in creating and maintaining child safe environments. Active supervision together with risk minimisation strategies can prevent or reduce the risk of injury to children.

Risk minimisation strategies, supported by clear policies and procedures for specific areas of child safety will help ensure the environment and practices at the service are child safe. Policies and procedures must be developed in relation to all matters specified in Regulation

168(2), including emergency and evacuation, water safety, sun protection, delivery and collection of children, and incident, injury, trauma and illness. Risks in the child's physical environment can be minimised by ensuring the safety of buildings, grounds, equipment, materials and furniture used at the service, and the safe storage and use of dangerous substances such as cleaning products and chemicals.

This policy is written to clearly articulate the strong commitment of our leadership, staff and volunteers to child safety and to outline the practices we have in place to keep children safe from harm.

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

Victorian Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Government has imposed compulsory minimum Standards that apply to organisations that provide services for children in Victoria to help protect children from all forms of abuse.

The Child Safe Standards require an organisation to have in place:

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

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

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

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

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

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

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

Policy Principles and Strategies

MPLCC applies the following child safe principles as appropriate to each and every part of our business:

- We promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander children.
- We promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.
- We ensure that staff, volunteers, parents/carers and children feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and will clearly state our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWC) in accordance with the Working with Children Check Policy.

- New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand the commitment of MPLCC 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.
- All staff will receive refresher training on the Child Safe Standards annually.
- No staff member or volunteer is to have contact with a child from MPLCC on social media in accordance with our Social Media policy.
- Any safety concerns or allegation of abuse will be treated seriously, appropriately and in accordance with MPLCC policies and procedures.
- We ensure the legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety.
- We will identify risks early and remove or reduce these risks in order to prevent potential child abuse. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- We involve children when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. Children are consulted in the planning of the children's services programs.
- If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, MPLCC will ensure a culturally appropriate response. MPLCC does this by engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to review policies and procedures.

Responsibilities

The **Committee of Management** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that an appropriate and effective Child Safe Policy is in place.
- Overseeing the development and implementation of appropriate and effective strategies and processes to implement the compulsory Child Safe Standards.
- Promoting child safety at all times.
- Overseeing the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Ensuring that any reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under the age of 16 has been reported to the police. 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.
- Overseeing the appropriate and timely investigation and resolution of any reports of child abuse.

The **Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Child Safe Policy is in place and reviewed at least every two years.
- Ensuring the development and implementation of appropriate and effective strategies and processes to implement the compulsory Child Safe Standards.
- Promoting child safety at all times.

- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, students, members and contractors are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring that all adults involved in MPLCC programs and activities are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and processes.
- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, students, members and contractors are aware of their obligation to observe the Child Safe Policy and associated procedures.
- Facilitating and ensuring the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Ensuring that any reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under the age of 16 is/has been reported to the police. 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.
- Ensuring that persons who notify a child safe complaint are regularly informed of the progress of the matter, including the consequences of any finding that the grievance is substantiated or not substantiated.

All **Managers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, students, members and contractors are aware of their obligation to observe the Child Safe Policy and associated procedures.
- Educating staff, volunteers, students and contractors about the appropriate prevention, detection and reporting of suspected child abuse.
- Providing direction and support to staff, volunteers, students and contractors in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.
- Promoting child safety at all times.
- Identifying and assessing risks of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible.
- Facilitating the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Ensuring that any reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under the age of 16 is/has been reported to the police. 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.

All **Staff and Volunteers** are responsible for:

- Abiding by the MPLCC Code of Conduct which makes a commitment to the standards of conduct required when working with children.
- Reporting any suspected abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and processes.
- Reporting child sexual abuse is a legal community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence

against a child under the age of 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

- Reporting any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities. Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Child Safe Environment

The Approved Provider must ensure that at all times the children are adequately supervised and that educators to child ratio are maintained and the physical environment is safe, secure and free from hazards for children. Providing a Child Safe environment is a priority for all staff at MPLCC

In relation to providing a child safe environment at the MPLCC it should include:

- ❖ maintaining learning environments that provide sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well maintained resources and equipment to ensure a safe environment
- ❖ maintaining a regular cleaning schedule for all equipment to avoid cross-infection
- ❖ maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent (OH&S Policy)
- ❖ conducting a daily check of the building, ensuring all children are signed out of the service, doors and windows are closed and locked, and appliances are switched off etc. A written record of the daily check should be kept, signed by an educator and filed for future reference
- ❖ actively supervising children at all times
- ❖ educating and empowering children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable
- ❖ ensuring children are adequately supervised at all times
- ❖ ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children
- ❖ conducting risk assessments for excursions and considering children's safety when leaving MPLCC
- ❖ ensuring all equipment and materials used at MPLCC meet relevant safety standards
- ❖ implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures
- ❖ ensuring there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children
- ❖ ensuring that children at MPLCC are not subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances and implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, and parents/guardians
- ❖ identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- ❖ protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making
- ❖ keeping up to date and complying with any changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy

Definitions

Abuse: (In the context of this policy) refers to physical and/or emotional mistreatment, and/or lack of care of the child. Examples include sexual abuse, the witnessing of family violence and any non-accidental injury to a child.

Bullying: Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying occurs when one or more people deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another person, damage their property, reputation or social acceptance.

Child: In Victoria, under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, a child or young person is a person under 18 years of age.

Child abuse: An act or omission by an adult that endangers or impairs a child's physical and/or emotional health and development. Child abuse can be a single incident but often takes place over time. Abuse, neglect and maltreatment (refer to Definitions) are generic terms used to describe situations in which a child may need protection. Child abuse includes any and all of the following:

Physical abuse: When a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a parent/guardian, caregiver or other adult. The injury may be inflicted intentionally, or be the consequence of physical punishment or the physically aggressive treatment of a child. Physical injury and significant harm to a child can also result from neglect by a parent/guardian, caregiver or other adult. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures, poisoning, internal injuries, shaking injuries or strangulation.

Sexual abuse: When a person uses power or authority over a child, or inducements such as money or special attention, to involve the child in sexual activity. It includes a wide range of sexual behaviour from inappropriate touching/fondling of a child or exposing a child to pornography, to having sex with a child.

Emotional and psychological abuse: Involves continuing behaviour by adults towards children, which erodes social competence or self-esteem over time. It occurs when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours, such as rejecting, ignoring, threatening or verbally abusing a child, or allowing others to do so (Office of the Child Safety Commissioner (OCSC), Victoria).

Racial, cultural and religious abuse: Conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion (OCSC).

Neglect: Refer to definition below.

Exposure to domestic/family violence: When children and young people witness or experience the chronic, repeated domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person by another through physical, sexual and/or emotional means within intimate relationships (adapted from the Australian Medical Association definition).

Child FIRST: A Victorian community-based intake and referral service linked with Family Services. Child FIRST ensures that vulnerable children, young people and their families are effectively linked to relevant services, including Child Protection (www.cyf.vic.gov.au/family-services/child-first).

Child sex offender: Someone who sexually abuses children, and who may or may not have prior convictions.

Child protection: The term used to describe the whole-of-community approach to the prevention of harm to children. It includes strategic action for early intervention, for the protection of those considered most vulnerable and for responses to all forms of abuse.

Child Protection Service (also referred to as Child Protection): The statutory child protection service provided by the Victorian Department of Human Services, to protect children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect. This service also works closely with Family Services (including Child FIRST) to support the assessment and engagement of vulnerable children and families in community-based services (www.cyf.vic.gov.au/childprotection-family-services/home).

Code of conduct: A set of rules or practices that establish a standard of behaviour to be followed by individuals and organisations. A code of conduct defines how individuals should behave towards each other, and towards other organisations and individuals in the community.

Disclosure: (In the context of this policy) refers to a statement that a child or young person makes to another person that describes or reveals abuse.

Domestic/family violence: The repeated use of violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour by an individual against a family member(s) or someone with who they have or have had an intimate relationship, including carers.

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of education and care services to provide children with an adequate level of care and protection against foreseeable harm and injury.

Maltreatment: (In the context of this policy) refers to physical and/or emotional mistreatment, and/or lack of care of the child. Examples include sexual abuse, the witnessing of family violence and any non-accidental injury to a child.

Mandatory reporting: The legal obligation of certain professionals and community members to report when they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from harm. A broad range of professional groups are identified in the CYFA as 'mandatory reporters'. Mandated staff members must make a report to Child Protection as soon as is practicable after forming a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

To have reasonable grounds to believe a child is in need of protection, a mandatory reporter should believe both that there is risk of significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and that the parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to protect the child (Sections 162(c)(d) and 184 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (amended in 2011)). Section 182 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (amended in 2011) lists those who are mandated to report. Mandatory reporters must report the abuse/neglect to:

- ❖ police, by calling 000, if the offence requires immediate police attention, or
- ❖ Child Protection authorities, if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child is suffering abuse or neglect, or wish to discuss their concerns about a child or young person.

Neglect: The failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed (Victorian Department of Human Services).

Negligence: Doing, or failing to do something that a reasonable person would, or would not do in a certain situation, and which causes another person damage, injury or loss as a result.

Offender: A person who mistreats and/or harms a child or young person.

Perpetrator: A person who mistreats and/or harms a child or young person.

Reasonable grounds: A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection after becoming aware that the child or young person's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to protect them. There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused

a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be referring to themselves)

someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused

a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused

the person is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development

the person observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision

a child's/young person's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to protect the child Voluntary (non-mandated) notification:

A notification to the Child Protection Service by a person who believes that a child is in need of protection. Section 183 of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (amended in 2011) states that any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection, may notify a protective intervener of that belief and of the reasonable grounds that the belief is based on. Under this part of the Act, notifications are made out of moral obligation, rather than legislative obligation. The person making the notification is not expected to prove the abuse, and the law protects the anonymity of the person making the notification.

Young person: In Victoria, under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, a child or young person is a person under 18 years of age

Legislative responsibilities

MPLCC takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including: •

- ❖ Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.
- ❖ **Failure to disclose offence:** In addition to mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations, any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence except in limited circumstances, such as where the information has already been reported to Child Protection or the child is over 16 when the belief is formed.
- ❖ **Failure to protect:** Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with MPLCC (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence. The offence applies to adults in a position of authority within an organisation.

Relevant legislation and standards

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): Sections 165, 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, and 168(2) (h)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2014
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2012
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), as amended 2011
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), as amended 2008 and 2011
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Working with Children Regulations 2006 (Vic) ∞ Child Safe Standards
- Failure to Disclose 2014

About the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry response, please visit the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#) (external site), or the [Child sexual abuse prevention and response page](#) on this site.

Staff can contact the Department of Health and Human Services for further information about the Child Safe Standards:

Telephone: (03) 9096 0000

Email: childsafestandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training:

Email: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au

Early childhood services operating under the National Quality Framework or **Children's Services Act 1996** should contact:

Email: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters. Advice on The Department of Health and Human Services website - www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities will be referred to for advice.

Child Safe Procedures

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Reporting suspected abuse:

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident to the Manager and CEO.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

If a child discloses an incident of abuse:

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared to others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using our incident reporting form and in the child's words. Report the disclosure to your Manager and the CEO.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
- The CEO will ensure that persons who notify a child safe complaint are regularly informed of the progress of the matter, including the consequences of any finding that the grievance is substantiated or not substantiated.

If a parent/ carer alleges that a child has been abused by MPLCC staff/ volunteer or raises a concern:

- Explain that MPLCC has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.

- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as CEO, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure report the disclosure to your Manager and the CEO.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately using our incident reporting form and that the record is stored securely.
- The CEO will ensure that persons who notify a child safe complaint are regularly informed of the progress of the matter, including the consequences of any finding that the grievance is substantiated or not substantiated.

Handling allegations, concerns and complaints:

MPLCC 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 record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are stored securely to protect the Privacy of all those involved.

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

Staff need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member). The EAL Manager can be called in to the meeting to support those with language barriers.

Most child safe complaints should be able to be resolved at local level. Before entering into the formal process, the aggrieved staff volunteers, students, members and contractors should attempt to resolve the child safe complaint with his or her nominated supervisor, or next most senior manager.

In circumstances where the child safe complaint is unable to be resolved at the informal stage or local level, the nominated supervisor or next most senior MPLCC manager who has received the complaint may refer the matter to the Committee of Management who will either make a relevant determination about the complaint, investigate the matter to make findings of fact or refer the matter to an external investigator to make findings of fact.

If the complaint is dealt with formally, MPLCC will ensure:

- Before a complaint is investigated, the complainant relevantly describes the allegations they wish to make (in most instances, but not all, this will need to be in writing), including particulars of the allegations so that they can be investigated appropriately;
- The person against whom the allegations are made is provided with a copy of the allegations that will be investigated; and

Maintaining confidentiality and non-victimisation

The parties to a child safe complaint are required, at all stages of this policy and procedure, to maintain confidentiality in relation to the concern or complaint. The parties must not disclose, by any form of communication, either the fact or the substance of the matter to anyone other than an advocate, staff representative.

A person must not victimise or otherwise subject another person to detrimental action as a consequence of that person raising, providing information about, or otherwise being involved in the resolution of a complaint under these procedures.

Any breach of either the confidentiality or non-victimisation requirements will be treated seriously by MPLCC, and may result in disciplinary action. Any such breach will be referred for investigation and handling in accordance with the relevant misconduct procedure.

Outcome and referral

When a child safe complaint is investigated and findings are made that substantiate any or all of the allegations made, the Manager must refer the matter to the CEO and MPLCC Committee of Management who may:

- Counsel the staff member involved on their behaviour and the findings made as a result of the investigation;
- Commence disciplinary investigation, which could lead to disciplinary action being taken, including termination of employment;
- Take some other form of appropriate action.

Recruiting and Induction

Whenever advertising vacancies and recruiting new staff, MPLCC will promote that it is a child safe organisation.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks for every position to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Referees must include a current or immediate past line manager/ supervisor who can attest to the candidate's interaction with children.

Each year existing staff will sign a "Safety declaration screening form", declaring that they have not committed any offences during the past 12 months. This will be done every calendar year along with a new staff information form and resigning of the code of conduct and code of ethics form.

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.

All new staff will be taken through the "Protecting Children" Mandatory reporting and other Obligations for Early Childhood Services presentation with the CEO as part of the Induction process. All staff will be given a copy of the Powerpoint presentation and session handouts then submit the assessment tool to be filed on their personnel file to ensure complete understanding of their obligations and understanding of this policy. As part of the induction staff will also be given an electronic version of [child safe standards](#) that can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations.