

Policy & Procedure & Review Standards

Giant Steps Melbourne
Child Safe Standards



Reviewed July 2020

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS POLICY

Policy

Giant Steps Melbourne is committed to child safety. Giant Steps Melbourne is committed to the health, welfare and safety of each and every student. We support and respect all children, as well as all those who make up the extended school community (including staff, volunteers and parents).

Giant Steps Melbourne has ZERO tolerance of child abuse.

Giant Steps Melbourne believes that every child has a fundamental right to be safe and that the specific needs of our students living with Autism does NOT reduce that fundamental right to be safe. We have a responsibility to ensure that our students are protected from all and any harm.

Giant Steps Melbourne is committed to preventing child abuse. We believe that by identifying risks early and then removing and reducing these risks we will move well towards preventing child abuse.

Aims

The aim of this Policy, and related Policies and Procedures, is to:

- Empower our children to be vital and active participants at Giant Steps Melbourne;
- Ensure our staff, including any contractors, and volunteers are committed to providing our students with a child safe environment;
- Ensure that any allegations, concerns or complaints about a child's safety is taken seriously and that each and every one is treated consistently with our procedures regarding such matters; and
- Promote and value the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and those from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS REVIEW PROCESS

REVIEW CYCLE - ANNUALLY

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 1 – EMBEDDING AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY, THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP Ministerial Order 870 Clause 7	
REQUIREMENT 1	Good Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant Steps Melbourne School leaders help and encourage to develop an appropriate organisational culture of child safety. Current Principal is a Trained Child Investigator – NSW • Giant Steps Melbourne’s School Board and Community have been involved in developing the child safety strategies and have approved all child safety strategies • The strategies are preventative, proactive and promote a shared responsibility to develop an open and aware culture of child safety • Risk assessments are carried out for ALL off site activities • Students are encouraged to communicate concerns through aid of visuals and iPads. Majority of our students are non-verbal and have complex needs • All staff are extensively trained in child safety strategies through numerous personal development and training sessions and whole school meetings • In the majority of instances, maintenance and contract workers usually carry out work outside of school hours, if they are onsite with students, they are escorted by a staff member at all times • Community Service and work experience students are debriefed before and after each session they attend on site • School expectations with respect to child safety are published and displayed in prominent locations in all school environments, including school buildings, website and online forums • Child safety is regularly included as an agenda item in regular meetings and specific staff training is undertaken in many areas and all staff complete Protecting Children Mandatory Reporting Course on an annual basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal acts as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety. • Refer - Statement of Philosophy • Refer - Example of Board Meeting Minutes • School policies are available to parents through parent portal and to staff on the Whole School drive. • Refer -Excursion and Community Access Policy • Children’s Profiles • Staff closely monitor Dysregulation Data • All students complete “Becoming Me” unit • Refer – Staff Personal Development Register and Whole School Meeting Agenda • Refer – Working with Children Check policy and Visitor Policy • Refer – Working with Children Policy and Visitor Policy • Refer – Statement of Commitment to Child Safety • Refer to the following policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Safe Standards ○ Restrictive Intervention ○ Code of Conduct Staff ○ Code of Conduct Students

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant Steps Melbourne’s strategies centre around our cohort of students, all of whom have moderate to severe autism and complex needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Code of Conduct Parents ○ Code of Ethics ○ Discipline ○ Mandatory Reporting ○ Safe and Supportive Environment ○ Student Welfare ○ Working with Children Check ○ Visitor • All students complete “Becoming Me” Unit
<p>REQUIREMENT 2</p>	
<p>The Principal ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is continually developing and enhancing the school’s child safe strategies • Weekly class and whole school meetings monitor the effectiveness of current child safety strategies and make changes accordingly • As part of the school review cycle all child safe policies and strategies are assessed reviewed. • The child safety strategies and relevant policies are available to the staff and school community. • All visitors including contractors and volunteers entering the site are briefed about Giant Steps Melbourne’s child safety strategies and policies • All students partake in the “Becoming Me” program • Responsibilities are included in the position descriptions for Principal and Executive staff and ongoing training and personal development is provided • Working with Children Check registers are kept up to date by Administration staff • Giant Steps Melbourne is a relatively small school so the roles and responsibilities to ensure that we achieve child safe strategies are shared between the Principal and Administration staff • Giant Steps Melbourne has a vetted employment process to ensure that staff employed have the right experience and skills to work with our cohort of students. Refer Appendix 1,2 & 3 of Child Safe Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer - Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. • Whole School Meeting Minutes • Staff review and sign off when policies are revised • Available through Parent Portal, Website and Whole School Drive • Refer – Visitors Policy • Annual review of practices • Refer - Working with Children Policy • See example of “Child Safe Questions for Interview” and referees checks

REQUIREMENT 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant Steps Melbourne has a culture of safety and awareness embedded in the school and all policies are available to staff and school community School staff who are trained in child safe strategies always accompany students when they are partaking in activities outside of the school including swimming, walks, work experience and camps • All incoming staff undergo an induction process that includes reading and signing child safe strategies that are available in their New Employment Packs • All contractors and volunteers are briefed accordingly upon entering the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is visible in staff and classrooms • Available via Parent Portal, Website and Whole School Drive • Refer – Example of Staff Policy Sign Off sheet and Induction • Refer – Visitors Policy and Contractor Briefing Information Sheet
REQUIREMENT 4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant Steps Melbourne has developed practices to implement child safety strategies and achieve goals of the strategies. • Giant Steps Melbourne communicates to the school community how child safety practises have been actioned via emails, the school newsletter and parent information nights • Giant Steps Melbourne staff engage in numerous training and personal development sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Four Critical Actions poster for School where all staff can view • Refer to the following polices – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Statement of Commitment to Child Safety ○ Child Safe Standards Policy ○ Code of Conduct Policies ○ Working with Children Check Register and Policy ○ Visitor Policy ○ Safe and Supportive Environment Policy ○ Student Welfare Policy ○ Code of Ethics Policy • Refer Staff Personal Development Register
REQUIREMENT 5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All policies and strategies are periodically reviewed • All child safety strategies are reviewed after an incident and updated if required • The Principal chairs the Whole School Meetings so is across discussions and outcomes of reviews • Outcomes of reviews and discussions are communicated to staff and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer – Policy Review Register • Refer – Child Safe Standards and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety • Refer - Whole School Meeting Agenda/Minutes • Parent Information Nights and Staff meetings and training sessions • Refer – Four Critical Actions for Schools Poster and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2 – SCHOOLS TO PUBLICLY COMMUNICATE CHILD SAFE POLICY & STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY Ministerial Order 870 Clause 8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giant Steps Melbourne is guided by its values to develop procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment and to protect children from child abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philosophy Statement of Commitment to Child Safety Child Safe Standards Policy Four Critical Actions for School poster Available for public viewing on website, parent portal, Whole School Drive and displayed around the school
CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3 – DEVELOPING A CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT Ministerial Order 870 Clause 9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giant Steps Melbourne have developed a number of Code of Conduct policies specific to our cohort of students, in consultation with the Principal, School Board and Staff All relevant Child Safe policies and strategies are assessed as part of the school review process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Conduct Policies are available for public viewing on website, parent portal, Whole School Drive Refer – Policy Review Register
CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4 – SCHOOL STAFF SELECTION, SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT Ministerial Order 870 Clause 10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giant Steps Melbourne has strong human resource practices that promote a child safe environment and reduce the risk of child abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Limitation Policy Working with Children Policy Working with Children Register Child Safe Policies are given to new staff as part of their Staff Induction pack
CHILD SAFE STANDARD 5 – IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO ALL FORMS OF ABUSE IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS Ministerial Order 870 Clause 11	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giant Steps Melbourne has a number of policies and procedures in place to ensure that correct process is followed when identifying and responding to all forms of abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer - Mandatory Reporting Policy, Four Critical Actions for Schools poster, Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian Schools information booklet, What

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer – Mandatory Reporting Policy, Four Critical Actions for Schools Poster, Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools, What to do when an allegation of child abuse is made information sheet • All Staff are clear on processes associated with Responding to an Emergency, Reporting to Authorities, Contacting Parents/Carers and Providing Ongoing Support 	<p>to do what an allegation of abuse is made information sheet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer – Staff Policy Sign off Sheet • Covered in Whole School Meetings and Staff Training
<p>CHILD SAFE STANDARD 6 – STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND REDUCE OR REMOVE RISKS OF CHILD ABUSE Ministerial Order 870 Clause 12</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant Steps Melbourne has implemented a number of strategies to monitor and evaluate risk management to ensure child safety in school environments • Staff training in child safety and risk assessments are carried out regularly throughout the year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Safe Standards ○ Playground Supervision ○ Child Safety Risk Management Strategies ○ Code of Conduct Staff ○ Code of Conduct Parent ○ Code of Conduct Student ○ Mandatory Reporting
<p>CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHILD EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION Ministerial Order 870 Clause 13</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant Steps Melbourne delivers appropriate education on standards of behaviour for students attending the school, Health and Respectful relationships (including sexual), Resilience and Child Abuse Awareness & Protection • The “Becoming Me” unit is part of the curriculum and all students attend these sessions. This unit is intended to educate and empower our students in the area of child safety, so that they are able to identify and communicate when they do not feel safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students complete “Becoming Me” unit • Student profiles up-dated annually – provides information about the child and how to support them • OT assessments and ongoing staff training and record keeping on all personal hygiene /health practices for children

Procedure

Our Students

Giant Steps Melbourne is an independent special school for children with Autism. At the forefront of every action that we take or decision that we make, we ensure that our children with Autism are safe, are valued and can participate fully in school life.

We understand that our students have a variety of abilities and levels of understanding and processing of information. We understand that our children have an increased risk and vulnerability of being subject to abuse. This increased risk is due to a number of factors, including communication difficulties, personal care needs and possible intellectual or cognitive disability. We understand that we must be more vigilant and have stronger strategies and controls to counter these risks.

At Giant Steps Melbourne we promote the value that each student must be viewed independently and that staff and volunteers must not make assumptions about the student's ability to understand.

At Giant Steps Melbourne we maintain increased vigilance in identifying indicators or warning signs of possible abuse. We understand that many actions or behaviours that may be signs of abuse by a child without autism, may actually be manifestations of the student's Autism/ co-morbid conditions and/or developmental delay. An example of this may be inappropriate public behaviour, such as touching oneself. Therefore, we maintain records of our students' normal behaviours and are vigilant about identifying any changes in their behaviour.

Irrespective of our students' perceived limitations and abilities, Giant Steps Melbourne will endeavor to:

- Teach our children about their bodies and about being safe in all environments;
- Teach, enable and facilitate independence for all our children in regard to personal care to reduce their risks of abuse in the future; and
- Inform our children about "safe" people and the means to communicate any concerns, allegations or complaints.

Staff and Volunteers

Giant Steps Melbourne has vigorous human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. We actively encourage the recruitment of personnel who have a background and are skilled in working with children, especially with children with autism. Our recruitment processes rigorously ensure that our personnel are equipped to deal with challenging behaviour in an appropriate and safe manner and that all staff and volunteers are aware of our legislative responsibilities.

All people engaged in child related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check. Validation of the Check is verified upon the commencement of each person engaged at Giant Steps Melbourne.

Giant Steps Melbourne is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. Child Safety is included as an agenda item in each weekly Whole School Meeting. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess and minimize the risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse in our children.

Giant Steps Melbourne takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate such allegations. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with such allegations, including the means by which to communicate with our children and their individual abilities.

Giant Steps Melbourne has a strict Code of Conduct which guides our staff and volunteers on the standards of conduct required when working with our children. New employees and volunteers are supervised to ensure they understand our commitment to child safety and to ensure their behaviour is appropriate and conforms to our Code of Conduct.

Legislative Responsibilities

Giant Steps Melbourne takes its legislative responsibilities seriously in regard to all matters of child safety.

Our Policies and Procedures in this area state that all personnel are mandatory reporters and are required to comply with their duties as such.

Irrespective of our legislative requirements, Giant Steps Melbourne is committed to reporting any inappropriate behaviour through the appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Risk Management

Giant Steps Melbourne acknowledges that being a special school for children with autism we have some unique risk factors based on our children's needs and behaviours. Our risk management procedures ensure that these unique factors are included in all areas of risk management.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and minimize child abuse risks, including risks posed by physical environments and environments outside of school hours.

Overview of Child Safe Standards

Related Policies

Student Welfare Policy and Procedures
A Safe and Supportive Environment
Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedure
Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct
Code of Conduct for the Care and Protection of Children

Related Documents

Child Safety Report Template

Recruitment Forms

- Phase 1 – Interview Questions – See Appendix 1
- Phase 2 – Safeguarding Interview Questions – See Appendix 2
- Phase 3 – Referee Questions - See Appendix 3

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually. This policy will also be reviewed after any form of incident regarding child safety, no matter the severity. This will ensure effectiveness is maintained and all risks are removed.

APPENDIX 1
Phase 1 - Interview Questions 2020

Name of Applicant: _____
Resume: Received / Not received
Phone Interview Date_____ **Interviewer**_____

Progress to face to face interview Yes/No

1/ Background: Tell us about yourself, personally and professionally and your academic qualifications

F/T or P/T work

2/ What do you know about Autism?

3/ What do you think you bring to GS as an educator

4/ What is your experience of working in teams, and, what in your opinion makes a team effective?

5/ Many of our students are non-verbal. What methods could be used to facilitate communication?

6/ Students with Autism often function at a highly anxious level. This is at times reflected in their behaviors. What is your experience (if any) with challenging behaviors, and how might you deal with behaviors such as biting, kicking and head butting?

7/ At Giant Steps we have a firm belief in integrating our students into society in accordance with their needs, for example mainstream school, community etc. Have you had any experiences with integration?

8/ What personal qualities do you bring to Giant Steps?

9/ Do you have your licence? Car?

Full licence, P plates.....

10/ Have you had any Workers Compensation claims in your past employment?

11/ Have you ever been involved in any Child protection matters, had an AVO taken out against you by a child or any criminal proceedings in child related matters?

12/ The role is physically demanding – we walk, run, dance, go on outdoor ed – would this suit you?

13/We work across all age ranges from 3 -18 years of age, do you have a preference?

14/ This is an opportunity to ask any questions or to add other comments or supporting statements

APPENDIX 2
Phase 2 – Safeguarding Children Interview Questions

Name of Applicant: _____

Note to applicant: Please fill in to the best of your ability

Knowledge of Policy and Procedure

1. What have you done in the last twelve months to improve safeguarding of children in the workplace?

2. Describe to us the key aspects of the safeguarding policy in your workplace?

3. Give me an example of when you have had a safeguarding concern about a child? What happened?

4. Tell us about a time when you have had to challenge the views of someone more senior than yourself in relation to safeguarding concerns. What was the outcome?

Knowledge of Values and Ethic

1. How do you feel when someone holds an opinion that differs from your own? How do you behave in that situation?

2. What are your attitudes to child protection? How have these developed over time?

3. What are your feelings about children who make allegations against staff?

4. Have you ever had concerns about a colleague with regards to his or her behaviour or attitude towards the children in his or her care? How did you deal with this?

Emotional maturity and resilience

1. Tell us about a person with whom you have had particular difficulty in dealing. What made it difficult? How did you manage the situation?

2. Tell us about a time when you have been working with children and your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? With hindsight, how might you have improved your response?

Motivation for working with children

1. What do you feel are the main reasons that have led you to want to work with children?

2. What has working with young people/children taught you about yourself?

Other Questions

1. Have you had any disciplinary action in relation to your employment in child related services?

2. Have you any criminal charges/offences relating to children?

APPENDIX 3

Phase 3 - Application – Referee Check for Child Related Employment

Name of applicant: _____

Position applied for: _____

Referee check completed by: _____ via phone/ in person on
(date) _____

Name of Referee:

Questions

1. How long has the applicant worked for your organisation?

2. How large was the team that they worked in?

3. What was their role? What were they responsible for?

4. How reliable and punctual were they during their employment with you? (did they take a lot of sick leave?)

5. Do you feel they were committed to the organisation?

6. How capable was the applicant in dealing with conflict if it came up?

7. Were there any disciplinary issues against them during their employment? Did it relate to anyone with a disability? Where there any issues that were related to child protection, child safety, reportable conduct or any criminal matter relating to children?

8. Are there any causes of concern with their previous employment? And would you employ them again with your organisation if they wished to return?

9. Would you recommend them for this position?

Space for any other comments
