

# Spring Gully Primary School

## COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

### POLICY

#### **Rationale:**

It is essential that staff, and members of the school community, communicate information in agreeance with established protocols so as to preserve the professionalism of the school, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students, and to comply with departmental and legal requirements.

#### **Aims:**

To ensure that the communication of information is carried out correctly and in a manner that complies with school, departmental and legal requirements.

#### **School Council's Role in Child Safe Communication & Promotion**

- The School Council communicates that it has zero tolerance of child abuse in any form.
- Child safety is listed for discussion at all formal meetings (eg School Council, Consultative Committee, staff briefings).
- Child safety strategies are developed, rigorously reviewed and adjusted to meet legislative and policy requirements.
- Effective reporting processes are developed, with identified people in the school to oversee outcomes.
- School Council and identified staff of the School will communicate with the wider school community about the Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and child protection reporting requirements.
- The school will report on child safety (and risk minimisation) in its Risk Registry.

#### **Link to the Statement and Commitment to Child Safety at Spring Gully Primary School**

Child protection is a shared responsibility between all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Spring Gully Primary School community. The safety and wellbeing of our students form a central and fundamental responsibility of our school and compliments our vision and values of: Respect, Team Spirit, Responsibility, Personal Achievement, Friendliness and Fairness. It is important that this rationale is **communicated** at all levels within the wider school community. We do this through our school policies, the school newsletter, the display of child safe posters, through recruitment and in through professional development foci with our staff.

We endeavour to clearly communicate our commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. It is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

#### **References DET:**

Information Privacy Policy - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacypolicy.aspx>

Police and DHS Interviews Policy:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/interviews.aspx>

### **Implementation:**

- Our school has a policy of open, proactive and cooperative communication.
- Our school acts in accordance with the Department of Education and Training Information Privacy Policy: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacypolicy.aspx>
- This practice recognises that staff members have legal, departmental, local, professional and social obligations with regards to the communication of information.
- Action may be taken by individuals, the department or organisations against staff members who choose to communicate information improperly.
- We will provide annually, two written reports and two parent-teacher interviews for students, additional interviews upon agreement, and an Annual Report, which will be published on the school website.
- Department of Education employees are free to make public comment on issues relating to education, but in doing so, must be wary not to make comments that can be construed as negative criticism of our school, School Council, our community, staff or community members.
- As a matter of professional courtesy, and as a requirement of Section 3.6 of the Teaching Services (Conduct of Duties) Order 1998, staff will communicate with the Principal before making public comment or formal statement on educational issues or when making a comment that bears on the organisation or program of the school or place of work. The Principal and School Council President will ensure that each other are informed.
- The Information Privacy Act and the Health Records Act 2001 require that schools protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual's right to control how their personal information is used.
- The school will only collect consensual information that it requires about individuals, and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.
- Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside the school's previous practices must be directed to the Principal, who may require that a formal written Freedom of Information request be made. The Principal will inform School Council of any such requests.
- All such Freedom of Information requests will be referred to the Department of Education's Freedom of Information Unit.
- Requests from Department of Human Services personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times.
- Information sought by police, including interviews with students must be directed to the principal. When interviews are requested by the Police or with the Department of Human Services, the principal will act in accordance with the Department of Education and Training policy entitled 'Police and DHS Interviews':  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/interviews.aspx>
- All staff will comply with court subpoenas to provide information at all times.

### **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or earlier as required.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...

**May 2017**

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Information Privacy Policy - <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/privacypolicy.aspx>

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