DUTY OF CARE POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact 9803 4590 or burwood.east.sds@education.vic.gov.au

DUTY OF CARE POLICY

At Burwood East Special Developmental School (BESDS), we consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people to be our highest priority. We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at our school at all times. We have zero tolerance for child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment where all students can be happy, confident, and resilient, regardless of their sexual or gender identity, cultural background disability, or other circumstances. We take account of the diversity of all children, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and vulnerable children.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain to our school community the non-delegable duty of care obligations that all staff at Burwood East Special Developmental School owe to our students and members of the school community who visit and use the school premises.

POLICY

“Duty of care” is a legal obligation that requires schools to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include personal injury (physical or psychological) or damage to property. The reasonable steps that our school may decide to take in response to a potential risk or hazard will depend on the circumstances of the risk.

Our school has developed policies and procedures to manage common risks in the school environment, including:

- Yard duty and Supervision
- Bullying Prevention
- Camps and Excursions
- First Aid
- Child Safe Standards
- Volunteers
- Visitors
- Working with Children and Suitability Checks
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting)
- Occupational Health and Safety

Our school acknowledges we are required to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation.

Staff at our school understand that school activities involve different levels of risk and that particular care may need to be taken to support younger students or students with additional needs. Our school also understands that it is responsible for ensuring that the school premises are kept in good repair and will take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of members of our community suffering injury or damage because of the state of the premises.

School staff, parents, carers and students are encouraged to speak to the principal to raise any concerns about risks or hazards at our school, or our duty of care obligations.

External Providers

Staff at our school acknowledge that, as our duty of care is non-delegable, we are also required to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm when external providers have been engaged to plan for or conduct an activity involving our students. Our *Visitors Policy* and *Camps and Excursions Policy* include information on the safety and care of our students when engaged with external providers.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our school website
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): Duty of Care
- https://www.besds.vic.edu.au/

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2024
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September 2028