**JUGIONG PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Policy for Protecting and**

**Supporting Children**

**and Young People**

## **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

This policy document:

* is provided to staff during their employment at Jugiong Public School to ensure a clear understanding of their duties and obligations under the key items of child protection legislation in NSW.
* sets out roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to child protection including training, reporting on safety, and supporting children and young people, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements.
* outlines the key concepts and definitions under the relevant legislation including mandatory reporters, reportable conduct, and risk management. It also sets out expected standards of behaviour in relation to employees and their relationship with students.

#### **GENERAL**

The safety, protection and wellbeing of all students are of fundamental importance to Jugiong Public School*.*

The NSW Government recognises that care and protection for children and young people is a shared responsibility. It begins with parents, but when government support becomes necessary, it is not the sole responsibility of community services but a collective responsibility.

Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing provides the framework for parents, communities, government and non-government agencies to work together to support children and families.

Education has an important role to support children and young people and to identify where problems arise that may put their safety, welfare or wellbeing at risk.

The School has a range of obligations relating to the safety, protection and welfare of students, including:

* a duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students;
* obligations under child protection legislation; and
* obligations under work health and safety legislation.

The purpose of this Policy is to summarise the obligations imposed by child protection legislation on the School and on employees, contractors and volunteers, and to provide guidelines as to how Jugiong Public School will deal with certain matters.

**KEY LEGISLATION**

There are three key pieces of child protection legislation in New South Wales:

* The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) (the Care and Protection Act);
* The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW) (the Ombudsman Act); and
* The Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW) and *Child Protection (Working* and the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013*.

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#### **OBLIGATIONS TO REPORT**

Jugiong Public School requires all staff to:

* report any concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person to the Principal or her delegate;
* report any reportable conduct of a member of staff to the Principal or his/her delegate;
* report any allegation that involves the Principal, to the Director of Schools, Wagga Wagga.
* provide support to children and young people.

This obligation is part of the School's overall commitment to the safety, welfare and wellbeing

of children.

**OTHER POLICIES**

There are a number of other School policies that relate to child protection that all staff need to be aware of and understand including (but not limited to):

* The Code of Conduct which sets out information about the standards of behaviour expected of all employees, contractors and volunteers of the School;
* The School's Policy on Student Bullying; and
* The Enhancing Online Safety for Children’s Act 2015.

## **SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES**

Jugiong Public School is strongly opposed to all child abuse and will provide comprehensive support for child protection and abuse prevention in order to minimize

its occurrence.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF**

Our School’s obligations under duty of care and under various pieces of legislation require that all relevant staff (including executive, teaching and non-teaching staff, part-time, temporary and casual staff) be appropriately trained, including:

* + reinforcing the School Child Protection Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct;
  + raising their awareness of child protection issues (recognising child abuse and neglect);
  + advising staff of their statutory obligations under the School policy and provide guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour;

• ensuring all staff have participated in an initial child protection induction and annual updates;

• ensuring all staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect of children and young people;

• ensuring all staff are aware of their obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work;

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**REPORTING**

Our School’s obligations under duty of care and under various pieces of legislation require that all relevant staff are aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so, including:

• using appropriate tools to inform decision making, such as the online Mandatory Reporter Guide, professional judgment or specialist advice, where there are concerns about risk of harm;

* determining whether concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people constitute risk of significant harm and, if they do, report these to Family and Community Services;
* seeking advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit where there is uncertainty about whether concerns amount to risk of significant harm;
* contacting the Child Wellbeing Unit about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people where:

1. there are concerns about risk of harm, that do not meet the threshold of significant harm but are not trivial;
2. the Mandatory Reporter Guide indicates this should be done;
3. a case has been reported to Family and Community Services and did not meet the risk of significant harm threshold;
4. there is an observable pattern of cumulative harm that does not meet the threshold of significant harm.

**SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Systems and Procedures:**

As part of our School’s obligations under duty of care and under various pieces of legislation Jugiong Public School has established effective systems in our workplace for:

* child protection concerns to be identified in the course of the work of staff, reported and action taken, where appropriate, so vulnerable children and young people are supported;
* reasonable steps to be taken to coordinate decision making and coordinate services to children and young people and their families with other local service providers, if required;
* collaboration to occur with other agencies for the care and protection of children and young people in ways that strengthen and support the family and in a manner that respects the functions and expertise of each service provider;
* exchanging relevant information to progress assessments, investigations and case management as permitted by law;
* responding to a request for a service from Family and Community Services provided that the request is consistent with departmental responsibilities and policies.

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Our School’s obligations under duty of care and under various pieces of legislation require that all relevant staff are aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so, including:

* adhering to procedures for conveying risk of harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager;
* adhering to procedures for reporting risk of significant harm to Family and Community Services;
* ensuring, where they have reported any risk of significant harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager, that the principal or workplace manager has reported those concerns to Family and Community Services;
* reporting directly to Family and Community Services if they believe the principal or workplace manager has not reported risk of significant harm concerns to Family and Community Services, and they still have concerns about risk of significant harm;
* ensuring that any relevant information that they become aware of, subsequent to a report being made to Family and Community Services or following contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit, is provided to Family and Community Services or the Child Wellbeing Unit respectively.
* cooperating with other relevant service providers to coordinate service delivery and decision-making;
* avoiding undertaking any investigation of the circumstances without the express prior approval of the relevant Family and Community Services case officer;
* informing students, of their right to be protected from abuse and of avenues of support if they have concerns about abuse.

**STAFF AND SCHOOL COMPLIANCE**

As part of our School’s obligations under duty of care and under various pieces of legislation Jugiong Public School has established effective systems in our workplace including:

* all visitors to the School are required to sign in at reception;
* detection and Disclosure – all staff are encouraged to report “small’ or “trivial” incidents;
* a clearly articulated Code of Conduct for staff;
* clearly articulated professional boundaries (these define effective and appropriate interactions between employees and students);
  + all staff are aware of the consequences of breaching the code of conduct; and
  + a culture of openness and transparency is encouraged.

Jugiong Public School will maintain a workplace register and record of:

* reports to Family and Community Services as confirmation that mandatory reporting requirements have been met, Including the reference number.
* related papers retained and kept confidential in secure storage by the principal. These records are to be provided to any successor.
* reference numbers provided by the Child Wellbeing Unit.

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#### **CHILD PROTECTION WITHIN THE CURRICULUM**

Key elements of child protection will be covered within the PDHPE syllabus. Core content will include reading and learning activities related to: recognising abuse; power in relationships; protection strategies; non-violent ways of relating; peaceful resolution of conflict; right for children to say no.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

Jugiong Public School recognises the importance of supporting our parents (and the

Community) in maintaining positive relationship with their children. From time to

time, the School will offer parent information sessions that may assist children and

their families to develop open lines of communication, including:

* + Parenting skills
  + Child/adolescent development
  + Appropriate use of internet and social media

The School will also raise community and family awareness about general child

protection issues, through information placed in School newsletters and through the

distribution of relevant brochures. The School will detail the Child Protection strategies

(such as training staff in best practices to ensure a safe environment) adopted through

a letter to parents and/or newsletters.