



CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7: EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN

PURPOSE

Saltwater College has adopted a whole school approach to the empowerment and participation of students:

- *Empowerment* – by encouraging and valuing student voice
- *Participation* – by providing opportunities for students to have a say about issues and concerns that affect them.

Becoming a Child Safe school means developing strategies to communicate and engage with all children who are involved with our school. It is important to ask our children when they feel safe, and when they feel unsafe. As 'Trusted Adults', we encourage, listen and support our children when they speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. By enabling opportunities for participation of our children in our school we are:

- demonstrating our commitment to upholding the rights of children
- strengthening our commitment to the children in our school
- building the communication and leadership skills of children – through our Student Leaders, Junior School Council, Green Warriors, ICT Leaders, Buddies and Peer Mediator programs
- building cultural understanding and respect
- enhancing the safety of children.

We teach our children about their rights and our school values in an age-appropriate manner, and we support them to recognise what abuse is, to understand it is not okay and to know that they can do something about it. We talk to our children about safety; both physical (the environment around them) and psychological (feeling valued, respected and cared for).

At Saltwater College, our whole school approach to promoting the participation and empowerment of children comes through our delivery of a rigorous guaranteed and viable curriculum (aligned with the Victorian Curriculum), policies and procedures. We work on the premise of primary prevention in giving our children strategies through the following whole school programs/approaches/policies:

- ICT Acceptable Use Agreements
- School Wide Positive Behaviours
- Respectful Relationships
- Safe Schools
- Suicide Prevention
- eSmart
- Combating Racism



- Bully Stoppers
- Attendance Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Lunchtime activities

As a school, we implement strategies such as the following to promote the participation and empowerment of children:

- providing children with child-appropriate and accessible information about:
 - what child abuse is
 - their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy
 - that no one has a right to injure them
 - how they can raise concerns about abuse
- ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children, for example by having procedures that are able to be accessed and understood
- ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for all children
- consider access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials
- gathering feedback from children through surveys such as the Student Attitude to School Survey regarding their connectedness to peers, safety and wellbeing and implement improvements based on this feedback
- enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them
- provide professional learning for staff on methods of empowering children and encouraging children's participation
- raising awareness in the community about children's rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites and newsletters

Saltwater College empowers children to articulate what they are learning, how they know they will be successful, how well they are progressing and what their next steps are for learning. We involve students in their education, engage them in their learning and assessment and empower them to learn by setting individual learning goals. These goals are developed, reviewed and monitored in collaboration with the classroom teacher and school leadership team. The goals are specific to each child's learning, to enable them to grow and improve. Our student centred approach allows every student to be empowered, and to participate in their education. Students are critically engaged in their learning, their progress and their next steps for learning.

Students and teachers refer to the school values on a consistent basis. Our values are student-centred and are communicated regularly to the whole school community. We recognize our values through student awards each week.



DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

[Child Safe Standards | Department of Health and Human Services](#)

[PROTECT Child Safe Standards - Home](#)

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council in May 2021 and is scheduled for review in May 2022.