St Thomas' School endorses Catholic beliefs and practices and is committed to the protection of children in our care. As a faith community, we nurture and watch over each person in keeping with the gospel values lived by Jesus Christ.

"I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full."

John 10:10

1.0 PURPOSE OR RATIONALE
This policy demonstrates a strong commitment of the whole school community of St Thomas’ Terang, leaders, staff, volunteers, students and their families, to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and procedures developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including all forms of abuse.

2.0 COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY
All students enrolled, and any child visiting have a right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse.

We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.
3.0 CHILDREN’S RIGHTS TO SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION
The staff and volunteers of St Thomas’ encourage students to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

The school will educate the children about:
(a) the appropriate Standards of Behaviour for students attending the school;
(b) healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
(c) resilience; and
(d) Child abuse awareness and prevention.

4.0 VALUING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
We value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:
∙ promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families
∙ promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and their families
∙ promote the personal safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life

5.0 RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
St Thomas’ Primary School will apply the most thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working With Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff and volunteers. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for staff and volunteer positions.

At St Thomas’ any person in a role that involves child-connected work will be informed of the school’s Child Safe Policy and the Code of Conduct to ensure any employees, contractors and volunteers have a clear understanding of the appropriate practices.
New school staff will be inducted into the school’s policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work. Regular monitoring and assessment of staff and volunteers will be carried out to ensure continuing suitability for child-connected work.

The 'Child Safe’ Team will be responsible for ensuring the above processes are carried out when recruitment of staff and volunteers is undertaken.

6.0 SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
St Thomas' Primary School provides support and supervision to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated. We have a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Please refer to CODE OF CONDUCT link below:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wi7I02XBIrVtnWNzPAcGqZW-vJ7MnNH5eBmeHMqRqoU/edit

7.0 REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT
Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct, and store the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures

St Thomas’ will have a Child Safe Team consisting of at least 3 people including:

(1) The Principal (Terry Harney)
(2) Child Protection Officer (Andrew McCombe)
and a;
(3) member of staff directly involved with an alleged incident
This team will oversee the management and storage of all documentation relating to an allegation and will inform staff of actions required in a timely and relevant manner. Confidentiality will be expected of all staff who are informed of any complaints and reports made.

The school would take immediate action should an allegation or disclosure arise.

(i) Inform appropriate authorities (eg; Police) about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting);
(ii) Protect any child connected to the alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved; and
(iii) Make secure and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the school’s response to it.

Staff must complete the Online Mandatory Reporting Module and have certificates stored by the school as evidence of completion. In addition to this, staff must maintain a current criminal record check as part of their Victorian Institute of Teaching registration.

Staff are also encouraged to:
Raise any issues/concerns with the Child Safe Team.
Keep relevant and updated documentation and records relating to matters of child abuse.
Never question the truth of an allegation made.
Never assume that it is the victim’s responsibility to notify police or authorities of an incident.

8.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

St Thomas is a 'child safe environment' and values risk management as a critical part of the school’s duty of care to ensure the safety of children. It will consider a broad range of contexts, environments, relationships and activities that children in our community engage in. Where risks are identified, we will immediately respond to reduce or remove them.

Our Risk Management Plan will regularly be monitored and evaluated to measure the effectiveness of risk controls.
Clear processes will be developed, recorded and established to remove all risks of child abuse to the children in your school.

We will recognise and adapt to the needs of particular children in our community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, culturally and or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability.

Guidance and training will be provided to all staff about:

(a) individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
(b) child abuse risks in the school environment; and
(c) the school's current child safety standards.

St Thomas' Emergency Management Plan outlines and details all aspects of risk across our whole school environment (on site and off site school activities) with specific activity risk assessments. In addition to our general Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse and harm to our students.

9.0 POLICY REVIEW
This policy is reviewed every three years and we undertake to seek feedback from students, parents, carers, staff and volunteers.

Policy Ratified: June 2016
Next Review date: 2019