

Policy & Procedures

Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms

Purpose

Outdoor school is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all our students. This policy aims to promote and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students experiencing difficulties and family violence within our school.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline our roles and responsibilities in regard to Information sharing procedures.
- Promote pro-active sharing and receiving of information.
- Align with the MARAM framework as well as CISS, FVISS ministerial guidelines.
- Encourage consistent and collaborative practice with our client schools.
- Meet our responsibilities for risk identification assessment and management, record keeping and referral practices.
- Guide our duty of care, anti-discrimination and mandatory reporting and privacy obligations.

Outdoor School acknowledges that school staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm impacted by abuse.

Background

This policy was created in response to the new Information Sharing and Family Violence reforms that were implemented April 19th 2021. The purpose of the reforms is to allow professionals working with children to gain a complete view of the children they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner with and/or without consent for minors under the age of 18 years.

The factors that may contribute to a professional's understanding of how sharing information may promote a child's wellbeing and safety include:

- physical, psychological and emotional health and access to and engagement with services to support a child's health and development
- engagement in supportive relationships, particularly supportive family relationships, involvement in activities that enable a child's personal, social and cultural development and connection to their culture and community
- participation in education and access to resources that support the child to learn and develop
- access to adequate, appropriate and safe accommodation, nourishment, protection from the elements and safe and stable environments in which to live, learn and grow.

Policy Definition

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (**CISS**), created under Part 6A of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, permits the requesting and disclosure of confidential information between prescribed organisations for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

Family Violence - any behaviour that occurs in family, domestic or intimate relationships that is physically or sexually abusive; emotionally or psychologically abusive; economically abusive; threatening or coercive; or is in any other way controlling that causes a person to live in fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of another person. In relation to children, family violence is also defined as behaviour by any person that causes a child to hear or witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of the above behaviour. This definition includes violence within a broader family context, such as extended families, kinship networks and communities.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (**FVISS**) was established under Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008. Part 5A authorises a select group of prescribed Information Sharing Entities (Family Violence information sharing entities) to share information with one another for family violence risk assessment and risk management.

An Information Sharing Entity (**ISE**), which is a prescribed organisation (or part of an organisation) that is authorised to share confidential information with other prescribed organisations.

Implementation

Ensure Implementation planning template is current.

At Outdoor School, potential information sharing opportunities are:

- a) OS receiving information to promote student wellbeing and safety (as provided by the home school).
- b) OS staff sharing information back to school to promote student wellbeing and safety.
- c) OS requesting further information to inform action (may be excluded information.)

Requests template:

[Template for making or responding to a request and proactively sharing information under CISS FVISS.pdf](#)

Information sharing and Record Keeping Requirements:

- *must acknowledge they have received a request for information*
- *must respond to requests for information and provide all relevant information to other Information Sharing Entities that meets the requirements of the scheme it was requested under and do so in a timely manner*
- *must consider the information sharing legislative principles for the schemes*
- *if declining to share all or part of a request for information, must advise the requesting information sharing entity in writing*
- *must keep records in relation to all requests received and when sharing information.*
- *if refusing a request, you must respond in writing and document the reasons why*
- *best practice is also that the ISE making the request follows the record keeping procedures of the Schemes*
- *can request information from other Information Sharing Entities*
- *can proactively share information with other Information Sharing Entities*
- *must meet the record keeping requirements of the Information Sharing Schemes.*

Further information and resources

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- DET [Schools' Privacy Policy](#)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act
- DET eLearn modules

Contacts:

- Child FIRST
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victims of Crime Helpline
- The Orange Door (Wodonga/Wangaratta)
- Child safe Standards and Policy
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/safeenviro.aspx>
- DET Protect website:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>

For more information on training, resources and guidance, visit the [Information Sharing and MARAM website](#)

Information Sharing and MARAM Enquiry Line 1800 549 646.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed on a 2 year basis, or earlier as required, following analysis of school data on reported incidents of FV to ensure that the policy remains up to date, practical and effective.

Data will be collected through:

- staff surveys
- assessment of school based data, including the number of reported incidents of FV in each year group and the effectiveness of the responses implemented.
- cumulus data base collection and analysis.

Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed with student representative groups, school board, visiting teachers and group teachers.

Review cycle

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	11/08/2022
Consultation	School Board 2022
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	31 st of July 2022