



CHILD PROTECTION: GROOMING POLICY

Policy Statement

Lockington Consolidated School hold all people, but especially children, young people and the most vulnerable, with the highest respect. Within this context, effective schools provide a safe, supportive and secure environment that promotes respect and care and values diversity. The mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of children and young people are essential preconditions for successful learning.

These qualities cannot be developed for individuals in isolation from the health and wellbeing of the school community as a whole.

Lockington Consolidated School is committed to the creation of a safe, just and respectful environment that supports wellness for all members of the school community. In this, there is a moral obligation and shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of the community.

Lockington Consolidated believes that, while protecting children and young people against sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility, schools have particular moral and legal responsibilities to ensure children and young people are safe in their care and to actively and intentionally work to eliminate all forms of abusive behaviours towards children. There are also particular moral and legal obligations for those in authority to prevent, reduce and minimise child abuse and exploitation in all forms.

This policy applies to the whole school community in supporting a safe environment for all children and young people.

It concerns the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and the Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 which commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014, introducing the offence of Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years. The Crimes Amendment (Grooming) offence provides that the offence of grooming concerns:

- predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child.
- an adult communicating, in person or electronically, by word or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years
- or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.
- sexual conduct which constitutes an indictable offence.

Note: Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example it may involve establishing a relationship with a child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Chrissy Drummond
PRINCIPAL

Rebecca Steele
SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT