

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Purpose

East Doncaster Secondary College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students whilst participating in school activities both during and outside of school hours and has zero tolerance of child abuse. This includes activities conducted outside of the school environment such as excursions, camps and sporting events, as well as within online school environments including email and intranet systems. East Doncaster Secondary College recognises that the wellbeing of students is the responsibility of all staff and that staff must report and respond to any concerns regarding possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

Scope

This policy applies to all East Doncaster Secondary College school staff, volunteers, school community members and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy applies across a range of school forums, such as camps, excursions, school council run events activities and services conducted within and outside school hours.

For the purpose of this document-

Child abuse includes-

- (a) any act committed against a child involving-
 - (i) a sexual offence; or
 - (ii) an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming);
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of-
 - (i) physical violence; or
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm;
 - (iii) serious neglect of a child

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse as outlined in **Ministerial Order No. 870**

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff being: an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

Policy

Our College is committed to child safety. The school's approach to Child Safety Standards are outlined below.

The school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. The school's plan for creating a child safe cultures can be found in the website at https://www.eastdonsc.vic.edu.au/our_school/child-safety-standards

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Our College is committed to regularly training and educating our staff on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Aims

- To embed a culture of child safety within the College community that supports all students and takes into account the diversity of all students, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, and students who are vulnerable
- To support, encourage and enable school staff, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- To define the roles and responsibilities of the College and staff and volunteers in protecting the safety and wellbeing of students
- To support and assist students and staff in the process of reporting suspected abuse

Implementation

The school will handle child safety concerns in a sensitive, confidential and timely fashion and will comply with all requirements set out in Ministerial Order No. 870 and the included child safe standards.

Our College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. We understand that when recruiting staff we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Checks and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

The College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers) informed about progress.

East Doncaster Secondary College will:

- Ensure all teaching staff have the appropriate qualifications and registrations to work within the College in accordance with VIT registration
- Ensure all non-teaching staff, including casual employees and volunteers have the appropriate registrations (Working with Children Check- employee or volunteer status as applicable) to work within the College
- Seek two forms of proof of identity and history and references indicating the suitability of staff to work with children (Office administration staff)
- Provide new staff with a copy of this policy and have the key aspects of this policy explained to them as part of their induction into the College (Assistant Principal responsible for Staff Induction)
- Brief staff on their responsibilities in relation to promoting child safety within the College and reporting suspected child abuse, on an annual basis.
- Support staff who make a mandatory report regarding suspected child abuse (Principal and Student Wellbeing & Engagement team)
- Ensure all advertised jobs include a statement indicating that staff are to abide by the Child Safety Standards and the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Identify and document any situations or environments where there is a risk of child abuse occurring and take actions to minimise this risk
- Ensure that school leaders and managers implement processes so that all members of the school environment understands their roles, responsibilities and behaviours expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's code of Conduct. The school code of conduct sets out a clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Be vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures. The school's approach to Child Safety risk reduction and management can be found on the website at https://www.eastdonsc.vic.edu.au/our_school/child-safety-standards

- Abide by laws pertaining to how this school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy
- Adhere to the College Photographing, Filming and Recording students policy relating to the use of student images, names or personal information in all forms of College publications.
- Adhere to legislation and inform the College community about the obligation meet to “Failure to disclose” and “Failure to protect” procedures. College procedures do not impinge on the responsibilities of staff regarding failing to disclose suspected child abuse or failing to protect a child reporting child abuse.

School Staff

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our College. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

All staff are expected to;

- adhere to the acceptable behaviours when interacting with students, as outlined in the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- be aware of and act upon the processes outlined in the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Behaviour Management Policy documents
- follow the procedures outlined in the Mandatory Reporting Policy if they form a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a students’ health, safety or wellbeing is at risk.
- abide by The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct, and adhere to the expectations described in the College’s Code of Conduct
- treat students with respect and foster an environment that is safe, pleasant and supportive, free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation as described in the Student Engagement policy.
- The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school’s leadership team of their concerns and the reason for their concerns. The school’s policy for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found in the website at:

https://www.eastdonsc.vic.edu.au/our_school/child-safety-standards

Use correct reporting templates and safely secure documented notes when responding to allegations of disclosure of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors or other persons connected to the school environment.

Students

This policy is intended to empower children to be vital and active participants in our College. We involve them in making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance at our College, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome.

In particular our students;

- have the right to be treated with respect and to be protected from any form of child abuse
- have the right to feel and be safe in their interactions with staff, contractors, volunteers and/or visitors

- are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Student Engagement Policies and abide by the conditions included in the 1 to 1 Digital Learning Policy and Mobile Devices Policy, as they relate to the relevant areas of the child safe standards.

Evaluation

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

Failure to disclose

https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2018/07/f0/bbce5bd2b/failure_to_disclose_betrayal_of_trust_factsheet_2017.pdf

Failure to Protect

http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/justice/resources/Of547d32-a4c4-4e05-9fbf-7415a4b4e3f6/failure_to_protect_betrayal_of_trust_factsheet_2017.pdf

Refer to the EDSC website for further information regarding Child Safe policies

<https://www.eastdonsc.vic.edu.au/policy-documents>

https://www.eastdonsc.vic.edu.au/our_school/child-safety-standards

Evaluation

Reviewed: March 2019

Date of next review: March 2020 or as directed by DET.

Signed:

School Council President: Stefan Kazakis

Principal: John Roberts