

Edenhope College ChildSafe Policy

Child Safety statement: Edenhope College is committed to child safety (Ministerial Order No. 870) and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the safety of our students is paramount.

Rationale:

Edenhope College is committed in our duty of care of providing child safety (**Ministerial Order No. 870**), ensuring that **all** children in our care are safe, happy and empowered. Our College acts in the best interests of **all** of our students at all times and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the safety of our students is paramount.

Aims:

At Edenhope College:

- 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 legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- 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 vulnerable children and those children with a disability.
- We promote diversity and tolerance and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome.

Implementation:

All of our staff, contractors and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All members of staff and those working with children (with the exception of teachers) are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. All teachers will provide a copy of their Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), registration to our College before commencement of their employment at Edenhope College. When Working with Children Checks and VIT need to be renewed, copies of this evidence will be provided to the College. We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children.

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility and we aim for all staff to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

A register of Working with Children Checks will be maintained by the Office Manager. All staff are required to inform the Office Manager if a volunteer will be engaged in Child related work and to ensure the volunteer has a WWC check and that it is presented to the Office Manager to be entered on to the register, prior to the volunteer activity commencing.

The Office Manager will conduct a periodic check to verify the status of Working With Childrens Check (WWCC). These checks are to occur at a minimum of once per year and be conducted in September.

At Edenhope College, the Wellbeing Team will undertake the roles and responsibilities of the Child Safety officer.

All concerns of a child's safety are to be immediately referred to the Wellbeing Team at Edenhope College and all allegations of abuse and safety concerns including investigation updates will be recorded by the Wellbeing Team. The Wellbeing Team will then support the reporting individual to make a report to relevant organisations of any inappropriate behaviour (Child First/Orange Door, DHHS or Police), depending on the nature, severity and urgency of the matter. An Iris report would also be logged with the Department of Education and Training's Incident Support and Operations centre (1800 126 126) by a member of the College Leadership Team.

Where relevant, if an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families, on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Edenhope College takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.
- Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.
- We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.
- We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Child abuse is not tolerated in any form and 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 specific procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments. This training includes annual online modules (mandatory reporting), guest speakers/organisations, readings and presentation of information. In relation to the online modules, certificates of completion by each staff member who is required to complete this training will be forwarded to members of the leadership team to ensure compliance.

At Edenhope College, our Wellbeing Team is the point of contact for questions, concerns or reporting allegations of child abuse.

Evaluation: This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or more often if necessary, due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

School Council Ratification Date: November 2019

Reviewed: June 2020.

Scheduled for review: no later than July 2021