



St Peter's ELC Child Safety Policy



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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the commitment of St Peter's ELC (ELC) in ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children at our Centre. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep children safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the ELC. This Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order 870. The Policy applies to all St Peter's ELC Staff, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, and visitors.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. St Peter's ELC is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Safety Program designed to keep children safe. At St Peter's ELC we do not and will not tolerate child abuse, and we are always committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The ELC regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

CHILD SAFETY VALUES AND PRINCIPALS

The ELC's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

- All children have the right to be safe
- The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount
- The views of the child and the child's privacy must be respected
- Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture
- Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our ELC Community
- Procedures are in place to screen all staff, direct contact volunteers, contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children
- Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility
- Child safety training is mandatory for all staff, St Peter's ELC Board Members and direct contact volunteers
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the ELC community
- Promote the cultural safety and participation of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



- Ensure children who have a disability feel safe, supported and encouraged to participate

CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM

St Peter's ELC is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safety Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our ELC's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the child cohort.

Our Child Safety Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, contractors, external education providers, parents/carers and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening ELC Board Members, Staff, direct contact volunteers, contractors and external education providers
- procedures for reporting Reportable Conduct and/or misconduct
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower children and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and children with disabilities
- a child safety training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of St Peter's ELC induction process, all staff are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Safety Program. Additional, ongoing child safety training is provided at least annually.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At St Peter's ELC, the Leadership Team and Staff, as well as Volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

The Board and Leadership Team

St Peter's ELC recognises their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety.



These include:

- creating an environment for children to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all St Peter's staff, volunteers, and contractors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- ensuring that ELC personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the ELC meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

Responsibilities of ELC staff (ELC employees, volunteers, and contractors)

- treating children with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children in their care
- following the legislative and internal ELC processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children
- assisting children to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the ELC's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

CHILD SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION

St Peter's ELC encourages children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions and concerns, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them. We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, staff or community members raise with us regarding child safety.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING

Our Child Safe Program provides detailed guidance as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report concerns to one of our ELC's nominated Child Safety Officer. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities. Staff, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, children, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the relevant authority or our Senior Child Safety Officer, our Director of Rathfarnham/ELC or our Director of Glendalough, by phoning (03) 9823 8101 or by email. Communication will be treated confidentially with a 'need to know' basis. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)
Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

REVIEW OF THIS CHILD SAFE POLICY

St Peter's ELC is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

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