

# CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND IMPLEMENTATION



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Education

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**This Child Safe Environment policies, procedures and implementation plans have been developed in collaboration with our school board and the Principal and staff of Eton Farm Education and with guidance from the Royal Commission’s child safe standards.**

## **Aims**

Eton Farm Education is committed to providing a child-safe environment which safeguards all students and is committed to promoting practices which provides for the safety, wellbeing and welfare of our children and young people. Eton Farm Education expects all school community members including staff, volunteers, students, visitors and contractors to share this commitment.

School staff are in a unique position of responsibility and authority and must make every effort to make sure that our school provides a child safe environment. Teachers in particular are of primary importance when it comes to detecting abuse and preventing abuse from occurring.

## **Scope and Application**

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Students
- Parents
- Community members
- Visitors to the school.

## **Definitions**

**‘Child’** - a person who is under the age of 18 years. Young people aged 18 and over are considered to be adults and are not covered by this legislation. However, schools still owe a duty of care to all students at the school. In these instances, police should be informed of any assault or crime against the young person.

**Teacher** - A Person who is registered under the teacher registration act 2012.

**Mandatory Reporter** - In Western Australia, the mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse are the following professions in both the government and non-government sectors:

- doctors
- nurses
- midwives



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- teachers
- police officers
- Teacher assistants, school chaplains and school psychologists are examples of people who work with children in schools that **are not** mandated reporters.
- **Ministers of Religion**

**Grooming** - The process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of a child. It does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity. It may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

**Child Abuse and Neglect** - Maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years. It is the result of action or inaction on the part of a person who has responsibility to care for a child resulting in harm or injury to the child. The harm may include delayed physical and/or intellectual development. The maltreatment experienced is normally described in five categories, each described below by a range of indicators. (Descriptions of these indicators below have been taken from the **Department for Child Protection document “Identifying and responding to child abuse and neglect – A Guide for Professionals”**.)

## **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. It can include, but is not limited by injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline or physical punishment.

## **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child’s body, making a child touch an adult’s genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

## **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.

## **Psychological abuse**

Psychological abuse is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.

## **Note:**

Child abuse and neglect, as defined by the Department for Child Protection, is maltreatment done by a person who has responsibility to care for a child and this document concentrates specifically on that relationship.

However, it is very important to note that the definitions of child maltreatment described in this section of this document can be used to explain some of the behaviour that can occur in schools by one child to another. While the treatment of such behaviour may be dealt with through other school policies such as Bullying Prevention and Behaviour Management, the victim of that 'bullying' may display some of the physical and behavioural indicators as those described in the next section of this document. These events will be treated seriously by the school with the aim to help both parties.

It is also important to note that the child who is 'bullying' may be doing so because they have been subjected to the same inappropriate behaviour and may require assistance through the school's Child Protection policy

## **Principles**

- The school will develop and maintain a child-safe culture and will ensure that all policies, procedures, practices and strategies are underpinned by our nominated child-safe organisational framework, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Staff will avoid situations in which they are alone with a child unless there are extraordinary circumstances.
- Staff and volunteers are adequately screened, trained and supervised.

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- Professional development and compulsory grooming and mandatory reporting training will be made available to all staff in the area of child protection.
- Responsibility does not end at mandatory reporting of a suspicion. Support will be provided for students and reporters.
- A plan of support will be developed for any child affected by child abuse.
- Professional confidentiality is protected when staff provide information in the best interest of the child regarding suspicion of child abuse.
- A protective behaviours curriculum will be delivered that is a realistic, age-appropriate personal safety component enabling students to recognise and report abuse, understand power in relationships and develop protective strategies, including seeking help.

Students will be supervised by adults deemed responsible and appropriate by the Principal during the school's hours of operation, and during official school events including excursions and camps.

- Students will be released into the care of their parents, or to another adult with written or verbal authority from the parents.
- All members of the school community are responsible for caring for the students of the school. This includes reporting any instances of suspected abuse or neglect AND taking action if they believe any current processes of the school may allow abuse or neglect to occur.
- Suspected abuse or intention to make a report about a child will not be communicated to parent or legal guardians prior to receiving approval from CPFS or the WA police.
- Grooming behaviours and allegations of child abuse are classified as gross misconduct and staff members will be suspended immediately pending further investigation.

## Responsibilities

### Board

- Ensuring this policy is updated in line with legislative changes.
- Reviewing annually the school's policies, procedures, practices and strategies to ensure compliance with the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Ensuring the protective behaviours curriculum is delivered.
- Ensuring all staff have current grooming and mandatory reporting training.
- Ensuring that all Board members and staff have current WWC, Police Clearance and Fit and Proper status.
- Ensuring that the vetting of job applicants is thoroughly carried out in line with the hiring policy by the Principal or their delegate, prior to employment commencing.
- Ensuring that a critical incident report has been made to DES if required.

### Principal

- Ensuring this policy is updated in line with legislative changes.

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- Reporting on behalf of non-mandatory reporters.
- Overseeing the development and implementation of individual support plans.
- Counselling and support for mandatory reporters.
- Communicating with external agencies, including but not limited to CPFS and police.
- Acting on and following through on instances of suspected abuse or neglect.
- Protecting the identity of mandatory reporters.
- Keeping comprehensive records of any suspected incidences of abuse.
- Ensuring at all times that students will be supervised by adults deemed responsible and appropriate.
- Ensuring volunteers and external providers and contractors are deemed appropriate to be in the school and all Working With Children Checks, Police Clearances, Teachers' Registration and Volunteer Declarations have been completed prior to commencement.
- Ensuring that any volunteer or employee that has been issued an Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice MUST NOT engage in child-related work.
- Ensuring that any staff or volunteers with expired or withdrawn WWC cards do not engage in child related work.
- Development and implementation of the Protective Behaviours Curriculum.
- Overseeing the currency of grooming and mandatory reporting training for all staff. New staff who have not completed mandatory reporting training will be enrolled in the first available workshop.
- Informing DES of a critical incident if the incident occurred on school grounds and/or involved school staff.
- Informing the Chair of the Board of any reports made to CPFS.
- Ensuring that the pre-employment documentation and checklists are completed.

## **Administration staff**

- Keeping updated and accurate records.
- Completing mandatory reporting training. New staff who have not completed mandatory reporting training will be enrolled in the first available workshop.
- Pass on all correspondence expediently to the Principal relating to Working with Children checks, Teacher Registration.

## **Teaching/other Staff**

- Observing, recording and reporting suspected abuse or neglect.
- Being familiar with this policy.
- Completing compulsory grooming training annually and mandatory reporting training every two years. New staff who have not completed mandatory reporting training will be enrolled in the first available workshop.
- Knowing how to respond to disclosure and with the indicators of abuse and neglect and what to do in both cases.
- Being aware of any legal documents related to or restricting access to a student.



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- Delivering the protective behaviours curriculum.
- Complying with the practices outlined in the Appropriate Relationships Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Complying with the Supervision Policy.
- Keeping comprehensive records of any suspected incidents of abuse.

## Adult members of school community

- Inform the Principal and teacher of any legal documents related to or restricting access to their child, and promptly inform the school of any change in circumstances.
- Report to the Principal any concerns of suspected abuse or neglect relating to children within the school community.

**The Royal Commission's Child Safe Standards as its Child Safe Organisation Framework is used to underpin Eton Farm Education policies, procedures, practices and strategies to ensure the provision of an environment where children feel respected, valued, supported and safe from harm.**

## Elements of a Child Safe Institution

<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/Research%20Report%20-%20Creating%20Child%20Safe%20Organisations%20-%20Prevention.pdf>

The Royal Commission's work on **child safe institutions** is underpinned by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**, which was ratified by Australia in 1990.

Consistent with Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the **Rights of the Child**, all institutions that directly engage with or provide services to children should act with the best interests of the child as a primary consideration. Institutions need to ensure that this principle, is widely known and understood by all staff and volunteers, appropriately integrated, and consistently applied across all elements outlined below.

Each of the proposed child safe elements are intended to be of equal importance and are inter-related. They are framed in an outcome focused manner and allow institutions flexibility in their application.

The ten elements are intended to be dynamic and responsive rather than static and definitive.

### **1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture.**

- a) the institution publicly commits to child safety and leaders champion a child safe culture;
- b) child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels of the institution;

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- c) governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the child safe elements and accountabilities are set by institutional leaders, at all levels of the institution's governance structures;
- d) risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children;
- e) staff and volunteers comply with a code of conduct that sets clear behavioural standards towards children;
- f) staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

## **2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**

- a) children are able to express their views and opportunities are provided to participate in decisions that affect their lives;
- b) the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, in helping children feel safe and be less isolated;
- c) children can access sexual abuse prevention programs and information;
- d) staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse  
[childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

## **3. Families and communities are informed and involved.**

- a) families have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child and participate in decisions affecting their child;
- b) the institution engages in open, two- way communication with families and communities about its child safety approach and relevant information is accessible;
- c) families and communities are informed about the institution's operations and governance.

## **4. Equity is promoted, and diversity respected.**

- a) the institution actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and respond effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities;
- b) all children have access to information, support and complaints processes;
- c) particular attention is paid to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## **5. People working with children are suitable and supported.**

- a) recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasises child safety;
- b) relevant staff and volunteers have working with children checks (WWCC);
- c) all staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations;
- d) supervision and people management has a child safety focus.

## **6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focussed.**



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- a) the institution has a child focussed complaint handling policy which clearly outline roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report;
- b) effective complaint handling processes are understood by children, staff, families and volunteers;
- c) complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

## **7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.**

- a) relevant staff and volunteers receive training on the nature and indicators of child maltreatment, particularly institutional child sexual abuse Creating Child Safe Institutions;
- b) staff and volunteers receive training on the institution's child safe practices and child protection;
- c) relevant staff and volunteers are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures.

## **8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.**

- a) risks in the online and physical environment are identified and mitigated without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy child development;
- b) the online environment is used in accordance with the institution's code of conduct and relevant policies.

## **9. Implementation of child safe standards is continuously reviewed and improved.**

- a) the institution regularly reviews and improves child safe practices;
- b) complaints and concerns are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

## **10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.**

- a) policies and procedures address all child safe organisation elements;
- b) policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand;
- c) The Board and consultation with the Principal informs the development of policies and procedures;
- d) leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures;
- e) staff and volunteers understand and implement the policies and procedures.

### **Related Legislation**

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
- Criminal Code Act (1913)
- Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006 (changes to s204B of The Criminal Code)
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004

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- The *Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006* is the legislation in Western Australia that protects children under the age of 16, or that the offender believes is under the age of 16, from an adult who uses electronic communications with the intent to procure the child to engage in sexual activity; or to expose the child to any indecent matter.

## Related Documentation

### Procedures including:

- WA Department of Child Protection and Family Support – How do I recognise when a child is at risk of abuse?
- Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect (Appendix 1, Child Protection, Department of Education Regulatory Framework System).
- Response to Disclosures of Abuse and Neglect (Appendix 4, Child Protection, Department of Education Regulatory Framework System).
- Child Protection Notification Steps (Mandatory Reporting) AISWA website.
- Child Protection Notification Steps (Non-Mandatory Reporting) AISWA website.
- Facts Sheets 9 pages (Dept. Child Protection).
- Mandatory Report – Sexual Abuse Form.
- Framework for understanding and guiding responses to harmful sexual behaviours in children – June 2 2022 – Department of Communities.
  - <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/framework-understanding-and-guiding-responses-harmful-sexual-behaviours-children-and-young-people>
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Amendment Bill 2022

### Policies including:

- Behaviour Guidance Policy.
- Bullying Prevention Policy.
- Complaints and Concerns Policy
- Duty of Care Policy.
- Excursions and Camp Policy.
- Privacy Policy.
- Records Management Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Student Code of Conduct.

Student Records; to ensure the school has knowledge of any court orders restricting access to students.

## References

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission).
- National Safe Schools Framework, Department of Education, Science and Training



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- [How do I recognise when a child is at risk of abuse?](#) (WA Department of Child Protection and Family Support)
- [AISWA child-protection1\\_0-2.doc](#)
- [Working with Children Check Guidance Notes](#) and Fact Sheets
- [Information for employers and volunteer organisations](#)
- [Information for self-employed people](#)

## Contact Person

Enquiries relating to this policy should be directed to the School Principal or the Chair of the School Board.

## Breaches of this Policy

Any breach of this policy may result in termination of Employment or Enrolment contract.

Version History		
Date	Version	Reviewer
07/19	01 Created	Board
12/22	02	LS
05/23	03	MMW

