



EAST PRESTON ISLAMIC COLLEGE

STUDENT SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

April 2023

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Last Review: April 2023	Constructed / Reviewed by: East Preston Islamic College on advice from Russell Kennedy Lawyers
Next Review: April 2025 (at least every two years (thereafter or more frequently after a significant student safety incident))	Approval Required: Board Motion
	Board Sign Off Date: 15 May 2023 Implementation Date: April 2023

1 Statement of Context and Purpose

- 1.1 East Preston Islamic College (the **College**) is committed to protecting its students from all aspects of harm, and has established strategies, practices, policies and procedures to uphold this public commitment.
- 1.2 All policies, protocols and procedures flow from the College's vision:
- To ensure excellence, in both academic and Islamic development, with continuous progress towards producing a new generation of Muslims who are committed, compassionate and hard working citizens, and who are ready to contribute positively and productively to the Australian society.*
- 1.3 The College takes a zero tolerance approach to any behaviours that jeopardise student safety and wellbeing (including child abuse and reportable conduct). The College regards its student safety and wellbeing responsibilities with the utmost importance as it delivers an Islamic educational program, and strives to deliver an educational curriculum that promotes the College's ethos, mission and values of *Learning, Achievement, Respect, Commitment and Fairness*.
- 1.4 The College's aim is to create an environment where students can receive an Islamic education and learn in a calm and focused environment characterised by ethical behaviour and defined professional boundaries, and where they feel safe and supported by the College.
- 1.5 This document is part of the College's student safety framework, and sets out how the College allocates responsibility for meeting its public commitment to student safety and wellbeing.

2 Application

- 2.1 This document applies to all Board members, employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on the College's premises, or at College-organised activities and events. Collectively, these individuals are referred to as 'staff'.
- 2.2 This document extends to any other person who is engaged in student-connected work at the College, or that otherwise has direct and regular contact with the College's students (whether supervised or not).

3 Related Documents

Legislation

- 3.1 *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*
- 3.2 *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)*

- 3.3 *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*
- 3.4 *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- 3.5 *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- 3.6 *Ministerial Order No. 1359*

Policies

- 3.7 Student Safety and Protection Policy
- 3.8 Student Safety Staff Code of Conduct
- 3.9 Student Safety Recruitment and Selection Policy
- 3.10 Student Safety Definitions
- 3.11 Responding to Student Safety Concerns Policy

4 Responsibilities

The Board

- 4.1 The Board is the governing body for the legal entity which operates the College, and as such is ultimately responsible for ensuring that student safety and wellbeing (and in particular the care, safety and welfare of children and young people) is the College's paramount consideration.
- 4.2 Without limiting that responsibility, the Board:
 - (a) Acquires guidance and information on student safety matters, and keeps up-to-date with its student safety obligations through engaging in professional development.
 - (b) Develops strategies (reflected through policies, procedures, words and actions) to embed a culture of student safety and wellbeing at the College, which comply with the Board's obligations under *Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and Boarding Premises*.
 - (c) Delegates roles and responsibilities to the Principal, for achieving the College's student safety strategies.
 - (d) Is to be satisfied that the Principal has allocated appropriate roles and responsibilities to the Leadership Team, and to staff, for achieving the College's student safety strategies.
 - (e) Ensures that student safety and wellbeing are embedded in the leadership, governance and culture of the College and identifies risks of child abuse occurring in the school environment.
 - (f) Ensures the College community is engaged and informed about the College's student safety strategies, and allocation of roles and responsibilities.
 - (g) Ensures that the College, and in particular the Principal, has adequate resources and support to achieve the College's student safety strategies.

- (h) Keeps the Principal and, via the Principal, keeps all staff accountable for achieving the College's student safety strategies, sharing relevant information and ensuring adequate recordkeeping in accordance with the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.
- (i) Periodically reviews the effectiveness of the College's student safety and wellbeing strategies in practice (including by, if considered appropriate, revising those strategies).
- (j) Ensures that student safety remains a regular board agenda item for review, reflection and discussion as well as ensuring that the College reports on the outcomes of any relevant review to the College community.
- (k) Ensures that privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to student concerns and complaints.

The Principal

4.3 In accordance with good governance, the Board delegates responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the College – and in particular the care, safety, wellbeing and welfare of students - to the Principal.

4.4 The Principal is therefore responsible at a day-to-day level, and accountable, for taking all practical measures to ensure that:

- (a) The College has a student safety and cultural safety culture (including in the online environment), and that this is promoted within the College environment –such as at assemblies and on posters in classrooms.
- (b) The College's student safety, wellbeing and cultural safety strategies are achieved, both in policy and in practice.
- (c) The College's student safety and wellbeing policies are communicated to parents, students and families, and that input is sought from them regarding policy development and review, and that the processes contained within are understood and culturally safe.
- (d) Staff (including the Principal, Leadership Team and SSOs) are enabled, prepared and supported when managing student safety complaints, including in their support of the student(s) involved (and, where appropriate, their families).
- (e) Staff (including the Principal, Leadership Team and SSOs) are educated, and complying with, their professional and statutory responsibilities regarding student safety.
- (f) Staff (including the Principal, Leadership Team and SSOs) are enabled, prepared and supported in identifying the risks to student safety and wellbeing, noting that indicators of harm may vary depending on the differences and needs of the student.
- (g) Staff (including the Principal, Leadership Team and SSOs) are enabled, prepared and supported to create, maintain and dispose of records about student safety and wellbeing in line with the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.
- (h) Staff (including the Principal, Leadership Team and SSOs) champion and model compliance with safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

- (i) Concerns about student safety are dealt with seriously, promptly and thoroughly, and in accordance with the College's policies and procedures, and any statutory obligations and that the College co-operate with law enforcement agencies and relevant authorities as required.
- (j) The Board receives timely reports regarding student safety and wellbeing concerns and risks, or any developments regarding the College's student safety obligations.

The Leadership Team

- 4.5 The College's Leadership Team is committed to 'leading from the front' and engaging in a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to student safety issues.
- 4.6 The College's student safety framework will be implemented under the direction of the Vice Principal and the Principal. The Vice Principal is responsible for the scheduling and co-ordination of briefings, information sessions and meetings for the education, implementation and comprehension of the student safety framework.
- 4.7 Where appropriate, the Leadership Team will assist the Principal with discharging their student safety responsibilities, as outlined in this document and otherwise required by legislation and good practice.

Student Safety Officers

- 4.8 Key responsibilities for the College's SSOs include:
 - (a) Having a good working knowledge and appreciation of the College's student safety framework.
 - (b) Without replacing any legal reporting obligations any person may have, supporting the Principal in promptly managing the College's response to an allegation of actual or suspected child abuse or reportable conduct, and ensuring that the allegation is taken seriously and responded to appropriately and thoroughly.
 - (c) Ensuring the College's student safety and wellbeing strategies are clearly and regularly communicated to staff, students and other members of the College community.
 - (d) Ensuring the College's student safety and wellbeing strategies are being implemented effectively, and are strengthened where required.
 - (e) Ensuring a strong and sustainable student safety and wellbeing culture is embedded within the College.

Staff

- 4.9 All staff are required to comply with the College's student safety framework (including the Student Safety and Protection Policy, Student Safety Staff Code of Conduct and Responding to Student Safety Concerns Policy), as well as their legal and professional obligations with respect to the prevention and reporting of actual or suspected child abuse and reportable conduct.
- 4.10 It is each such staff member's individual responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse or reportable conduct, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have with one of the Principal, the Leadership Team, the College's SSOs (and/or with external agencies, where required). In this regard, staff are encouraged to voice their concerns, no matter how minor, trivial or insignificant.

- 4.11 All contractors and volunteers involved in student-connected work are required to adhere to the College's Student Safety and Protection Policy and Student Safety Staff Code of Conduct, and are responsible for contributing to the safety and wellbeing of students in the school environment. They too have obligations with respect to the reporting of actual or suspected child abuse or reportable conduct.
- 4.12 Again, it is the College's expectation that contractors and volunteers are attuned to their individual responsibilities and act in accordance with their internal and external reporting obligations, and the College's policies and procedures.

5 Communication and Implementation

- 5.1 This document is made publicly available on the College's website.
- 5.2 This document is available to staff as part of the College's and the Board's internal policies and procedures. Aspects of (and updates to) the College's student safety framework, including this document will be addressed in the College's professional development updates, training programs, bulletins and newsletters.
- 5.3 To properly implement this document:
- (a) The Board will review this policy and the College's student safe practices at least every two years (or more frequently after a significant student safety incident) and implement improvements where applicable.
 - (b) Families and the College community will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the review and development of the College's student safety and wellbeing policies and practises.
 - (c) Periodic training and refresher sessions on this document are provided to all staff.
 - (d) All staff must ensure that they abide by this document and assist the College in implementing this document.