



EAST PRESTON ISLAMIC COLLEGE

CHILD

SAFETY

POLICY

PURPOSE

All schools in Victoria by ministerial order are required to have a child safety policy, a child safe statement of commitment and code of conduct. The purpose of the policy is to demonstrate our commitment to child safety and monitor a child safe school environment. This policy has been framed in response to Ministerial Order 870.

In accordance with East Preston Islamic College's governance structure, the School's governing body assigns the responsibility for the discharge of this policy to the Principal.

DEFINITIONS

A **Child** means any student enrolled at EPIC.

Child connected work means work authorised by the EPIC governing body and performed by an adult in the School environment where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child Abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- A sexual offence;
- A grooming offence;
- The infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect.

Child Abuse includes but is not limited to Child Sexual Abuse.

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.

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

- a campus of the School;
- online School environments (including email and intranet systems), and;
- 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 School events).

School staff means an individual member of staff working for EPIC who is:

- directly engaged or employed by the School's governing body;
- a volunteer;
- contracted service provider (i.e. Casual Relief Teacher);

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY *(refer to EPIC student welfare and discipline policy)*

At East Preston Islamic College, we have zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to the protection of all our students. We want our students to feel safe, happy and empowered and we support and respect all our students, staff and volunteers. Our policies and procedures clearly states that at EPIC we have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously by our leadership team, management and all staff. Our staff are aware of their moral and legal obligations to contact and report any child safety issues and our college is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying, removing and reducing risks.

East Preston Islamic College embeds and produces a culture of child safety and the fact that it is everyone's responsibility to keep all children safe and free from abuse. The governing body of East Preston Islamic College will continue to lead a strong commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse and mandate all staff (including pre-service teachers, contractors and volunteers), visitors and children to proactively ensure the safety of children at all times.

East Preston Islamic College is committed to the safety of all children from diverse families and including those with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

IMPLEMENTATION

The East Preston Islamic College, community works within the framework of restorative justice which supports our shared core values of the school which are learning, achievement, respect, commitment and fairness. This framework, and embedded values and religious beliefs, underpins our Safety Code of Conduct to which we adhere in all of our dealings with students. East Preston Islamic College has aligned its practices with the Child Safe Standards as written in Ministerial Order No. 870.

At East Preston Islamic College the following strategies have been identified, that will assist us to embed a culture of child safety at East Preston Islamic College:

- Continue to advertise widely, and in a variety of ways, it's Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and the expectation that we are all working toward zero tolerance of child abuse.
- At East Preston Islamic College we have managed to align all relevant school policies, in regard to student discipline and wellbeing, with the Child Safety Policy; which includes: Child safety code of conduct, Welfare and Discipline policy and Mandatory reporting policy.
- The College will continue to promote messages that can be visible on the College website, Facebook page, Newsletter, on posters around the school, annual staff induction, parent

information sessions, school portal and child safety information in EPIC enrolment packs, in regard to the College's commitment to child safety.

- Annual and regular review, of our risk management procedures to ensure safety of all students in any activity delivered by the school.
- Continue to align recruitment and HR practices and policies to ensure all jobs involving child-connected work clearly state the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and informing all applicants of these.
- Monitor procedures in terms of the use of pre-service teachers, volunteers and contractors; ensuring they are aware of the school's culture of child safety, outlining their responsibilities in this regard, whilst ascertaining their commitment toward this goal and that they hold a current Working With Children Check.
- Follow all protocols and procedures in regard to mandatory reporting as outlined in the Mandatory Reporting Policy, guidelines and requirements, including completion of the online Mandatory Reporting modules-Training for all staff
- Follow all protocols and procedures in regard to mandatory reporting as outlined in EPIC Mandatory Reporting Policy and, including completion of the online Mandatory Reporting modules, which must be completed by all staff of East Preston Islamic College.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE STRATEGIES

The East Preston Islamic College Wellbeing team, with the Head of Wellbeing and Discipline, Assistant Wellbeing Coordinator, College Counsellor, Vice Principal and Principal have been assigned to ensure continued compliance with the Standards.

The EPIC Wellbeing Team is responsible for the following:

- Building a culture of support and encouragement when discussing child safety matters.
- Providing advice and information to members of staff and school community
- Supporting and guiding staff when making a report to DHHS or Police
- The development and review of Child Safe Standards policies and documents
- The EPIC Wellbeing team are the main point of contact for DHHS and other government agencies
- Supporting staff to extend their understanding of their responsibilities with regards to Child Safe Standards.

OUR STUDENTS *(refer to EPIC Student Code of Conduct)*

All students of East Preston Islamic College community have the right to:

- Feel safe, secure and comfortable at all times;
- Feel secure at all times.

East Preston Islamic College uses the practice of restorative justice. As such it will seek to achieve solutions which restore respect and harmony to all students of the College. Teachers will assist students who have committed a wrongdoing to do what is needed to make things right.

All students of East Preston Islamic College community have the responsibility to:

- Keep themselves and their environment safe;
- Show respect for themselves, for others and for the property of East Preston Islamic College.

Actions which take the form of abuse, harassment or assault or which are coercive, including those that are seemingly justified on the basis of being an initiation into, or punishment within a group, are unacceptable. Abuse and any type of harassment is not tolerated at the College. The College will provide support for anyone who feels that they are being harassed and will work towards resolving the issue with both parties. If the problem persists, a formal complaint should be made to the Vice Principal, who will investigate the complaint and take action appropriate to the circumstances.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES *(refer to EPIC Student Welfare and Discipline Policy)*

At East Preston Islamic College, we seek to provide religious, spiritual, educational and cultural experiences that will help each student to develop:

- universal moral values of compassion, honesty, truthfulness, courage, tolerance and forgiveness;
- self-respect, self-discipline and respect for others;
- respect for the school resources, property and the environment;
- sensitivity to other people's needs;
- courtesy to new students, visitors and emergency teachers;
- punctuality to school and classroom;
- Students have the right to voice their opinion and report and stand up against any bullying, neglect, abuse and harassment. Students who are experiencing any potential abuse to report their concerns to the EPIC wellbeing team;
- sense of cooperation;
- regard for personal safety and safety of others;
- care in personal appearance;
- Responsibility for their own learning.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR STAFF (*Refer to EPIC Staff Handbook*)

The staff of EPIC owes a duty of care to students. It is expected that all staff contribute towards the fulfilment of this legal duty. This duty of care is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury.

Students should not be left unsupervised either within or outside of class. Staff should be punctual to class and allocated yard duty supervision. Any student who is allowed to leave or is sent from a class must have a note explaining the reason for being out of class and it must be signed by their classroom teacher or school diary must be used for this purpose.

Yard duty is an integral part of the responsibility of staff. It must take priority over other personal activities. It is unacceptable to be late. Staff should constantly supervise their designated area, being alert and actively move around.

Staff should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student. Where staff are left with the responsibility of a single student they should ensure that this is in an open space in view of others.

If a staff member needs to conduct a private conversation with a student, he/she should consider the time and venue carefully to avoid a situation where they may be making themselves vulnerable. It is preferable to leave the door open. The staff member should not locate themselves between the student and the door.

All staff should notify the Vice - Principal immediately if they suspect a situation involving any form of child abuse which includes physical emotional and sexual abuse and take necessary action and follow protocol.

RECRUITING STAFF: TEACHING, NON-TEACHING AND VOLUNTEERS (*refer to employee code of conduct*)

At East Preston Islamic College, we take all reasonable steps to employ skilled 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. In addition, the Human resource Manager will conduct, referee checks to check the suitability for working with children with previous employers. Our College, understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) and volunteers are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. All teaching staff must ensure that they keep their VIT Registration and Criminal Record check is up to date. The teachers must always carry with them: Current Provisional

VIT Card; or Current VIT Card with full registration and CRC printed on the card. All contractors, volunteers and Pre-service teachers attending the site will be supervised by an EPIC staff member.

ONGOING TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPERVISION

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our College understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. At East Preston Islamic College the governing body, will continue to provide ongoing supervision and monitoring of staff and volunteers. The governing body, will continue to meet regularly with staff and volunteers, support them in their role, provide training and resources, and continues to raise performance issues and required improvements.

As part of ongoing training, the Principal will ensure all staff of East Preston Islamic College, to receive training in the following areas:

- Child safety briefings: two Child safety briefings per year, at the beginning of each semester
- As part of our annual performance management cycle, the governing body will continue to monitor VIT registration of all staff via the VIT portal every term and monitor the working with children's checks of all non-teaching staff.
- The College will continue to offer all necessary professional development sessions about child safety standards once every term, and all staff will be required to complete the Department of Education online e-modules for mandatory reporting at the beginning of every year.
- Identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- How to handle a disclosure or suspicion, including refresher sessions on Child safety reporting procedures
- Cultural awareness training

At East Preston Islamic College our culture aims for all staff and volunteers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. New employees and volunteers will be monitored regularly to ensure they understand East Preston Islamic College's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behavior towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behavior will be reported through to the EPIC Wellbeing Team.

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN (Refer to EPIC Welfare and Discipline policy)

All staff at East Preston Islamic College are legally required to report any child safety concerns. All staff of EPIC have a duty of care to the safety, health and wellbeing of all its students. All Staff of East Preston Islamic college are required to make direct reports or discuss the matter with the Head of Wellbeing,

Assistant Wellbeing Coordinator and the College Counsellor. In case, where members of the wellbeing team are unavailable all child related concerns should be directed to the Vice Principal and Principal.

RECORD KEEPING

All reported child safety concerns, complaints and incidents are recorded and stored at the college in accordance with security and privacy requirements.

DISCLOSURE

The complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the EPIC Mandatory reporting policy: *(Refer to EPIC Complaints and Grievance Policy and Mandatory Reporting Policy)*

MANAGING DISCLOSURE PROTOCOL

FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS

A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection after becoming aware that a child's health, safety and wellbeing is at risk.

REPORTING A BELIEF *(Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for procedures in response to allegations of child abuse)*

All mandated staff (teachers and principals) of East Preston Islamic College must make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection.

All Staff members of East Preston Islamic College, **whether or not mandated**, need to report to the Principal or VP their belief when the belief is formed in the course of undertaking their professional duties.

A report must be made as soon as practicable after forming the belief and on each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief. If one staff member has a different view from another staff member about making a report and the staff member continues to hold the belief that a child is in need of protection, that person is obliged to make a report.

If staff believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing they must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from government agencies such as Child FIRST or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

MANDATORY REPORTING- POST MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT AFTER THE REPORTING

Any student that has disclosed a child abuse concern or allegation will be protected fully by the governing body of East Preston Islamic College. The college will take the following steps to ensure the safety of the child:

- The College will offer ongoing support for the child, the parents and families involved:
 - The College will establish consistent communication between child's parent/guardian/carer to discuss the wellbeing of the child and strategies implemented at school.
- If staff member is alleged of child abuse- Student will be removed immediately from interacting with the alleged staff member and alleged staff member will be asked to stop all interaction with the student.
- A Safety plan will be developed for the student by the Wellbeing team and will take all necessary action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the student:
 - The College's Wellbeing team will create and implement a Student Safety Plan, which documents the planned support strategies and includes for review these strategies will be informed by health care and wellbeing professionals' expertise in addressing child abuse and trauma.
 - The College's Wellbeing Team will organise an EPIC Student Guidance Group to monitor, provide support, and follow-up of the child's wellbeing (The guidance group will consist of members of the EPIC Wellbeing Team, teachers, health professionals counsellors/psychologists/social workers and where appropriate family members of the student involved.
- The East Preston Islamic College Wellbeing team will provide the child with ongoing counselling and guidance
- The College will support the student further by referring the parties involved to specialised agencies that deal with such child safety issues. The EPIC Wellbeing Team will refer students to specialised agencies such as:

-**CASA (Centers Against Sexual Assault)** which provides expert support in child abuse trauma

-**Headspace** provides support with mental health issues associated with child abuse

-**Child FIRST** provides support to Families and vulnerable children

- **Child Protection Society** Provides advice and support to children and families to help them break out of the cycle of abuse, neglect, poverty and disadvantage through a creative portfolio of programs, resources and services.

-**Gatehouse Centre, Royal Children's Hospital** Provides support and assistance to children and young people affected by sexual offending or problem sexual behaviors.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A CURRENT STAFF MEMBER

Any allegations or complaints made about a current staff member are to be referred to the Principal. The Principal shall be informed as soon as possible and will take the matter to the governing body.

The School will, as far as possible, seek to adopt an investigative process sympathetic to the complainant and appropriate to the circumstances. The staff member will be informed of allegations against them and may be asked to take leave with pay while the matter is investigated.

The staff member will be given a copy of the written record and/or allegation, and any other related documentation while ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect the child.

RISK MANAGEMENT (*Refer to EPIC Risk Management Policy*)

East Preston Islamic College is committed to identifying and reducing or removing risks of child abuse. Child Safety will appear as an item on the school's risk management Policy.

Where:

- The risks will be identified and;
- Risk control strategies will be recorded and enacted to remove or reduce risks.

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the governing body will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHILD EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

East Preston Islamic College ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns and child abuse allegations. The governing body of East Preston Islamic College promotes the child safety standards required by the ministerial order 870, in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user friendly. At East Preston Islamic College we promote participation and empowerment of our students we develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- **Standards of behavior for students attending East Preston Islamic College:**

At East Preston Islamic College, all staff actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. All staff, listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carer, raise with us. Our School Values, Mission and Vision statements, Student Code of Conduct are made explicit. Emphasis is placed on how we see the values of our school is emphasised in the classroom and outside in the playground.

- **Healthy and Respectful relationships:** The EPIC Wellbeing Team implements wellbeing workshops such as Respectful Relationships, Peer Support Programs, Girl talk sessions which explores themes around child safety, sexuality, Respectful Relationships, understanding and appreciating difference.
- **Resilience:** At East Preston Islamic College students are made aware of different strategies to build self-esteem, wellbeing and resilience. The Life education program is implemented at the college every two years to support the understanding of health, resilience, values education and welfare issues. In primary school, the practice of Circle time continues to promote an environment which is democratic, respectful, safe and inclusive. The aims of circle time are to develop a caring classroom ethos and sense of belonging, increasing student voice and participation. It also aims to develop the self-awareness and social and emotional skills that support resilience and healthy relationships. Our students further develop their voice through their active participation in leadership teams, debating, school assemblies and the daily Morning Prayer. Wellbeing is a part of our specialist program. All students from Foundation to grade six are explicitly taught the content and skills outlined in the College's wellbeing program.
- **Child abuse awareness and prevention:** The school community, including staff, parents and students are informed about child safety issues, policies and procedures. We have a child safety statement on our college website which states ***East Preston Islamic College has zero tolerance for child abuse and actively works to listen and empower our students.*** We encourage our students to talk about how they feel during mediation sessions and encourage them to express their views about issues concerning safety. We promote empowerment of students and inform our school community about issues around child safety through our online newsletter, website, Parent information evenings, staff meeting etc. All staff are briefed about the child safety standards, information is shared in PLC meetings where we discuss issues around child safety and minimising risks etc. Students are given a student code of conduct at the beginning of the year and are made aware about bullying, harassment and child abuse. Students are made aware of the reporting process and is encouraged to report any child safety issues.

BREACHES OF POLICY

The School expects that any employees who become aware of a breach of these policies will advise the Vice Principal without delay to enable remedial action to be taken.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed by the EPIC governing body as part of our 3-year cycle. In the event of an incident, a review processes and documentation will occur within one moth of the incident.

NEXT REVIEW

Next review date is 30th June 2022.