

Purpose

Westgarth Primary School OSHC is committed to child safety; our children are safe, happy and empowered.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and in a manner consistent with our policies and procedures. Legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety are followed rigorously.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. Westgarth Primary School OSHC has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers and we are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in Westgarth Primary School OSHC. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them; we listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome.

In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our staff and volunteers

Support and respect for all children, staff, and volunteers are an integral part of our service.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Ethics and Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct. A copy of the Code of Ethics and Conduct can be found appended to our Staffing Policy.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in Westgarth Primary School OSHC understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

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Westgarth Primary School OSHC's culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) 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.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Westgarth Primary School OSHC's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

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. Westgarth Primary School OSHC understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for further information.

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

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.

Privacy

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. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal

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information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Westgarth Primary School OSHC 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 Westgarth Primary School OSHC 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.

Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above).

In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments, and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Westgarth Primary School OSHC 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.

The Physical Environment

Westgarth Primary School OSHC ensures that:

- Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean, and in good repair.
- Outdoor space is enclosed by a fence.
- Each child has access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of that child.
- Laundry facilities are adequate and appropriate for the needs of the service

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- Each child has at least 3.25 square metres of unencumbered indoor space available to them.
 - Each child has at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space available to them.
 - Age appropriate toilet, washing, and drying facilities are provided for use by children and these facilities enable safe and convenient access.
 - Indoor spaces are well ventilated, have adequate natural light, and are maintained at a temperature that ensures safety and wellbeing.
 - Our service allows the children to explore and experience the natural environment with adequate shading areas provided to protect children from the sun.
 - Premises are designed and maintained in a way that facilitates supervision of children at all times, having regard to the need to maintain the rights and dignity of the children.
 - Safety glass, or treated glass, is used in areas accessible to children

Related documents and attachments

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Framework
- Westgarth Primary School OSHC Staffing Policy

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