

EASTBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL Child Safety Policy

Our commitment to child safety

Eastbourne Primary School is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

Eastbourne Primary School has a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Eastbourne Primary School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Eastbourne Primary School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Eastbourne Primary School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse, and how to respond to suspected child abuse.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Eastbourne Primary School has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

If you believe a child is in need of protection as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child phone the Department of Health and Human Services 1300 655 795.

If you have significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child phone ChildFIRST 1300 721 383.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants at Eastbourne Primary School. 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 value respect and collaboration and promote diversity and tolerance at Eastbourne Primary School, 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, volunteers, parents and carers

This policy guides our staff, volunteers, parents and carers on how to behave with children at Eastbourne Primary School.

All of our staff, volunteers, parents and carers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff, volunteers, parents and carers, as well as children, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Eastbourne Primary School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational 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, volunteers, parents and carers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff, volunteers, parents and carers 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 Eastbourne Primary School'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 (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). 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.

All Educational Support and Teaching staff who work with children are required to participate annual mandatory reporting training, which will include an annual reinstatement of this policy, our child safe code of conduct and procedures for responding to suspected child abuse.

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

All people engaged in child-related work, including parents, carers and volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information. We maintain an up-to-date record of all employees, volunteers, parents and carers who have a current Working with Children Check, and only these people are able to work with children at Eastbourne Primary School.

We carry out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. These reference checks ensure that the school employs people who have a record of acting appropriately with children.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for personnel

At Eastbourne Primary School, 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 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

Eastbourne Primary School takes our legal responsibilities for child safety 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 our organisation 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.
- **Grooming:** Grooming offence targets communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time with the groomer (aged 18 years old or over) or another adult.

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 (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child on social media).

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Eastbourne Primary School 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.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every year and following significant incidents if they occur. Eastbourne Primary School will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated March 2024 and is scheduled for review in March 2025.