

POLICY NO. WEL027 Promote Participation & Empowerment of Children

Description

Chelsea Heights Primary School ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. **Chelsea Heights Primary School** has simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety.

All staff have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

How Chelsea Heights Primary School promotes participation and empowerment of children:

- We provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. Information is included in welcome packs, information sessions and posters, as well as on websites and social media. We have 'Life Education' visit the school annually, their programs include safety for students issues, healthy and respectful relationships.
- We ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children.
For Example:
 - We have access to professionals to translate information (including information about children's rights, child safe policies, statements of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages.
 - We gather feedback from children, for example survey, focus groups, circle time and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and we then implement improvements based on this feedback.
 - We enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible.
 - We ensure services are accessible for all students, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops, provide access to DET psych / Speech specialists, outsource specific cases to agencies – OnPsych, Family Life, Oz Child, DHHS etc.
 - We would ensure Aboriginal children were accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers would understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
 - Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other organisational activities, such as organisational planning and decision making. For example – Student Leadership positions, Assembly presentations, Student Leadership Conferences, 'Junior Mayors'.

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- We raise awareness in the community about children's rights, through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites, newsletters, Information Evenings, Parent Teacher meetings, School Council, Parents & Friends etc.

By successfully implementing these strategies Chelsea Heights Primary School ensures:

- reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible for all children
- children understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
- children feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- children feel empowered to contribute to the organisation's understanding and treatment of child safety
- children's reports of concern are responded to appropriately
- staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every four years during the school's year of review.

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