

## Child Protection Awareness for Parents, Carers and Community

### Overview

There are seven key pieces of child protection-related legislation that are applicable to schools in NSW:

- Education Act 1990 (NSW)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 (NSW)
- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)
- Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW)

Child Protection is a significant responsibility for schools and one that Esslemont College takes very seriously.

The NSW Government and the Office of the Children's Guardian has recommended 10 child safe standards for schools; one of which is that "**Families and communities are informed and involved**".

Child Protection is a topic that is sometimes avoided and one which may make parents/carers feel uncomfortable. At Esslemont College we consider it important to provide parents with the opportunity to discuss concerns they may have and they are encouraged to do so.

### Parents, carers, and community members

Parents, carers, and community members are encouraged to report any conduct that is in their view inappropriate, reportable or criminal conduct to the Principal. All such reports will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy and Guidelines.

Families and communities are informed and involved



If a parent, carer or community member has any concern about the welfare, well-being or possible child abuse, they should bring the concern to the Principal. We will always support you. And whilst we may have a legal obligation to report to statutory bodies and to others, to ensure our duty of care obligations are met, we will maintain confidentiality where possible. Even if your concern is mistaken or mis-conceived we will deal with the matter appropriately.

If you see behaviours in your own child that you are concerned about for example:

- there is a new and on-going secrecy between your child and another child that you have not witnessed before;
- your child has begun to hide and lie about certain behaviours.
- there are significant changes in behaviours. For example, aggressive, violent or regressive behaviour.
- your child's usual behaviour has changed. They are now socially isolating, have changed friends and/or no longer spend time with their peers or are no longer interested in their usual group activities and interactions.

You should feel comfortable in raising your concerns with the school. This can be with the class teacher, or you can make an appointment with one of the school leaders. Those behaviours are not necessarily an indication that abuse is occurring, nor even that your child's welfare or well-being is at risk, but they are behaviours that should be shared with the school.

### Significant child protection concerns

Staff at Esslemont College are made aware of the types of matters that are considered to be child abuse through its Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and staff annual training. These include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

**Neglect** is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

**Sexual abuse** is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Child sexual abuse is a crime.

**Physical abuse** is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation.

Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints.

Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punish a child (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.

**Emotional abuse** can result in serious psychological harm, where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.



A copy of Esslemont College's Child Protection Policy and Procedures for staff is on our website.

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We hope that the information in this document **assists parents and carers to recognise concerning behaviour and have the confidence and capability to report this behaviour to the appropriate person in the school.**

If you would like to find out more information about your role in creating a child-safe organisation you can visit these websites.



Esslemont College's Complaints Policy and Guidelines may also be used to guide parents for any complaints or grievances they may have.