

## COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFE POLICY

---

### WOODRIDGE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD SAFE POLICY

The following Policy sets out Woodridge Pre-school's commitment to child safety. This policy is reviewed yearly, and all staff are required to read and sign the current policy on a yearly basis. See page 5, *Acceptance*, for our staff commitment.

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Attachment 1: Child Safety Standards Information Sheet.* This document outlines the current 11 safety standards. The 11 Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe.
- *Attachment 2: Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection.* As a Pre-school servicing children and families, our early childhood teachers and educators have legal obligations regarding mandatory reporting. This information sheet outlines when these requirements take effect.

### RELATED POLICIES AT WOODRIDGE PRE-SCHOOL

- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Child Safe Environment & Wellbeing Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Determining the Responsible Person
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Staffing
- Interaction with children

### OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

- Woodridge Pre-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 will not use corporal punishment in any form on 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.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Woodridge Pre-school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

- Woodridge Pre-school has robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing committee members, staff and volunteers.
- Woodridge Pre-school is committed to regularly training and educating our committee members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our committee members, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk, phone 000.**

You can call 131 444 to report some non-urgent crime and events to Victoria Police, more information can be found here: <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/police-assistance-line-and-online-reporting>

To report concerns about a child who may need protection from harm, abuse or neglect, contact Child Protection on 13 12 78

<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-report-child-protection>

Additional contact phone numbers for early childhood workers' mandatory reporting are provided in addendum 2.

## **OUR CHILDREN**

This policy is intended to empower children, who are vital and active participants at Woodridge Pre-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 promote diversity and acceptance at Woodridge Pre-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 AND VOLUNTEERS**

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children at Woodridge Pre-school.

All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of 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.

## **TRAINING AND SUPERVISION**

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at Woodridge Pre-school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all committee members, staff, volunteers, families and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our committee members, staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our committee members, 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 committee members, staff and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Woodridge Pre-school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. This will include checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to Woodridge Pre-school's code of conduct for information about appropriate behaviour). 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 legal responsibilities. Woodridge Pre-school understands that when recruiting committee members, staff and volunteers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people who are engaged in child-related work and who are not exempt, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check. For more information, please refer to the Working with Children website <https://www.vic.gov.au/working-with-children-check>

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. 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 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and reasonable to all staff and volunteers. 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. 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 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, families or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of Woodridge Pre-school are comfortable disclosing any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

## **LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Woodridge Pre-school takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: 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 Victoria Police
- Mandatory reporting: Any committee members, staff or volunteers who are mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teacher, principals and police officers) must comply with their duties
- 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
- Reportable conduct: The head of our organisation must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation
- Duty of care: If a child is abused by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question. For more information, please refer to the new organisational duty of care to prevent child abuse page <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/betrayal-of-trust-fact-sheet-the-new>
- on the Department of Justice and Regulation's website.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. 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.

## **ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS**

Woodridge Pre-school takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our committee members, staff and volunteers are trained to deal with allegations appropriately. We work to ensure all children, families, board members, 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. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:

- 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 two years and following any significant incident if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Woodridge Pre-school on 27 March 2025

**REVIEW DATE:** March 2026

## ACCEPTANCE

All early childhood workers at Woodridge Pre-School are to sign to confirm that they understand and agree to this commitment to child safe policy.

Accepted By (Early Childhood Worker)	Signature