



Dear Olympic Avenue Kindergarten Families,

We are writing to update you on the **Reportable Conduct Scheme** and **Child Safe Standards**, which came into effect for all early childhood services on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2019. Organisations that provide services or facilities for children must implement Child Safe Standards to protect children from abuse. The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers.

### **What types of workers and volunteers are covered by the scheme?**

The scheme applies to the conduct of any person over the age of 18 years who is employed or engaged by an organisation covered by the scheme to provide services, including as a volunteer, contractor, office holder, officer or other position.

A reportable allegation can only be made against a volunteer if they have been *engaged* by an organisation covered by the scheme. To 'engage' a volunteer means to enter into an agreement, either verbally or in writing, for a person to provide a service without that person (the volunteer) receiving financial gain. There is no minimum period for the engagement.

### **What this means for you?**

Under the definition of volunteers, any parents or family members that spend any amount of time with children in the kindergarten, other than dropping off and picking up, are classed as a volunteers for the purpose of the RCS. This includes Committee members, parent duty helpers & those sharing their skills with the children. It is important to understand that the RCS applies to all conduct of workers and volunteers, not only whilst on the kindergarten premises.

If you think that a worker, volunteer or anybody else covered by the Scheme has committed reportable conduct, or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, either within or outside of the kindergarten, then you should report this to your Educator or the OAK President, who must then report it to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). Additionally, workers, volunteers or parents can also report it to the Commission.

### **What is reportable conduct?**

Reportable conduct includes physical violence, sexual offences, sexual misconduct, behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm and significant neglect.

Further information can be found in the attached CCYP information sheet or on CCYP's website: [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au).

### **Working with Children Checks**

As part of our commitment to create a child safe environment for all children within our Community, from Term 1 2020, all volunteers will be required to provide a Working with Children Check (WCC) prior to participating in any volunteer activities at OAK. This change



brings us into line with schools and sporting or recreational clubs who already require all volunteers to provide WCC. A copy of your WWC must be forwarded to Nicole McClure ([officeolympicave@gmail.com](mailto:officeolympicave@gmail.com)) prior to any volunteering session.

WCC are free for all volunteers and can be obtained online at: [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/)

Should you have any queries or concerns please feel free to contact Carly Kohler (President) on [presidentolympicave@gmail.com](mailto:presidentolympicave@gmail.com) or Zoe Engel (Vice President) on [vicepresidentolympicave@gmail.com](mailto:vicepresidentolympicave@gmail.com).

Olympic Avenue Kindergarten has a zero-tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

Regards,

Olympic Avenue Kindergarten Committee of Management

Observe something?

Please make a report at OAK by informing an educator or email [presidentolympicave@gmail.com](mailto:presidentolympicave@gmail.com)

Your report will be assessed by our Child Safe committee and in collaboration with The Orange Door (formerly CHILD FIRST) a decision will be made whether to report to the Commissioner

If a report is deemed necessary, the Child Safe Committee will report to the Commissioner within 3 business days of report for further investigation.

1300 782 978

contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au

ccyp.vic.gov.au

## Early years workers and volunteers and the Reportable Conduct Scheme



### The types of Reportable Conduct are:

Against, with, or in the presence of a child

#### Physical violence

This can include **hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child or another person**. It can also include the apprehension of violence – words, gestures or actions that cause a child to believe physical force is about to be used against them.

#### Sexual offences

**Sexual offences are criminal and must be reported to Victoria Police**. Sexual offences include sexual abuse, assault, indecent acts, possession of child abuse materials and 'grooming'.

#### Sexual misconduct

This is conduct of a sexual nature that is not necessarily criminal. It can be evidenced through physical action or communication, **including online**. Misconduct can include unwanted/inappropriate touching, inappropriate exposure or conversations of a sexual nature, overly personal/intimate conduct.

#### Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm

This can include severe or sustained verbal abuse, coercive or manipulative behaviour, hostility, rejection, humiliation, belittling and scapegoating children. There must be a **clear link** between the adult behaviour and the child's harm. The harm must be **significant**, and more than trivial or temporary.

#### Significant neglect

This can occur where there is **deliberate or reckless failure** to meet the basic needs of a child which has had, or could have, considerable effect on the child's safety or wellbeing. Neglect includes **physical, emotional, educational and supervisory neglect** – this can include inadequate supervision or failure to seek or comply with medical treatment.

### What does it mean for me?

If you are **over the age of 18** and employed or engaged by an approved education and care or children's service (even if you do not have direct contact with children as part of your role) then you are covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

If the organisation you are employed or engaged by is covered by the Scheme, your conduct **both within the organisation and external to it** is covered by the Scheme. This includes as a **volunteer or contractor**.

The Scheme applies to all employees and those engaged by an organisation regardless of the length of time they are employed or engaged – including part-time, full-time, casual or sessional roles.



### What do I need to do?

If you think that a worker, volunteer or anybody else covered by the Scheme has committed reportable conduct, or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, either within or outside of the organisation, then you should report this to the Head of Organisation.

The head of the organisation must report it to the Commission. Additionally, workers, volunteers or parents can also report it to the Commission.