



Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School **Empowerment of Children Policy**

Strategies to Promote the Participation and Empowerment of Children

Description

Our Lady of the Way Primary School ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. We have implanted a simple and accessible process that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All staff at Our Lady of the Way Primary School will have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

Rationale

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. Some organisations do not have simple and accessible processes assisting children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

Our Lady of the Way Primary School will implement this standard by:

- Providing 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 will be included. Ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children.
- Our Lady of the Way Primary School has policies and procedures that are able to be accessed and understood by children with a disability.
- Ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisation to review information and processes.
- Considering access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.
- Translating school information (including information about children's rights, child safe policies, statement of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages if appropriate.
- Gathering feedback from children, for example through surveys, focus groups, story time and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implement improvements based on this feedback.
- Enabling 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. For example, views could be gathered through circle time and feedback sessions.
- Ensuring services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops if required.
- Training relevant staff and volunteers on methods of empowering children and encouraging children's participation.
- Ensuring Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.

- Encouraging participation and empowerment of children in other school activities, such as decision making.
- Raising awareness in the community about children's rights, for example through staff conversations with families/carers and communications such as websites.

We aim to successfully implement this standard so that Our Lady of the Way Primary School is a school in which:

- 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 school's understanding and treatment of child safety
- children's reports of concern are responded to appropriately
- all staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation

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