

Eastern Health Child Safety Principles

Child Safety Commitment

This set of principles has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Eastern Health from sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement existing professional and occupational codes of conduct. All staff (including volunteers, students and contractors) and visitors are expected to contribute to the development of an environment that respects the dignity of children and reflects the values of Eastern Health.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, students and visitors are responsible for adhering to the Eastern Health Child Safety Standard and practicing consistent with Eastern Health's commitment to child safety at all times by:

- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from any form of abuse/harm
- Treating all children with respect
- Engaging with children in a safe and effective manner that is reflective of the Eastern Health values
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of all children (inclusive of listening to concerns about themselves, and concerns about other children, for example, siblings)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children in all situations
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with children unless this is consistent with their role and responsibility
- Avoiding unnecessary, or what could be interpreted as inappropriate, physical contact
- Ensuring children are not put at risk of abuse or harm
- Actively discouraging development of friendships and/or non-therapeutic relationships between employees or visitors and children
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or concerns of harm to children in accordance with the Eastern Health Clinical Practice Guideline # 938 "Children at Risk of Harm"
- If an allegation of child abuse or harm is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the relevant Eastern Health procedures for reporting of abuse/harm, or mandatory reporting are followed

Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, students and visitors are responsible for adhering to the Eastern Health Child Safety Standard and practicing consistent with Eastern Health's commitment to child safety at all times by not:

- Ignoring or disregarding any suspected or disclosed child abuse or harm
- Developing any "special" relationships with children that could be seen as favoritism, for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment of specific children
- Engaging in open discussion of a mature nature or using what might be considered inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Expressing personal views on culture, race and sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminating against any child because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity, disability or for any other reason.

Useful Links and References

Vulnerable Babies, Children and Young People at Risk of Harm. Best Practice Framework for Acute Health Services – DHS 2006

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/childrenatrisk/index.htm>

Useful Website Links:

The Royal Children's Hospital - Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service

<http://www.vfpms.org.au/>

Eastern CASA – Centre Against Sexual Assault and Family Violence – ECASA

<https://www.easternhealth.org.au/services/item/174-eastern-centre-against-sexual-assault-ecasa>