Mount Scopus Memorial College

בית הספר הר הצופים

Recommendations from Child Wise Report 2022

1. Establish and communicate a clear governance model that identifies key responsibilities for child safety at each level of the organisation.

2. Ensure the implementation of the standards and Improvement Plan are adequately resourced.

3. Ensure child safeguarding is regularly, discussed, and evaluated across all areas of the organisation (as part of staff meetings, performance reviews etc).

4. Ensure all stakeholders understand their child safeguarding obligations. This should be through extensive training and with an evaluation to ensure all stakeholders can demonstrate the knowledge transfer has occurred and there is a clear understanding of how to apply this to their role.

5. Establish a group of 'Child Safety Champions' and/or Child Safe Working Group made up of a cross section of staff from diverse sections of the school. This group may be tasked with implementing certain recommendations contained within this report and associated Improvement Plan.

6. Consideration should be given to the use of the word 'Informal' in the Informal Jewish Life program. 'Jewish Life' may adequately capture the intent of the program and be the beginning of a legitimate, curriculum-based program with the same rigour surrounding student development and safeguarding.

7. Using a rights-respecting approach, establish ways in which students at Mount Scopus can be meaningfully consulted and can participate in practices, processes and decisions that affect them. This approach should be adopted across all areas of the school, including the Informal Jewish Life program.

8. Ensure students have age-appropriate understanding of personal safety and protective behaviours.

9. Ensure that relevant and important policies and procedures, in particular complaints policies and procedures, and the Staff and Volunteer Child Safe Code of Conduct and are made available in accessible and child-friendly language that is age-appropriate.

10. Establish a standalone bullying policy that is clearly communicated to all stakeholders. This should also be drafted and produced in a child friendly format.

11. Increase parents' knowledge of MSMC's child safety approach.

12. Consideration should be given to how parents and carers can be more actively engaged in personal safety and protective behaviours and empowered as vital participants in the school's child safety infrastructure.

13. Ensure there is a clearly understood process and forum for parents to regularly express their concerns, views and opinions.

14. Consult with families in the production of user-friendly versions of key processes and policies.

15. Consideration of the needs of students from diverse backgrounds is prioritised in the implementation of all prevention strategies and in the response to safety and wellbeing matters that may arise in all areas of the school.

16. The board and Leaders at MSMC should acknowledge to students that they have heard some deeply concerning feedback from some students around exclusion and inequity and that effecting change in this area will be a priority for the school.

17. Cultural and language diversity, gender, LGBTQIA+, disability, accessibility and inclusion of students is acknowledged within policies and procedures and training across Mount Scopus and includes references on how to make reasonable adjustments to improve the safety and wellbeing of students.

18. MSMC staff, leaders and Board members should receive diversity training (to include culturally and linguistically diversity, LGBTQIA+, disability and additional educational needs).

19. Further develop and strengthen all policies and procedures related to the recruitment, screening, induction and supervision of all roles at MSMC to ensure child safety is involved at every stage of engagement.

20. Strengthen mechanisms to audit WWCC compliance.

21. Ensure professional development and supervision/management check ins are undertaken for all staff and volunteers with a focus on child safety and wellbeing.

22. Include in the annual performance review framework for school leaders a KPI on understanding of the school and the individual's child safeguarding obligations.

23. A Conflict-of-Interest policy should be in place to declare conflicts of interests with respect to relationships with students and student's families, including through schooling, sporting and other community activities.

24. Ensure a child-focused complaint-handling approach is in place and well understood by all stakeholders.

25. Ensure all complaints from students are dealt with appropriately. This means information given as part of the complaint is recorded and analysed and timely feedback is provided to those who have raised the complaint.

26. Review and re-develop the framework for conducting internal child safety investigations. This should include best practice procedures including, ensuring safety of the child and child centricity throughout the process, ensuring the investigator is independent, and careful drafting of allegations.

27. Develop consistent methods to reflect and learn from 'near misses' and critical incidents.

28. MSMC's approach to child safety training is reviewed and all Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors and students should receive Child Safety training. A benchmark for this training is contained within the Improvement plan.

29. Child Safe Officers and Champions should be carefully selected and provided with a higher level of training and a personal development plan appropriate to their added responsibilities.

30. Ensure all Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors and students on placement are provided regular learning and development opportunities surrounding Child Safety and wellbeing.

31. Establish a clear policy and procedure for ensuring safeguarding risks are identified, mitigated and responded to in all areas of the school (including Informal areas) and that these are understood by all leaders, staff, parents and students.

32. Develop a risk register and child safety risk matrix tool to assist in determining risk levels within a range of settings.

33. Establish a regular review of risk at Board level to ensure oversight.

34. Update relevant policies and procedures to include child safeguarding requirements in relation to online risks for students.

35. Ensure stakeholders, specifically children, young people and their families are involved in the identification and assessment of risks.

36. Establish a procedure for reviewing child safe practices across the whole school.

37. Ensure policies and procedures provide scope and guidance for engagement with children and young people providing feedback as part of continuous improvement.

38. Ensure risks, near misses, policy breaches, complaints and feedback are systematically analysed so that emerging trends and themes can be identified and responded to appropriately and in a timely fashion.

39. Ensure a cycle of review is programmed into the school calendar to allocate and manage resources for this work.

40. Develop mechanisms to evaluate compliance in child safety, and to ascertain and review members' feedback on child safety issues.

41. The learning from this review should be utilised to inform a refreshed communications strategy for engaging with students, families and communities in relation to serious child safety incidents. The principles of trauma-informed practice could underpin such a strategy and guide how the organisation will respond to potentially traumatised students, families and community members.

42. The findings of relevant reviews should be adapted and shared with internal and external stakeholders, in particular those who contributed to the process.

43. The Recommendations of this review should be shared with internal and external stakeholders.

44. Ensure all policies and procedures within the organisation are consistent and compliant with the Victorian Child Safe Standards

45. Develop formal mechanisms to implement key processes and policies consistently.

46. Ensure stakeholders are consulted to inform the development of policies and procedures and are able to co-design these alongside the school.

47. Identify clear pathways to communicate any policy changes or updates to all stakeholders.

48. Review and strengthen the Child Protection Policy.

49. Develop a Child Safeguarding framework.