

Young, Ellen L

From: Rabbi Smukler <Rabbi.Smukler@yeshivahcentre.org>
Sent: Monday, 5 March 2012 4:57 PM
To: Pile, Geoff S; Rabbi Smukler
Cc: Young, Ellen L; Johnson, Robert H
Subject: RE: response to VRQA query re child protection policy
Attachments: img-120305000902-0001.pdf

Hi Geoff,

Many thanks for your email.
 I will update the school details as requested.

Attached is the scanned letter I received from VRQA dated 9th August 2011.

Kind regards,

Rabbi Smukler

From: Pile, Geoff S [mailto:pile.geoff.s@edumail.vic.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 5 March 2012 9:02 AM
To: Rabbi Smukler
Cc: Young, Ellen L; Johnson, Robert H
Subject: RE: response to VRQA query re child protection policy

Dear Rabbi Smukler,

Thank you for your email and the scanned copy of your mandatory reporting policy. The comment in our letter regarding compliance with mandatory reporting policies and procedures was one relating generally to findings of school reviews and not one relating specifically to Yeshivah College. The VRQA has already undertaken a risk assessment of schools scheduled for review with regard to available documentation and data and Yeshivah College has been found to be at low risk of non-compliance. All schools determined to be at low risk of non-compliance have been asked to submit the mandatory reporting policy and I apologise that we did not include reference to your recent correspondence when we wrote to you.

We will get back to you as soon as possible with advice on whether further information will be needed. In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could please update your school details on the form provided and email or post it back to me.

Please feel free to call me on 9651 3804 should you have any further concerns.

Kind regards,

Geoff Pile
 Senior Regulation Officer

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority
 Level 6, 35 Spring Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
 GPO Box 2317, Melbourne VIC 3001
 T (03) 9651 3804 F (03) 9651 3266
www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

From: Rabbi Smukler [mailto:Rabbi.Smukler@yeshivahcentre.org]
Sent: Sunday, 4 March 2012 10:50 PM
To: Pile, Geoff S; Johnson, Robert H
Cc: Rabbi Smukler
Subject: FW: response to VRQA query re child protection policy

Dear Geoff and Rob,

I am in receipt of the 'Notification of the review and evaluation of Yeshivah College' re the 'school's mandatory reporting policy and procedures' - Dated 1 March 2012.

The letter indicates that 'past reviews conducted by the VRQA have, in a number of cases, indicated partial or non-compliance with the requirement to provide mandatory reporting procedures, in terms of compliance with the relevant legislation'.

I am confused:

After correspondence I had with the VRQA last July and August - I received a letter dated 9th August 2011 - hand signed by Robyn Timmins stating:

'Thank you for your email advice of 3rd August which details the approach and practices employed at Yeshivah College regrading child protection issues, and which included the school's revised mandatory reporting procedures.'

The letter proceeds to acknowledge much of what I had written to Robyn and ends:

'The VRQA is satisfied that the school's mandatory reporting policy meets the prescribed minimum standard.'

Below please find the correspondence I sent to Ellen Young on the 3rd August 2011 - with the attached policy that I sent at that time.

I am happy to scan and forward a copy of the letter I received from Robyn - Dated 9 August 2011.

After that time - I once again in-serviced ever single educational staff member in my school in the 'Child First - Child Protection Policy'.

Please let me know how to proceed as I am unsure what else VRQA wants of me at this time.

Many Thanks,

Rabbi Smukler

From: Rabbi Smukler
Sent: Sunday, 4 March 2012 10:32 PM
To: Rabbi Smukler
Subject: Fwd: response to VRQA query re child protection policy

Rabbi Yehoshua Smukler
 Principal
 Yeshivah College
 Melbourne Australia

Begin forwarded message:

From: Rabbi Smukler <Rabbi.Smukler@yeshivahcentre.org>
Date: 3 August 2011 6:11:06 PM AEST
To: "young.ellen.l@edumail.vic.gov.au" <young.ellen.l@edumail.vic.gov.au>
Cc: Rabbi Smukler <Rabbi.Smukler@yeshivahcentre.org>
Subject: response to VRQA query re child protection policy

Dear Ellen,

Attached please find our amended "Child First / Child Protection Policy" reflecting the comments you mentioned on Monday.

Please let me know if the amended policy addresses the relevant concerns.

In addition I wish to share with you Yeshivah's approach and practices regarding child protection issues, and our commitment to ensuring that we are all well equipped to prevent and deal with issues should they arise.

As is good practice, the school has strong connections and relationships with relevant organisations and support people to assist us should any problems arise. These include:

- We have a point of contact with the local Child Protection (DHS) investigative unit manager and a number of her colleagues.
- We are acquainted with the local SOCA (Sexual Offences and Child Abuse) Police team, and how they work within the Jewish Community.
- We are very familiar with the children and family services provided by SECASA.
- We also tapped into the resources, training and support offered by the JTAFV (Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence).

All teaching staff are subject to a Police Check prior to being offered employment, and all auxiliary staff such as groundsman, administrative staff and people who have regular contact with the school have a Working with Children Check. Should we become aware of a problem or possible risk to our students, we will immediately work with the authorities and ensure the person is dealt with appropriately and has no access whatsoever to our children.

We are proactive in creating a safe school community:

- We empower our students to stand up for what they know is right and to say 'no'. We do so via the 'Bounce Back' -a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program -in our Primary School that develops these and other resiliency skills.
- Our entire School Staff (Primary and Secondary) have undergone DHS 'mandatory reporting' training as well as Legal training concerning a teacher's legal duties inclusive of 'Duty of Care' provided by Jason Newman of TressCox Solicitors.
- A number of our staff attended training with Debbie Gross (Director of the Crisis Centre for Jewish Women in Jerusalem) during her Melbourne visit in March 2011.
 - o These educators returned to our school after the seminar and conducted 'Protective Behaviour' workshops with our students,
 - o In these workshops the children learnt to 'say no, run away and tell an adult'.
- The students also learnt about 'good touch bad touch', 'no secrets', 'my body is mine' and 'if something makes me uncomfortable I don't need to put up with it'.
- We systematically train the students in both our Primary and Secondary School in these personal safety behaviours and regularly revisit these skills to ensure they are fresh in the children's minds.
- We have robust policies and procedures that govern staff and student interaction.

We also believe that it takes a community to prevent abuse. As such we have established a close working partnership between the school and the parent body. The school adopts a leadership role by prioritising child safety, providing training programs and ensuring effective policies to prevent, and procedures to deal with, issues should they arise. We assist parents in establishing open lines of communication with their children and the school, as we believe they can facilitate prevention through their own awareness and education.

We are absolutely committed to creating a safe school environment where students, staff, and parents feel comfortable to come forward with any concerns. We have invested much energy and resources in this area and will continue to do so, going forward.

Sincerely,

This email message has been sent by:

Rabbi Yehoshua Smukler

PRINCIPAL

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