



ישיבת אהלי יוסף יצחק ליובאוויטש  
 YESHIVAH COLLEGE  
 תחת נשיאת בני אהרן מליובאוויטש

Subject: Yeshivah College - 'Keeping our children safe'

21 July 2011

Dear Parents,

At Yeshivah we are dedicated to creating a safe community for our children.

I write to share with you Yeshivah's policy, 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. (SECASA = *South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault*, we encourage you to avail yourselves of the quality family education resources on their website: [www.secasa.com.au](http://www.secasa.com.au)).
- We also tapped into the resources, training and support offered by the JTAFV (Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence).

At Yeshivah today we are not aware of anyone on staff who poses a risk to our children and Victoria Police have confirmed there are no investigations relating to current staff, contractors or employees. 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 staff have undergone DHS 'mandatory reporting' training.



- 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.
- These educators returned to our school after the seminar and conducted 'Protective Behaviour' workshops with our students,
- 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 of our Primary 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.

It takes a community to prevent abuse. The close working partnership between the school and the parent body is vital. 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. Parents must establish open lines of communication with their children and the school, and can facilitate prevention through their own awareness and education.

An effective 30 minute video workshop, training parents to 'speak to your kids about personal safety', was produced by Rabbi Yakov Horowitz, founding director of project 'YES'. It is an essential video that must be viewed by all parents and can be found at: <http://vimeo.com/25322132>

The effects of abuse are profound. Victims and their families need love, understanding and professional support. Revisiting abuse whether recent or from long ago can be painful and embarrassing. It is not an easy task to come forward. However, if an individual has suffered abuse, they know its agony, and are well aware of the imperative to ensure it doesn't happen again.

We all want to eradicate abuse from our community and indeed communities around the world. To this end, the Rabbanim in our community as well as the Yeshivah Centre and College have on numerous occasions encouraged victims of abuse to come forward and work with the relevant authorities.

***Should you become aware of, or suspect abuse of any kind please contact Child Protection Southern Region on 1-300-655-795 or the Moorabbin Sexual Offences Unit on 9556 6128 or 0414 181 311.***

***if you have any concerns about abuse in relation to the school staff or students please contact me directly on 9522 8223 and I will immediately and unhesitatingly contact the relevant authorities.***

'A safe community' is a verb not a noun; it requires constant effort, but together it can be achieved.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Yehoshua Smukler  
Principal Yeshivah College