

Yeshivah Centre
 מרכז ישיבה אוניברסיטת בר אילן

2 Elul, 5772
 20th August 2012

Dear Friends,

Our children are entitled to our protection and our vigilance in eradicating abuse, particularly sexual abuse, in our community.

This letter seeks to assure you of our vigilance and the steps that we take. If mistakes were made in the past, they must be dealt with and we must ensure, to the extent possible, that mistakes are not made, or do not continue to be made, in the way in which allegations of abuse are dealt with.

There is no stigma attached to being a victim; the community must support victims and ensure that allegations are referred to the police and other authorities. The law of the land must be obeyed and supported.

Unfortunately, the law of the land inhibits the degree to which we can address with you those issues that relate to current proceedings, and it would be improper and potentially in contempt of court, to comment on specific cases that are before the courts. However we can inform you of the steps being taken currently, and in the future, to protect our children.

The Yeshivah Centre leadership wants to make it absolutely clear that we condemn sexual abuse in any form. We recognise that the effects of abuse are profound and victims and their families need empathy, understanding, and support. Revisiting abuse, even from long ago, can be painful and embarrassing and it is not an easy task to come forward. Only by working together, can we ensure that it does not happen again.

We understand and appreciate that there are victims who feel aggrieved and we sincerely and unreservedly apologise for any historical wrongs that may have occurred.

We continue to offer support and provide counselling to anyone who feels this would be of benefit to them and are fully committed to creating a safe environment for our school and broader community.

Under the Auspices of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

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PAGE 6

Yeshivah Centre & College

Yeshivah Centre and College employ absolute best practice in regard to child safety. In this letter, we wish to share with you some of the policies, procedures and practices that we have in place to ensure the wellbeing and safety of our children.

Commitment to Protecting our Children

We are focused on ensuring the safety of our children and are committed to the position that cases of suspected child sexual abuse be reported to the relevant authorities.

We provide the following brief of our policy, approach and practices regarding child protection and our commitment to ensuring that we are all well equipped to prevent and deal with issues should they arise.

Current Practices & Liaison with Authorities

All teaching and auxiliary staff who have regular contact with children are subject to a Working with Children Check before being offered employment.

As is good practice, the school has strong connections and relationships with relevant government authorities and support services including the Department of Human Services, the local Victorian Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse team and the South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA). In addition, we avail ourselves of the resources, training and support offered by the Jewish Taskforce Against Family Violence and the social services provided by Jewish Care.

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'.
- Our teaching staff have undergone Department of Human Services 'mandatory reporting' training on the detection and reporting of abuse and the support of victims of abuse.
- Staff have undertaken Protective Behaviour training facilitated by the Director of the Crisis Centre for Jewish Women (from Jerusalem).
- In age appropriate workshops, our children learn to 'say no, run away and tell an adult'. They learn 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 have robust policies and procedures that govern staff and student interaction.

Copies of our Child Protection Policy is available by emailing office@yeshivahcentre.org

Yeshivah today

At Yeshivah today, we are not aware of anyone who poses a risk to our children. Should we become aware of a problem or possible risk to our students, we will immediately report to and work with the authorities and ensure the person has no access to our children.

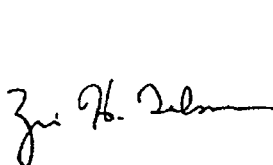
It takes a community to prevent abuse. The close working partnership between the school and the parent body is vital. The school adopts a leadership role by prioritising child safety, providing training programs and ensuring effective policies to prevent, and procedures to deal with issues should they arise.

Yeshivah Centre and College is cooperating openly and fully with the Victorian Police and the Department of Human Services in any enquiry, maintaining open lines of communication. The Victorian Police has confirmed that Yeshivah Centre and College is providing ongoing assistance and cooperation.

We will continue to provide the Police with all possible assistance with their enquiries into allegations and provide support to victims and their family.

Be assured that the Yeshivah is dealing with these matters seriously and we look to the future focused on continuing to serve the community with care and compassion.

With best wishes for a Shana Tova and כתיבה וחתימה טובה.



Rabbi Z. Telsner
Yeshivah Shule



Rabbi Y. Smukler
Yeshivah College Principal



Mr D. Wolf
Committee of Management Chair