

Media release



18 August 2025

Goodstart commences investigation into allegations from Mount Helen

Today Goodstart Early Learning's CEO has written to families across Ballarat to advise them that an investigation has commenced into reportable conduct allegations at our now closed Mt Helen centre, dating back to 2023.

Recently Goodstart received police clearance to begin our own investigation after they advised they would not be laying charges against a former educator from the centre.

Last week we contacted all of the families directly involved in the case. We want to acknowledge the distress caused to families of children named in allegations, despite the police finding.

In August last year (2024) we received a report about an allegation of unprofessional conduct at our Mt Helen centre (which has since closed due to being financially unsustainable). The allegation was immediately referred to police and regulators and the educator in question was suspended.

As Goodstart investigated, we discovered that the then centre director had failed to report previous allegations about the same staff member from 2023 and incorrectly reported other allegations about them. Following an investigation of the reporting failures, we dismissed the centre director for serious misconduct.

Goodstart is always devastated to learn of instances where individual staff members breach our strict reporting policies. However, this case demonstrates how seriously Goodstart treats reporting, and the need to keep children safe.

While Victoria Police have advised they will not lay any charges in relation to the former staff member who is the subject of the allegation, Goodstart dismissed the person earlier this year after they became listed as Prohibited by the early childhood regulator.

Goodstart has appointed an independent external investigator. We have been reaching out to families – first those directly involved, then those who had children at Mt Helen during the relevant period, and all our Ballarat families. We will keep families closely informed as the investigation proceeds.

Goodstart not only encourages but requires reporting. All staff know failing to report properly can result in dismissal. It is a breach of the law, our code of conduct and our mandatory child safe behaviour standards.

While Goodstart invests significantly in safeguarding children, we seek to continually improve, including based on learnings from this case. This case also reveals areas for system improvement. For example, Goodstart repeatedly requested police investigate the allegations, after they initially declined to do so.

Further, Goodstart was not advised when the educator being investigated received a prohibition order, even though he was still employed by Goodstart (albeit suspended). Despite the prohibition order, the person also retained their working with children check despite repeated representations from Goodstart (including directly from our CEO) asking that it be suspended during the investigation.

We're for children, not for profit

visit [goodstart.org.au](https://www.goodstart.org.au)



Media release (continued)

This reporting failure is distressing for families and for our very many wonderful and hard-working staff. As a not for profit we reinvest every dollar we earn into child safety and outcomes, and we have no stronger ethic than the safety of children in our care.

Families have all been written to directly, any families can also call us directly on: 1300 316 166.

Ends



For more information contact media manager Rachel Espiner on 0429 553 103 or media@goodstart.org.au.

Notes for editors

Goodstart Early Learning is Australia's largest early learning provider with 661 centres nationwide. We're a not-for-profit social enterprise committed to improving the lives of Australia's children and their families. For more information, visit goodstart.org.au.

Acknowledgement of country

Goodstart acknowledges all Traditional Custodians across Australia and recognises First Nations peoples' continued cultural and spiritual connection to the land, sky and waterways that surround us. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.