



Child Protection Policy

Rationale

The safety, protection and wellbeing of all students are of fundamental importance to the College. The College, staff, volunteers and contractors have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and welfare of students including:

- a duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students
- obligations under Child Protection legislation
- obligations under Work Health and Safety legislation

This policy is provided to staff, contractors and volunteers during their employment or engagement with Santa Sabina College to ensure a clear understanding of their duties and obligations under the key items of child protection legislation in New South Wales (NSW).

This policy outlines the key concepts and definitions under the relevant legislation including mandatory reporters, reportable conduct, and risk management. It also sets out expected standards of behaviour in relation to employees and contractors and their relationship with students.

Section 1. Key legislation and principles

The key pieces of child protection legislation in New South Wales are listed below and outlined in detail in Sections 2, 3 & 4:

- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 2012 (NSW)*
- *Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulations 2013 (NSW)*
- *Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)*

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations *

Following the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Australian Human Rights Commission has issued the National Principles for Child safety. The College is committed to upholding these principles and they are:

- committed leadership, governance and culture
- children and young people are safe, informed and actively participate in the College
- families and community involved in safety settings
- equity and diversity promoted
- robust recruitment and screening
- effective complaints management
- ongoing education and training
- safe physical and online environments
- regular improvement
- child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures

(*published by the Australian Human Rights Commission)

Obligations to Report

The College requires staff to report any concern they may have about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person to the College Principal, who is the Head of Agency or their delegate. If the allegation involves the College Principal staff are required to report the matter to the Chair of the College Board. This obligation is part of the College's overall commitment to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.

Other Policies

There are a number of other College documents that relate to child protection that staff need to be aware of and understand including (but not limited to):

- Staff Code of Conduct which sets out information about the standards of behaviour expected of all employees, contractors and volunteers of the College
- Work Health and Safety Legislative Framework and Guidelines which summarise the obligations imposed by work health and safety legislation on the College and workers
- Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Guidelines which summarise staff obligations in relation to unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Recommended Protocols for Internal Investigative and Disciplinary Proceedings – 2001 written by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) NSW and the NSW Independent Education Union
- Ombudsman's Class or Kind Agreement
- Guidelines for Reporting, Disclosing or Exchanging Personal Information for the Purposes of Child Wellbeing 2013, written by the AIS NSW

Training

All staff members are required to undertake annual child protection training, delivered by the AIS or an endorsed provider. All new staff members are issued with the Child Protection Policy at induction, and undertake online training. At least one educator on duty at Mary Bailey House (MBH) and Out of School Hours Care (OOSH) must hold Identify and Respond Children at Risk of Harm certification.

Section 2. Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) (The Care and Protection Act)

The Care and Protection Act provides for mandatory reporting of children at risk of significant harm.

Any concern regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student must be reported to the Head of Agency or their representative on your campus.

2.1 Mandatory Reporting

Under the Care and Protection Act persons who:

- in the course of their employment, deliver services including health care, welfare, education, children's services and residential services, to children
- hold a management position in an organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of services including health care, welfare, education, children's services and residential services, to children are mandatory reporters.

All teachers and early childhood educators are mandatory reporters. Other College employees may also be mandatory reporters.

2.2 Reporting to Community Services

Defined Threshold

A mandatory reporter must, where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child (under 16 years of age) is at risk of significant harm, report to Community Services as soon as practicable, the name, or a description of the child and the grounds for suspecting that the child is at risk of significant harm.

In addition, while not mandatory, the College considers that a report should also be made to Community Services where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a young person (16 or 17 years of age) is at risk of significant harm and there are current concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the young person.

Reasonable Grounds

“Reasonable grounds” refers to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm, based on:

- first hand observations of the child, young person or family
- what the child, young person, parent or another person has disclosed
- what can reasonably be inferred based on professional training and/or experience

“Reasonable grounds” does not mean that you are required to confirm your suspicions or have clear proof before making a report.

Significant harm

A child or young person is “at risk of significant harm” if current concerns exist because of the presence of any one or more of the following circumstances:

- the child’s or young person’s basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive necessary medical care
- in the case of a child or young person who is required to attend College in accordance with the Education Act 1990 —the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive an education in accordance with that Act
- the child or young person has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated
- the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm
- a parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child or young person that the child or young person has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm
- the child was the subject of a pre-natal report under section 25 of the Care and Protection Act and the birth mother of the child did not engage successfully with support services to eliminate, or minimise to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk factors that gave rise to the report.

Child abuse and neglect

There are different forms of child abuse. These include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

Neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation.

Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints.

Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.

Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.

Although it is possible for 'one-off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child.

This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Child sexual abuse is a crime.

Child wellbeing concerns are safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns for a child or young person that do not meet the mandatory reporting threshold, risk of significant harm.

2.3 Mandatory Reporting

Reporting by the College about these matters to Community Services and, where necessary, the Police, is generally undertaken by the Head of Agency (College Principal) or their delegate. This is in accordance with best practice and the Memorandum of Understanding between Community Services and the three Education Sectors.

If staff have a concern that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm they should contact the Head of Agency as soon as possible to discuss whether the case reaches the threshold of "risk of significant harm" and the steps required to report the matter.

However, if there is an immediate danger to the child or young person and the Head of Agency or their delegate are not available staff should speak to the Police and/or the Child Protection Helpline directly or as a Reporter online via ChildStory <https://childstory.net.au>. Then advise the most senior member of staff or next most senior member of staff at the College as soon as possible.

Staff are not to inform the parents or caregivers that a report to Community Services has been made.

Staff are required to deal with the matter confidentially and only disclose it to the persons referred to above or as required to comply with your mandatory reporting obligations. Failure to maintain confidentiality will not only be a breach of this policy, but could expose staff to potential civil proceedings for defamation.

2.4 Concern for Students

While the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)* outlines a mandatory reporter's obligation to report to Community Services, as an employee of this College, any concern regarding the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a student must be reported to Head of Agency, or their representative on their campus.

Staff are required to deal with all reports regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student with confidentiality and only disclose it to the Head of Agency or their delegate. Failure to do so will be a breach of this policy.

Section 3. The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW) (The Ombudsman Act)

3.1 Responsibilities

Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act requires the heads of certain agencies, including non government Colleges in NSW, to notify the NSW Ombudsman of all allegations of reportable conduct by an "employee" and the outcome of the College's investigation of these allegations.

An "employee" includes employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience participants, clergy, ministers of religion and instructors of religion who provide pastoral or liturgical services. In this part where there is a reference to an employee it includes all of these persons.

The Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's responsibilities are outlined below and they:

- must keep under scrutiny the systems for preventing reportable conduct by employees of non-government Colleges and the handling of, or response to, reportable allegations (including allegations which are exempt from notification) or convictions
- must receive and assess notifications from non-government Colleges concerning reportable conduct or reportable convictions
- are required to oversee or monitor the conduct of investigations by non-government Colleges into allegations of reportable or reportable convictions
- must determine whether an investigation that has been monitored has been conducted properly, and whether appropriate action has been taken as a result of the investigation
- may directly investigate an allegation of reportable conduct or reportable conviction against an employee of a non government school, or the handling of or response to such a matter (e.g. arising out of complaints by the person who is the subject of an allegation)
- may undertake "own motion" investigations of non-government schools where the Ombudsman considers it appropriate to do so, including where there is evidence of systemic failure or serious conflict of interests

Head of Agency

The College Principal is the Head of Agency.

Under the *Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)* the College Principal must:

- set up systems within their organisation to ensure that they are advised of any allegations of reportable conduct against employees
- notify the Ombudsman as soon as possible and no later than 30 days after being made aware of an allegation
- notify the Ombudsman whether or not the College plans to take disciplinary or other action in relation to an employee who is the subject of a reportable allegation or conviction, and the reasons for taking or not taking any such action as soon as practicable
- provide the Ombudsman with any documentary and other information as the Ombudsman may from time to time request to assist in the Ombudsman's monitoring of an investigation

Employee obligations to report

Employees must report any concerns they may have about any other employee engaging in reportable conduct or any allegation of “reportable conduct” that has been made to the College Principal, including information about themselves. If employees are not sure whether the conduct is reportable conduct but consider that it is inappropriate behaviour they must still report it.

Employees must also report to the College Principal if they become aware that an employee has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving reportable conduct. This includes information relating to themselves. If the allegation involves the College Principal, employees are required to report to the Chair of the Board.

Contact for parents

The College Principal is the contact point for parents if they wish to report an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee.

3.2 What is reportable conduct?

Definition of reportable conduct

Reportable conduct is defined as:

- a) any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence or an offence involving child abuse material)
- b) any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- c) any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

Reportable conduct does not extend to:

- a) conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards
- b) the use of physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures; or
- c) conduct that is exempted from notification by a Class or Kind Agreement.

Other relevant definitions

Behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child is behaviour that is obviously or very clearly unreasonable and results in significant harm or trauma to a child. There needs to be a proven causal link between the inappropriate behaviour and the harm, and the harm must be more than transient.

A child is a person under the age of 18 years for the purposes of the Ombudsman Act.

Ill-treatment captures those circumstances where a person treats a child in an obviously or very clearly improper manner. The focus is on the alleged conduct rather than the actual effect of the conduct on the child.

Ill-treatment can include disciplining or correcting a child in an obviously unreasonable or inappropriate manner; making excessive and obviously unreasonable demands on a child; malevolent acts towards children; and inappropriate and hostile use of force against a child.

Neglect includes either an action or inaction by a person who has care responsibility towards a child. The nature of the employee's responsibilities provides the context against which the conduct needs to be assessed.

Supervisory neglect:

- an intentional or reckless failure to adequately supervise a child that results in the death of, or significant harm to, a child
- an intentional or reckless failure to adequately supervise a child or a significantly careless act or failure to act, that:
 - involves a gross breach of professional standards
 - has the potential to result in the death or significant harm to a child

Carer neglect:

- grossly inadequate care that involves depriving a child of the basic necessities of life; such as the provision of food and drink, clothing, critical medical care or treatment, or shelter

Failure to protect from abuse:

- an obviously or very clearly unreasonable failure to respond to information strongly indicating actual or potential serious abuse of a child

“Recklessness” in this context relates to circumstances when the person ought to have known that their actions would cause a person physical harm or cause them to fear injury.

Reckless act (or failure to act):

A reckless act, or failure to act, that:

- is a gross breach of professional standards
- has the potential to result in the death of, or significant harm to a child.

Physical Assault is any act by which a person intentionally inflicts unjustified use of physical force against another. An assault can also occur if a person causes another person to reasonably apprehend that unjustified force is going to be used against them. Even if a person who inflicts physical harm or causes another person to reasonably apprehend physical harm does not actually intend to inflict the harm or cause fear, they may still have committed an assault if they acted “recklessly”.

Assaults can include hitting, pushing, shoving, throwing objects or making threats to physically harm a child.

PSOA: “Person Subject Of Allegation”. Sexual Misconduct has two categories which include:

- crossing professional boundaries
- sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour

The alleged conduct must have been committed against, with or in the presence of a child.

Crossing professional boundaries

Sexual misconduct includes behaviour that can reasonably be construed as involving an inappropriate and overly personal or intimate:

- relationship with
- conduct towards
- focus on

a child or young person, or a group of children or young persons.

The College's Code of Conduct outlines the nature of the professional boundaries which should exist between employees and children and/or young people can be particularly useful. For employees who either intentionally breach such codes or have demonstrated an inability to apply them appropriately, it may be necessary to provide more detailed written advice about what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

Sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour

Behaviour involving sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour which can constitute sexual misconduct. Some forms of this behaviour also involve crossing professional boundaries. This conduct may include:

- inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
- comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- sexual exhibitionism
- personal correspondence (including electronic communications such as emails and text messages) with a child or young person in relation to the adult's sexual feelings for a child or young person
- exposure of children and young people to sexual behaviour of others including display of pornography
- watching children undress. For example, in change rooms or toilets when supervision is not required or justified

Sexual Offences encompass all criminal offences involving a sexual element that are "committed against, with or in the presence of a child".

These offences include (but are not limited to) the following:

- indecent assault
- sexual assault
- aggravated sexual assault
- sexual intercourse and attempted sexual intercourse
- possession/ dissemination/ production of child pornography or child abuse material
- using children to produce pornography
- grooming or procuring children under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity
- deemed non-consensual sexual activity on the basis of special care relationships

3.3 Allegation against a staff member

Initial steps

Once an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is received, the College Principal is required to:

- determine on face value whether it is an allegation of reportable conduct
- assess whether Community Services or the Police need to be notified (i.e. if reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm or criminal offence)
- notify the child's parents (unless to do so would be likely to compromise the investigation or any investigation by Community Services or the Police)
- notify the Ombudsman within 30 days of receiving the allegation
- carry out a risk assessment and take action to reduce/remove risk, where appropriate
- investigate the allegation or appoint someone to investigate the allegation.

Investigation principles

The College will:

- be mindful of the principles of procedural fairness
- inform the person subject of the allegation (PSOA) of the substance of any allegations made against them and provide them with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations

- make reasonable enquiries or investigations before making a decision
- avoid conflicts of interest
- conduct the investigation without unjustifiable delay
- handle the matter as confidentially as possible
- provide appropriate support for all parties including the child/children, witnesses and the PSOA.

Investigation steps

In an investigation the College Principal will appoint an investigator who will generally:

- interview relevant witnesses and gather relevant documentation
- provide a letter of allegation to the PSOA
- interview the PSOA
- consider relevant evidence and make a preliminary finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman guidelines
- inform the PSOA of the preliminary finding and provide them with an opportunity to respond
- consider any response provided by the PSOA
- make a final finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman Guidelines
- decide on the disciplinary action, if any, to be taken against the PSOA
- apply the NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) Guidelines and decide if the matter is reportable to CCYP
- send the final report to the Ombudsman and report to the CCYP (where required)

The steps followed in the investigative process will be guided by the “Recommended Protocols for Internal Investigative and Disciplinary Proceedings, 2001(IEU/AIS)” (Appendix One) as updated from time to time.

The steps outlined above may need to be varied on occasion to meet particular circumstances. For example it may be necessary to take different steps where the matter is also being investigated by Community Services or the NSW Police.

A PSOA may have an appropriate support person with them during the interview process. Such a person is there for support only and as a witness to the proceedings and not as an advocate or to take an active role.

3.4 Risk Management

Risk management means identifying the potential for an incident or accident to occur and taking steps to reduce the likelihood or severity of its occurrence.

The College Principal is responsible for risk management throughout the investigation and will assess risk at the beginning of the investigation, during, and at the end of the investigation.

Initial risk assessment

One of the first steps following an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is for the College Principal to conduct a risk assessment. The purpose of this initial risk assessment is to identify and minimise the risks to:

- the child(ren) who are the subject of the allegation
- other children with whom the employee may have contact
- the PSOA
- the College
- the proper investigation of the allegation

The factors which will be considered during the risk assessment include:

- the nature and seriousness of the allegations

- the vulnerability of the child(ren) the PSOA has contact with at work
- the nature of the position occupied by the PSOA
- the level of supervision of the PSOA
- the disciplinary history or safety of the PSOA and possible risks to the investigation

The College Principal will take appropriate action to minimise risks. This may include the PSOA being temporarily relieved of some duties, being required not to have contact with certain students, or being suspended from duty. When taking action to address any risks identified, the College will take into consideration both the needs of the child(ren) and the PSOA.

Please note: a decision to take action on the basis of a risk assessment is not indicative of the findings of the matter. Until the investigation is completed and a finding is made, any action, such as an employee being suspended, is not to be considered to be an indication that the alleged conduct by the employee did occur.

Ongoing Risk Management

The College Principal will continually monitor risk during the investigation, including in the light of any new relevant information that emerges.

Risk Management at the Conclusion of the Investigation

At the completion of the investigation, a finding will be made in relation to the allegation and a decision made by the College Principal regarding what action, if any, is required in relation to the PSOA, the child(ren) involved and any other parties.

Information provided to the PSOA

The PSOA will be advised:

- that an allegation has been made against them (at the appropriate time in the investigation)
- of the substance of the allegation, or of any preliminary finding and the final finding

The PSOA does not automatically have the right to:

- know or have confirmed the identity of the person who made the allegation
- be shown the content of the Ombudsman notification form or other investigation material that reveals all information provided by other employees or witnesses

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*, once the “relevant employment proceedings” have been completed a PSOA can seek access to the records held by the College on their “relevant employment proceedings”.

Disciplinary Action

As a result of the allegations, investigation or final findings, the College may take disciplinary action against the PSOA (including termination of employment).

In relation to any disciplinary action the College will:

- give the PSOA details of the proposed disciplinary action
- give the PSOA a reasonable opportunity to respond before a final decision is made

Confidentiality

It is important when dealing with allegations of reportable conduct that the matter be dealt with as confidentially as possible.

The College requires that all parties maintain confidentiality during the investigation including in relation to the handling and storing of documents and records.

Records about allegations of reportable conduct against employees will be kept in a secure area and will be accessible by the College Principal or with the College Principal's express authority.

No employee may comment to the media about an allegation of reportable conduct unless expressly authorised by the College Principal to do so.

If an employee becomes aware of a breach of confidentiality in relation to a reportable conduct allegation they must advise the College Principal.

Section 4 Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 and Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013

4.1 General

The Office of the Children's Guardian is responsible for employment screening for child-related employment. A Working with Children Check is a prerequisite for anyone in child related work. This includes staff and contractors. It involves a national criminal history check and review of reported workplace misconduct findings. The result of a Check is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring by the Office of the Children's Guardian, and any relevant new records which appear against a cleared applicant's name may lead to the Check being revoked.

It is the responsibility of the child-related worker to ensure that when they are eligible to apply for a Check or when their Check is up for renewal that they do so.

New staff (18 years and over) are required to complete a WWCC prior to employment.

Any new staff member, who is under 18 years at the time of their commencement, and turns 18 years during their employment, is required to undertake the WWCC within one month of their birth date.

Volunteers who are not parents or nominated family representatives are required to undertake the Check prior to commencing their duties at the College. Parent volunteers are not required to undertake the voluntary WWCC, unless they are attending camps. All parents volunteering on overnight school camps require a WWCC. The camp organiser needs to provide the information to Tallong staff and Human Resources, who verify the WWCC and keep records.

Responsibilities

The objective of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* is to protect children:

- by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work
- by requiring persons engaged in child-related work to have WWCC clearances

The College is required to:

- verify online and record the status of each child related WWCC
- only employ or engage child-related workers or eligible workers who have a valid check
- report findings of misconduct involving children made against child-related staff or volunteers

Child-related staff and eligible volunteers are required to:

- hold and maintain a valid Check prior to employment
- not engage in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a bar

- report to the Head of Agency if they are no longer eligible for a Check, the status of their check changes or are notified by the Office of the Children’s Guardian that they are subjected to a risk assessment
- update their contact details, including any name or address changes, within three months

All volunteers are required to;

- possess a cleared volunteer WWCC
- to be aware and follow the expectations of conduct expressed in our Code of Conduct

Relevant Definitions and Procedures

Young person

Young person means a person who is aged 16 years or above but who is under the age of 18 years for the purposes of the Care and Protection Act.

Bars

Final Bar

This bar is applied based on a decision made by the Office of the Children’s Guardian, following a risk assessment. This person is barred against working with children

Interim bar

An interim bar is issued to high risk individuals to prevent them from continuing to work with children while a risk assessment is conducted. An interim bar may be applied for up to 12 months. If an interim bar remains in place for six months or longer, it may be appealed against through the Administrative Decisions Tribunal. Not everyone who is subject to a risk assessment will receive an interim bar; only those representing a serious and immediate risk to children. Interim bars are issued only for risks considered likely to result in a final bar.

Child-related work

Child-related work includes, but is not limited to, work in the following sectors:

- Early education and child care including education and care service, child care centres and other child care
- Education schools and other educational institutions and private coaching or tuition of children
- Religious services
- Residential services including boarding schools, homestays more than three weeks, residential services and overnight camps
- Transport services for children including school bus services, taxi services for children with disability and supervision of school road crossings

Child-related staff

A person who has physical contact or face to face contact with children in work outlined above, including schools. This may include volunteer work.

A child-related worker may commence work once they have completed the Check application process. An application is completed when the online application form is complete and the worker’s identity has been proven at the NSW motor registry or Council Agency and the fee has been paid (if in paid work) and the check is verified by the College prior to commencing work.

Disqualified person

A disqualified person is a person who has been convicted, or against whom proceedings have been commenced for a disqualifying offence outlined in the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*.

A disqualified person is a person who has a bar preventing them from working with children in child-related work. It is an offence for an employer to knowingly engage a child-related worker when they do not hold a Check or who has a bar or an interim bar. It is an offence for an employee to engage in child-related worker when they do not hold a Check or has a bar or an interim bar.

Finding of misconduct involving children

The College must report to the Office of the Children's Guardian when a finding has been made that the person (a staff member of the school) subject to the finding engaged in:

- sexual misconduct, committed against, with, or in the presence of a child, including grooming a child
- any serious physical assault of a child
- any child pornography offence or misconduct involving child pornography
- an offence of filming for indecent purposes committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child under section 21G or 21H of the Summary Offences Act 1988

Reporting body

Independent Schools which are members of the AISNSW are defined as reporting bodies by the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*.

Section 35 of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* requires this College to notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of findings of misconduct involving children made against a child-related staff member. The College is also obliged to report, amend or provide additional information to the Office of the Children's Guardian as outlined in the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is an evaluation of an individual's suitability for child-related work. The Office of the Children's Guardian will conduct a risk assessment on a person's suitability to work with children when a new record is received which triggers a risk assessment. This may include an offence under Schedule 1, pattern of behaviour or offences involving violence or sexual misconduct representing a risk to children, findings of misconduct involving children or notification made to Office of the Children's Guardian by the Ombudsman.

Working with Children Check (WWCC) Clearance

A WWCC means authorisation under the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* to engage in child-related work. A staff member or potential staff member will be issued with a number which is to be provided to the College to verify the status of the WWCC.

Section 5. Relationships with Students

Staff should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student. Where staff are left with the responsibility of a single student they should endeavour that this is an open space in view of others. Where this is not possible or practical it should be discussed with the immediate supervisor.

Staff may, as part of their pastoral care role, engage in discussion with students. This is entirely appropriate. However staff must be cautious of making personal comments about a student or asking questions that probe their own or a student's sexuality or relationships.

When staff wish to conduct a private conversation with a student they should consider the time and venue carefully to avoid placing themselves and/or the student in a vulnerable situation. It is required to leave the door open. The staff member should not locate themselves between the

student and the door. Staff are required to ask another student to be present during these situations.

Staff should never drive a student in their car unless they have specific permission from their supervisor to do so. In the event of an emergency staff should exercise discretion but seek advice and report the matter to their supervisor and College Principal or their delegate. On these rare occasions, the student will sit in the back seat. Parent permission is also required.

Staff should notify the Head of Agency immediately should they suspect a situation involving any form of reportable conduct. It is not a staff responsibility to investigate. Similarly staff should report to the Head of Agency any suspected case of neglect.

Social relations between staff and students outside the school can be problematic. Staff should refrain from visiting students at their home unless they have the express permission of the College Principal. Staff must be alert to the risk involved in social relations with students and be conscious that their position places extra obligations on them. Staff are not to friend students on social media nor ex-students until they are 25 years of age.

Staff are not to engage in tutoring or coaching students from the school for monetary return.

When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience staff must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable. Staff should seek reassurance from the student by asking for a student volunteer to demonstrate a particular activity.

Attention to the toileting needs of young children should be done with caution. It may be appropriate to have the door open. In respect to students with a disability the management of toileting needs should be included in the student's individual management plan.

Staff will not supply or condone the use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs for themselves or any student in their care.

When congratulating a student, a handshake or a pat on the shoulder is acceptable as long as the student is comfortable with this action. Kissing or hugging students is not acceptable.

Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching. Always advise the student of what you intend doing and seek their consent.

Staff must always treat students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.

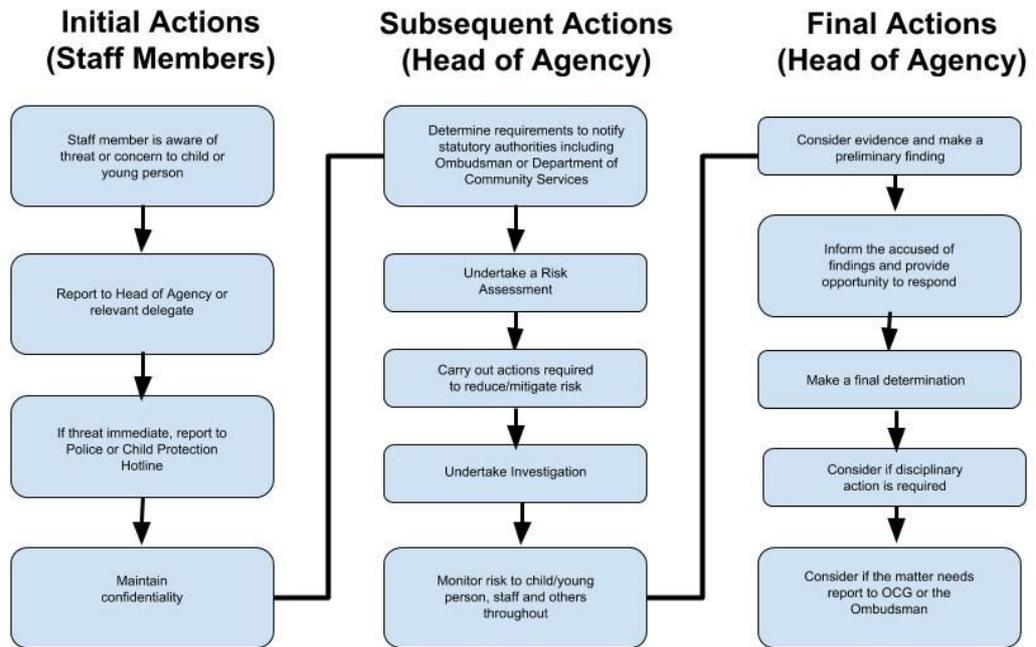
Staff who communicate with students electronically must abide by the terms of the College's Digital Technology Guidelines, and always use the College email account. Transmission of messages or files which are sexually explicit or offensive are prohibited.

Staff should not communicate with students on social networking websites for purposes unrelated to their employment without the knowledge and permission of the Head of Agency.

Sometimes during the course of their work they may be in receipt of a gift from a student. In such circumstances where the receipt of a gift could be considered outside of usual custom they are to inform your immediate supervisor.

Staff should ensure that they are familiar with and adhere to the College's policy in regard to the storage and administration of medical products to students.

Flowchart of Child Protection Procedure



Sometimes in ensuring duty of care staff may be required to restrain a students from harming themselves or others using reasonable force. Any such strategy must be in keeping with the College’s behaviour management practices.

Review of Guidelines

These guidelines will be reviewed at the discretion of the Principal.

Last review date: November 2018

Next review date: As determined by the College Board and College Principal

Authorised delegate(s): College Principal