



# Saint Stephen's College

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

To provide written processes about the appropriate conduct of Saint Stephen's College ("SSC") staff and students that accord with legislation applying in Queensland about the care and protection of children.

Sections 3 and 10 of the *Education (Accreditation of Non- State Schools) Regulation 2001* and Section 146B of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 as amended*, and Section 10 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* all provide that every non-state school must have in place the processes and policies about the health and safety of its students that accord with the relevant workplace health and safety legislation and child protection legislation. These processes and policies must specifically include the process of reporting and dealing with "harm" caused to a student by bullying and/or other inappropriate behaviour including sexual abuse and/or sexual harassment.

### SCOPE

The policy applies to all staff and students and volunteers at Saint Stephen's College.

### REFERENCES

*Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000*  
*Education (General Provisions Act) 1989*  
*Education (Teacher Registration Act) 1988*  
*Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001*

### DEFINITIONS

**Bullying** where used in this Policy Statement, incorporates the range of behaviours alluded to on pages 3 and 4 of the Saint Stephens College "Student Anti-Bullying Education and Intervention Policy" and includes "Harm" as defined in this policy and exemplified in that policy.

A **child** is a person under 18 years of age.

**Department of Communities** means and includes any alternative Department or Agency from time to time or at any time named in the *Child Protection Act* or any Regulation made there under including (but not limited to) the Department of Child Protection.

An **employee** means any person who is employed or engaged full time or part time in work at the College for financial reward and includes teachers, teacher's aides, tutors, administration, accounting, information technology and grounds staff, persons on contract to the College, the Chaplain and the Headmaster.

**Counsellor** means any senior member of the College Pastoral Care Team including the Headmaster, Heads of Programme, Heads of the College Houses, the College Nurse and, if the Headmaster considers it appropriate, a person providing professional counselling services.

**Harm** is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- Sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- Domestic or family violence.

**Immediately** means as soon as is reasonably practical in the circumstances.

**Improper conduct** in the context of this manual is conduct which causes or is reasonably likely to cause harm to a student.

A **parent** includes any caregiver of a student.

The **Headmaster** means the Headmaster, the Acting Headmaster or the officer having the day-to-day management of the College.

**Reasonably suspects** means suspects on grounds that are reasonable in the circumstances.

A **student** is any person regardless of age who is enrolled at the College.

A **volunteer** is a person other than a member of the College, staff or a student, who is involved in any College activity from time to time or at any time, and specifically includes any volunteer who is a parent of a student.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

Commission for Children and Young People	07 3247 5525
College of Teacher Registration	07 3377 4777
Department of Communities	55 25 5888
Police	000 (emergency calls only)
Coomera Police Station	5573 6111
Regional Police Headquarters	5570 7999
Father Andrew Kinmont	07 5573 8662 / 0417 711 699
College Nurse	5573 8615
College Counsellor	5573 8620

## **PART A – PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES**

### **PRINCIPLES**

SSC will uphold the following principles under this Policy:

- Protecting students from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to maximising their personal and academic potential.
- The College recognises that people who are subjected to abuse are harmed by it.
- At SSC, the welfare and best interests of the student will always be a primary consideration.
- SSC expects its students to show respect to its staff and volunteers and to comply with safe practices.
- All employees must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students, and are not unlawful.
- Sexual acts by an adult employee or volunteer with a student who is a child will always be sexual abuse.
- SSC will respond diligently to a report of suspected or actual harm, or risk of harm to a Student.
- Reprisals against students or others making a complaint will not be tolerated.
- Student management practices will be administered with respect and in a manner which maintains the student's dignity.
- SSC will act fairly and reasonably towards an employee or volunteer who is the subject of allegations of improper conduct.
- SSC will support an employee or volunteer whom the College reasonably considers to be the subject of a demonstrably false allegation of causing harm to a student.
- Anybody within the College who becomes aware or reasonably suspects that a student is being harmed must report it to the College in accordance with the College's Procedures for Reporting Harm (see Part C over). However, SCC will take appropriate disciplinary action against any person (including a student or a parent of a student) who makes a knowingly false allegation against any such employee or volunteer.
- SSC will take disciplinary action against employees who harm others, and appropriate action against volunteers who harm others.
- SSC will not permit people to work in a position if the College believes on the basis of all information available that, if the allegations against them were wholly or partly true, there would be an unacceptable risk that others might be harmed.
- The College will cooperate with state authorities in resolving allegations of harm.

## **GUIDELINES**

In complying with these principles, SSC will be guided by the following.

### **Natural Justice**

The principles of natural justice will apply to decisions to be made under this Policy. The two fundamental principles of natural justice are:

- that those making a decision are not biased.
- that nobody should be condemned unless they are given prior notice of the allegations against them and they have a fair opportunity to be heard.

In addition, in cases other than those which must be reported to the relevant authority, where the person against whom the allegation is made is a child, (apart from the initial interview to establish whether there are grounds for further investigations):

- a) The Head of House of which the accused child is a member of a teacher of that child's choosing should be present at the interview; and
- b) The parents of the accused child should immediately be informed and requested to attend at the College;
- c) The accused child should be placed in a location where he or she will be unable to cause harm to himself or another student until the child's parents arrive or the child is suspended from the College.

### **Process**

It is important to make the lodging of a complaint easy.

### **Confidentiality**

Each person who has access to information regarding suspected or disclosed harm has an obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality (any discussion must be limited to persons within the reporting line). The College is unable to promise absolute confidentiality since its policies will require disclosing, internally and/or externally, certain details involved in responding to any complaint. Moreover, State authorities can compel people to give evidence about actions under the Policy and to produce documents (and see Section 146B of the *Education [General Provisions] Act 1989*).

### **Criminal Law**

Where there are allegations of criminal misconduct (including, but not limited to, any form of sexual abuse) involving a student of the College, the allegations must be referred to the police. The Principal must refer all allegations of pedophilia to the police, including those from the past, except where the alleged perpetrator is deceased.

### **Defamation**

A person providing information about harm in good faith to a person who needs to know that information is generally excused from liability for defamation or breach of confidence. (Section 22 of the *Child Protection Act, 1999*; Section 146B(5) of the *Education and Other Legislation (Student Protection) Act 2003* . However, a person (including a student or a parent of a student) who makes a knowingly false, or a malicious or vexatious report will not be protected by those provisions of those Acts and may risk action for defamation and/or disciplinary action.

### **Promptness**

All steps under the Policy should be carried out promptly. The College will keep the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator informed of progress.

### **Protection**

The Principal will ensure that the following are undertaken in order to reduce the chance of abuse occurring:-

- Ensure that each staff member understands and fulfils their obligations under this Policy.
- Ensure that there is an acceptable reference for each staff member engaged since the commencement of this protocol, from their previous employer.
- Ensure that each non-teaching staff member and (as far as is reasonably possible) every volunteer who has contact with students has a current positive suitability notice issued by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.
- Ensure that each teaching staff member is a Registered Teacher.

### **Support**

The College will provide support for the victim through professional counselling if it is requested, even if any allegation is not yet proved or disproved.

The College will support the respondent to a complaint with professional counselling if it is requested until the matter has been resolved.

### **Interviews**

There will be two representatives of the College present at interviews, where practical. In cases of allegations of serious harm it is best not to interview a student who is a child unless a properly qualified person conducts the interview. Where the child refuses to have a parent or independent person present, the child should be suspended pending completion of investigations.

An employee against whom an allegation has been made is entitled to be accompanied at any interview by a union representative or solicitor.

### **Teachers**

If a respondent to an allegation is a registered teacher, the College will give notification to the College of Teacher Registration, if required to do so under the *Education (Teacher Registration) Act 1988* and/or the *Education and other Legislation (Student Protection) Amendment Act 2003*.

### **Public Relations**

The Principal will ensure that the College is able to react quickly to allegations of harm so that accurate and relevant information is available for staff members, students and their families and for the media.

In particular, the Principal should in all cases except where it is alleged that a parent has caused harm to a student, ensure that parents are kept fully informed of investigations and consequences of investigations.

### **Police Action**

It will usually be necessary to wait until the police have decided whether to charge the respondent before taking any internal disciplinary proceedings. If the police do charge the respondent, it will be necessary to wait until the charges have been dealt with in the courts before commencing internal enquiries or disciplinary proceedings. This does not preclude the Principal from seeking advice from police regarding the duty of care to existing students which may involve the standing down of a staff member during an investigation. The police are not required to inform SSC about their investigation. Some of their material may be acquired under a Freedom of Information request when their work on the case is finished.

### **Insurer**

SSC will keep its insurer informed about developments.

### **Publication**

The Principal will ensure that this policy is published:-

- to staff members generally, at least once each year
- to each new staff member, on induction
- by reference to it in the College newsletter, **at least twice each year**
- by display on at least one notice board in the College, **always**

The Principal will ensure that a copy of the policy is always available from the SSC administration.

### **Review**

The College will ensure that this Policy is reviewed at least once **every two years**.

## PART B - DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF HARM

The following actions should be taken in any cases relating to harm or suspected harm against a child:

1. Record details of the allegations. Be careful not to taint the evidence of the student or the respondent.
2. Decide whether the allegation should be reported to authorities: see *Procedures for Reporting Harm* (see below). If so, report it.
3. Provide details of the allegations to the respondent.
4. If there is "unacceptable risk", stand down the respondent. In extreme cases, dismiss them summarily. (**Note:** If the Principal deems that there is unacceptable risk, he must consult with the Chairman of the Board or his Deputy before dismissing a staff member summarily unless the staff member admits to the alleged offences. If there is any delay in so consulting, the staff member should be suspended on full pay).
5. Offer counselling to the student and the respondent.
6. Inform the student's parents. (NOTE: In cases of harm caused external to the school, the police or Department of Communities must notify the parent - not the College - see page 12 under heading "PROCEDURE Evidence", last paragraphs. Section 15 *Child Protection Act*).
7. Inform the College's governing body.
8. Inform the College's insurers.
9. Investigate the allegations. (**Note:** if the allegations have been reported to police, do not begin the investigations until the prosecution is complete and the police inform you they have decided not to charge the respondent.
10. Attend to public relations.
11. Take disciplinary action against the respondent if the circumstances require it.
12. Take disciplinary action against the student if a police investigation has found that the student has been untruthful.
13. Keep the student and the respondent informed as the matter proceeds.

## PART C - PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING HARM

Staff members at SSC are expected to reflect the highest standards of care in their behavior towards and relationships with students.

Employees of SSC must not under any circumstances engage in physical or emotional abuse or engage in sexual contact of any nature with a student of the College. It is irrelevant whether the conduct is consensual or non-consensual, or condoned by parents or caregivers. The age of the student is also irrelevant.

Failure to behave in an appropriate manner may result in criminal proceedings and/or disciplinary action, including dismissal.

The following Table outlines the procedures for reporting harm which will apply at SSC.

Where a reference is made to **PROVIDING A WRITTEN REPORT** in the procedures detailed below, the following matters are to be included in the written report:

1. name of the person giving the report;
2. name, sex and (if known) age of the child victim;
3. details of the basis for the maker of the report becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the child has been sexually abused;
4. details of the actual or suspected sexual abuse;
5. particulars of the identity of the alleged perpetrator of the abuse (if known); and
6. particulars of the identity of any other person who may be able to give information about the abuse (if known).

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING HARM	
<b>SCOPE</b>	applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• harm of any kind whatsoever to any student of the College who was under 18 years at the time the harm was caused; and</li><li>• behavior of a staff member that a student considers inappropriate</li></ul>
<b>DEFINITION</b>	"harm":- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a student's physical psychological or emotional well being, however caused;</li><li>• can be caused by (but is not limited to)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or</li><li>- sexual abuse or exploitation</li></ul></li></ul>

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>If</b>	<b>Then</b>
<b>Reporting Harm</b> (Accreditation Regulation s.10)	You are a student who has been harmed or who is aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been caused by anyone (including another student) to a student of the College (who was under 18 at the time).	Report it to any staff member.
	You are a staff member and you are aware or reasonable suspect that harm has been caused by anyone to a student of the College who was under 19 at the time.	Immediately report it in writing to the Headmaster or to the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Board of the College.
	You are:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Headmaster or the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of SSC a director of SSC and you receive a report of harm or suspected harm to a student of the College; <b>and</b> you are aware of the harm having been caused or you reasonable suspect the harm to have been caused.</li> <li>ii. If you are the Chairman or Deputy Chairman and if the harm is not alleged to have been caused by the Headmaster, you must immediately notify the Headmaster.</li> </ol>	Immediately report it to the police in the case of sexual abuse or suspected sexual abuse, or in the case of any other form of harm, to the police and/or to the Department of Families.  Keep a written record of your actions.
<b>Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour</b> (Accreditation Regulation s.10)	You are a student and you wish to report behaviour by a staff member that you consider inappropriate.	Report the behavior to the Headmaster or a member of the College Executive.
	You, the Headmaster or a member of the College Executive receive the report under the preceding step.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interview the student.</li> <li>- Interview the staff member named in the report.</li> <li>- Interview any other person who may be able to provide useful information.</li> <li>- Report your findings to the Headmaster or a member of the College Executive, with your recommendation for action to be taken.</li> <li>- As Headmaster, take action on the basis of the report.</li> </ul>

Subject	If	Then
<p><b>Reporting Sexual Abuse</b> (Education (General Provisions) Act s.146B)</p>	<p>You are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A staff member; and</li> <li>• Aware of you reasonably suspect that an employee of the College has sexually abused a student of the College who was under 18 at the time.</li> </ul>	<p>Give a written report about the abuse to the Headmaster or, if the complaint involves the Headmaster or in other exceptional circumstances, the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of SSC immediately.</p> <p>Contents of the written report are prescribed by regulation made under the Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2000:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The name of the person giving the report (the “first person”);</li> <li>b. The student’s name and sex;</li> <li>c. Details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonable suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused by an employee of the school;</li> <li>d. Details of the abuse or suspected abuse;</li> <li>e. Any of the following information of which the first person is aware:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The student’s age;</li> <li>ii. The identity of the employee who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the student;</li> <li>iii. The identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Keep a written record of your actions.</p>
	<p>You, the Headmaster, Chairman or Deputy Chairman, receive a report under the preceding step.</p>	<p>Give a copy of the report to a police officer immediately and if you are not the Chairman, to the Chairman of the Board.</p>

## **PART D – PREVENTING BULLYING**

**Note: This Part D should be read in conjunction with the College "Anti-Bullying" policy which forms a separate document.**

The SSC has a responsibility to ensure that the rights of its students are safeguarded. These include the right to a learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. The College must take reasonable steps to ensure that students learn in a safe, supportive and caring environment without fear of being bullied, discriminated against or harassed.

By definition bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person or group by a more powerful person or group of persons. It may be manifested in many ways e.g. harassment (verbal, sexual or psychological), victimisation, alienation, coercion, intimidation, exclusion, ostracism, discrimination.

In any form bullying is not acceptable behaviour and results in hurt, fear, loss of self-esteem and decreased social effectiveness for the victim. Within the context of the SSC bullying is entirely contrary to the ideals of the College. In accordance with the College's Mission statement therefore this policy seeks to:

- develop in students respect and concern for others, of all races and creeds;
- develop in students an understanding that they must take responsibility for their own behaviour;
- develop in students critical and effective thinking and problem solving skills;
- develop in students life skills related to healthy life styles; and
- develop an environment that nurtures and promotes student self-esteem and self confidence.

### **Implementation**

The following steps are a guide to dealing with reports of bullying.

1. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who observed or reasonably suspects the bullying incident or who has been approached, to ensure the student's safety. It is never acceptable to turn a blind eye to bullying.
2. A clear account of the incident should be recorded and given to the Principal or delegate.
3. The Principal or delegate will then work through the College's anti-bullying policy.

### **Students**

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice;
- reassuring the student;
- offering continuous support; and
- providing encouragement to form and maintain friendships with non-bullying students.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened;
- discovering why the student became involved;
- establishing the wrong doing and the need to change; and
- enlisting the support of parents/caregivers to help change the behaviour and attitude of the student, where appropriate.

**Note:** It is recognised that "help" to a bully such as that mentioned above is in the majority of cases inappropriate where the "bullying" involves sexual abuse, sexual harassment or other serious or prolonged acts of harm).

Within the curriculum, SSC will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in assemblies and subject areas, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

## **PART E – PREVENTING HARM TO STUDENTS FROM PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF THE COLLEGE**

Over 85% of children are harmed by someone they know and trust – a parent, sibling, other relative, family friend or care provider. Employees should be aware of the physical, emotional and behavioural indicators of risk of student harm, and actual harm. These indicators are more significant if they are severe and/or consistent over time.

### **Indicators of Harm**

#### **Physical Abuse and Excessive Punishment**

- student presents with bruises, burns or fractures at a frequency which is inconsistent with normal activity;
- students offer explanations for an injury which appear inconsistent with that injury;
- student or another person advise that he/she has been subjected to or threatened with physical harm;
- reluctance/refusal to participate in swimming or other activities where getting changed or wearing more revealing clothes may show signs of harm;
- excessive absenteeism.

#### **Emotional Abuse and/or Deprivation**

- poor peer relationships/withdrawn;
- inclined to seek adult company and/or students who are older or younger;
- avoiding going home on a regular basis;
- learning difficulties, including poor concentration;
- attention seeking behaviour such as stealing, lying, running away, disrupting classes repeatedly.

#### **Physical Neglect and/or Inadequate Supervision or Care**

- students appear underweight for age and body type;
- inadequate clothing;
- asking other students for food or money or not bringing food to College;
- excessive absences from College and/or high frequency of illness/infection;
- student often arrives at College early and/or leaves late.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

- bruises, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, arms, lower abdomen or thighs;
- bruises, scratches or other injuries not consistent with accidental injury;
- difficulty walking or sitting;
- persistent headaches or recurrent abdominal pain;
- unexplained pain in genital area;
- torn, stained or bloodied underwear;
- itching, soreness, discharge or unexplained bleeding;
- painful and recurrent urination;
- recurrent urinary tract infections;
- signs of sexually transmitted diseases;
- pregnancy in adolescents where the identity of the father is vague or secret.

Where an employee has concerns or is unsure whether or not observations should be cause for concern, it is mandatory that they report their concerns to the Principal.

## PROCEDURE

The Principal will contact the Department of Communities to discuss, in the first instance, the fact there is a concern and to seek advice as to the appropriateness of formally reporting the matter.

If it is deemed, after this discussion, that further investigation is warranted, then the Principal, on behalf of the employee who made the original observation, will report the matter to the Queensland Police Service. Reporting to the police is mandatory where harm caused to a child indicates a criminal offence may have taken place, such as a sexual assault. At this time the employee concerned must be available to give a first hand account of the situation.

In most cases students need to be interviewed before the matter is discussed with the student's parents, in order that the interests of the student are protected.

Where a parent is the person against whom harm is alleged, the responsibility for informing parents vests with the investigating officers of the Queensland Police Service of Department of Communities.

It should be noted that the role of the employee is not an investigative one. Staff must not undertake investigations beyond satisfying themselves that they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has been, or is at risk of harm. Neither the employee nor the Principal is obliged to obtain proof, establish the cause of harm or assess its severity. Once a report has been made, the employee is not required to take further action, beyond the requirement to exercise a duty of care.

### Evidence

The investigation of these matters is a complex and sensitive process. In the course of an investigation, officers from the child protection agencies may request permission to interview the student concerned. In most cases, in order to ensure the interests of the child are protected, the student may be interviewed before the matter is discussed with the parent/caregiver.

The responsibility for informing parents/caregivers of notifications and any interviews rests with the investigating child protection agency officers, not with the Principal. For this reason, any person making an inquiry or complaint concerning an investigation or an interview must be promptly referred to the Principal who will refer the enquirer to the appropriate department, with the explanation that it is the responsibility of that department to answer such inquiries or complaints.

### Confidentiality

**The identity of the person reporting the matter must not be revealed to any person or officer of any department without that person's consent.**

Child protection agencies operate under strict laws of confidentiality (see Section 180, *Child Protection Act 1999*). This means they do not divulge the identity of the person reporting the matter except to others requiring the information to perform duties under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, neither do they divulge information about their investigations to the person reporting the matter.

Section 22 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* provides for the protection from civil liability for persons who, acting honestly, notify or give information about suspected harm to a child. It also states that merely because the person gives the notification, the person cannot be held to have breached any code of professional etiquette or ethics, or departed from accepted standards of professional conduct. Furthermore, Section 146B (5) of the *Education and Other Legislation (Student Protection) Act 2003* provides similar protection with respect to reports of sexual abuse.

### **Support for the Student**

SSC has a responsibility to offer a long-term, supportive environment for all students. The following are suggested as ways to support a student who may be in need of protection:

- Treat the student with respect and dignity.
- Be sensitive to the student's needs, feelings and concerns.
- Monitor the situation.
- Maintain confidentiality as far as is practicable.
- Immediately notify the Principal if, after the initial report, any further incidents of harm are suspected.

## **PART F – PREVENTING STUDENT SELF HARM**

During their schooling, some students may be at risk of harming themselves. This harm may occur with or without suicidal intent; or may be symptomatic of, or associated with, a known medical condition or intellectual disability.

### **Self-harm with Suicidal Intent**

Youth suicide rates in Australia are among the highest in the industrialised world. Common risk factors include:

- previous attempts at suicide (most powerful risk predictor);
- depression;
- drugs and alcohol abuse;
- conduct disorder;
- disruptive and unsupportive family background;
- relationship conflicts;
- poor coping skills;
- psychiatric illnesses;
- ready availability of lethal means to commit suicide;
- copycat behaviour after an incident of self-harm by another person.

Other risk factors include:

- recent bereavement;
- chronic physical illness;
- anniversary phenomenon (of past losses or major life events);
- early loss experiences;
- school failure;
- perfectionism and over achievement as a result of students having high expectations of themselves.

Threats of self-harm by a student should be taken seriously and reported to the College Counsellor (if there is one) and Headmaster immediately. It is much safer to be cautious and act on the concern, than to do nothing.

An employee who becomes aware of, or suspects, a student is experiencing significant psychological distress, should consult the College Counsellor, or College Nurse (where applicable) for further advice and report the information to the Headmaster.

In the case of an acutely distressed student, the immediate safety of the child is paramount. An employee should ensure the immediate safety of the student, arrange for an adult to be with the student at all times and then report concerns to the Headmaster and the College Counsellor. Employees should note, that while it is important to support a student, they should be careful not to substitute support for professional help.

Following a report, the College Counsellor will meet with the distressed student (or, if there is none of if the College Counsellor is not present, an external treating professional), on the day of the report, to conduct an initial assessment and determine an appropriate course of action. In cases of serious concern, the Headmaster, or Counsellor under the direction of the Headmaster, will notify the student's parents and make arrangements for access to professional assistance.

## **Self-harm without Suicidal Intent**

Not all cases of self-harm relate to suicidal intent. Students may engage in a variety of high risk behaviours, such as alcohol/ substance abuse; drug-taking; unsafe promiscuity; cutting/burning oneself.

All College employees are expected to act to prevent all high risk behaviours occurring within the College, and support any other interventions undertaken to reduce the risk of such behaviours occurring outside the College.

Employees who are aware that a student is engaging in, or is at risk of engaging in, high risk activities should consult with the College Counsellor or College nurse for further advice and report their concerns to the Headmaster.

Following a report, the Headmaster will consult with the student Counsellor to determine what course of action should occur. Possible actions include:

- contacting parents
- arranging professional assistance
- consulting with the local office of the Department of Communities
- contacting the police, where appropriate.

## **Self-harm as a Symptom of a Medical Condition or Intellectual Disability**

Where it is known that a student has a propensity to engage in self harm that is symptomatic or associated with a known medical condition or intellectual disability, the College Headmaster, in cooperation with other qualified College staff and external treating professionals (where applicable) will devise an individual program of management to prevent or reduce the likelihood of the student engaging in self- harm at SSC.

The program will complement any other management procedures adopted outside the College setting to address the self harm behaviour.

The program of management will be monitored on an on-going basis and modified as appropriate to maximise socially adaptive behaviour.