



## Child Protection Risk Management Strategy

### Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to eliminate and minimise risk to child safety to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

### Scope

Students and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements are responsible for acting in compliance with this Child Risk Management Strategy and related policies and procedures.

### References

- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Act 2001 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulation 2001 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2000 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Education \(Overseas Students\) Regulation 1998 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Queensland College of Teachers\) Act 2005 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Law \(Queensland\) Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit](#)

### Commitment of the College

Saint Stephen's College is committed to the safety and holistic wellbeing of all students in the College. In accordance with sections 171 and 172 of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)*, Saint Stephen's College is dedicated to eliminating and minimising risks to child safety through this Strategy which includes and refers to various other policies and procedures to effectively ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in the school's care.

This Child Risk Management Strategy is evidence of the College's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm in fulfilment of the requirements of section 3(1)(a) of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011 (Qld)*. The College will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people through maintaining a positive culture and appropriate services to meet the needs of our students. The College is committed to acting in accordance to the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act ("the Act")* to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students through implementing the measures in this Strategy Statement.



Developing character, inspiring hope

## Implementation

In practice, the commitment of Saint Stephen's College to acting in accordance to the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act ("the Act")* to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students means that it will implement the measures outlined below in points 1 – 8.

### 1. Code of Conduct

The College has clearly established values and expectations to provide a safe and supportive environment. These values and expectations are expressed through the:

- Student Code of Behaviour;
- Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities;
- Parent Charter, all of which are published on the College website, and
- Policies, procedures and protocols in the Staff Handbook establish expectations and responsibilities of staff.

College employees are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people. They must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people, and to support those who have been harmed.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Employees should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student;
- When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience; employees must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable;
- Employees must always advise the student of what they intend doing and seek their consent;
- Employees must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as, having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student;
- Employees must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student.

This commitment is evidence of Saint Stephen's College fulfilment of the requirements of section 3(1)(b) of the Regulation.

### 2. Policies for recruiting, selecting, training and managing people working with children

The College is committed to recruiting, selecting, training and managing employees in such a way that limits risks to children and fulfils the requirements of section 3(1)(c) of the Regulation. In particular, the College will:

Ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children from employees via:

- Accurate position descriptions, including whether the successful applicant must be a teacher registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (who has been subject to relevant police and other safety checks), whether a Blue Card is necessary for the successful applicant, the responsibilities and supervision associated with the position, the nature and environment of the service provided to children, and the experience and qualifications required by the successful applicant;
- Advertising the position with a clear statement about the school's commitment to safe and supportive work practices and identifying that candidates will be subject to a teacher registration check or Blue Card screening, a police check, referee checks, identification verification and the requirement to disclose any information relevant to the candidates' eligibility to engage in activities including young people;
- A selection process that includes assessing the application via an interview process and referee and other checks (as identified above) based on the accurate position description;
- A probationary period of employment, which allows the school to further assess the suitability of the new employee and to act as a check on the selection process;

Ensure that its training and management procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children from employees via:

- Management processes that are consistent, fair and supportive;
- Performance management processes to help employees to improve their performance in a positive manner;
- Supportive processes for staff when they are experiencing challenges, such as mentoring, mediation, conflict resolution, coaching, additional training, and external support and counselling services;
- An induction program which thoroughly addresses the College's policies and procedures, particularly its expectations regarding child risk management and to assist employees to understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for children;

Training new and existing staff on an ongoing basis to enhance skills and knowledge and to reduce exposure to risks, as follows:

- The College's policies and procedures;
- Identifying, assessing and minimising risks to children;
- Handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm to a child;
- Keeping a record of the training provided to employees;
- Exit interviews to assist the school to identify broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and well-being of children at the school.

**a) Screening**

It is the policy of the College that all members of staff, volunteers and contractors are cleared to work with children:

- all members of academic staff are registered or provisionally registered with the College of Teachers, or have received special dispensation from the College;
- all non-teaching members of staff and all volunteers and contractors (including Board members), who are required to hold a blue card, have a current card. The suitability to work with children is administered by Vanessa Vanderveen;
- in some cases, deemed appropriate by the School, paid or unpaid employees who work with children but are not required to hold a blue card (e.g. a parent volunteer) may be asked to consent to a criminal history check through the Queensland Police Service;
- where volunteer parents are working with children, it will always be in the presence of academic or non-teaching staff who are cleared to work with children. In these circumstances, volunteers are exempt from needing a Suitability Blue Card.

**b) Choosing Staff**

Saint Stephen's College recognises that risk management for child protection begins with the recruiting, screening and selection of the right people to work in schools, and continues by having consistent procedures in place for all staff (including volunteers) and contractors to follow, with adequate management and supervision to ensure they comply with these procedures.

**c) Induction**

Saint Stephen's College has a written induction process which applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors (hereafter called 'staff') during the first twelve months of appointment, and includes procedures for making staff members aware of the legislation on Child Protection, and the Code of Behaviour expected of staff.

**d) Professional Development**

All staff members are required to understand and apply the School's Child Protection Policy and reporting of suspected sexual abuse requirements. In addition, the School provides Professional Development in relation to child protection on a regular basis and a register is kept of such activities.

**e) Saint Stephen's College Policies**

The College maintains a number of policies relevant to risk management, including:

- Child Protection Policy and Protocols;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- College Response to Duty of Care;
- Pastoral Care Policy and Procedures;
- Critical Incident Policy & Procedures;
- Evacuation and Lockdown Procedures.

**3. Procedures for Handling Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm**

The College recognises that children and young people are vulnerable members of the community and that extra measures must be taken to protect and support them. The College employs a professional Counsellor to support students. In compliance with the requirements of section 3(1)(d) of the Regulation, any of the types of concerns or reports below should be reported and managed under the College Child Protection Policy and Procedure, as follows:

- All staff with concerns about sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse;
- Teachers with concerns of sexual or physical abuse; and
- All staff who have received a report of inappropriate behaviour by another staff member.

In accordance with the *Child Protection Act 1999*, if a staff member, teaching or non-teaching, is aware or reasonably suspects harm has been caused to a student under 18 years and the harm has not been reported under the Child Protection Policy, the staff member must report the harm to the College Headmaster. The types of harm reported may include emotional or psychological abuse or neglect or sexual exploitation.

If the Principal is aware or reasonably suspects the harm has been caused and that the student is in need of protection, the Principal must report the harm or suspected harm to the Chief Executive of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (or other department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999*). In assessing whether a student is in need of protection, the Principal will consider the "Significant Harm Test" and the "Parent Willing and Able Test", as well as utilise the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' Child Protection Guide resource.

To report any type of harm, all staff members should use the Report of Suspected Harm or Sexual Abuse Form [2015 SSC Staff Referral of Suspected Child Harm or Abuse](#).

Furthermore, and in accordance with section 76 of the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005*, the Headmaster will report to the Queensland College of Teachers any investigations into allegations of harm caused, or likely to be caused, to a child because of the conduct of a relevant teacher at the College.

**4. Managing Breaches of Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy**

Saint Stephen's College is committed to appropriately managing breaches of this Child Risk Management Strategy in accordance with its other relevant policies as appropriate in the circumstances, such as its Child Protection Policy, Employee Code of Conduct, Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedures and Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, and this is evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of section 3(1)(e) of the Regulation.

**5. Implementing and Reviewing the Child Risk Management Strategy**

This Strategy in its entirety and its related policies and procedures are evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of section 3(1)(f)(i) of the Regulations relating to implementation. The College is committed to reviewing the Strategy annually and are evidence of fulfilment of the requirements of section 3(1)(f)(i) of the Regulation relating to review.

**6. Policies and Procedures for Compliance with Screening Requirements**

To ensure that children and young people are kept safe from harm, our staff and volunteers are required to possess either teacher registration or a current blue card as required by legislation. Vanessa Vanderveen manages and maintains the College Blue Card Register to ensure members of the College community comply with legislative requirements. The register is reviewed annually.

**7. Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activities and Special Events**

The College has an established process of assessing and managing risks associated with College events, and maintaining appropriate written records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to risks to children. The high risk management strategy incorporates the key criteria of physical, emotional, sexual and cultural harm, and is conducted in accordance with industry standards and fulfilment of the requirements of section 3(1)(g) of the Regulation.

**8. Strategies for Communication and Support**

The College Risk Management Policy is published on the College website to inform and encourage feedback from the community. The policy is reviewed annually and parents are encouraged to provide feedback to the Assistant to the Headmaster Administration and Compliance. The College is committed to the fulfilment of the requirements of section 3(1)(h)(i) of the Regulation.

In accordance with section 3(1)(h)(ii) of the Regulation, Saint Stephen's College is committed to training employees in relation to risks to children and will conduct this training regularly via annual formal training events, informal updates at staff meetings and regular discussions between managers and their staff.

**Compliance and Monitoring**

Saint Stephen's College is committed to the annual review of this Strategy and will also record, monitor and report to the College Board and others as appropriate regarding any breaches of the Strategy. In addition, The College is committed to other various compliance and monitoring arrangements made under relevant policies and procedures.

**Helpful Links**

- Independent Schools Queensland's [Child Protection Decision Support Trees](#)
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' [Child Protection Guide](#)