



Child Protection Policy

Rationale

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about the health and safety of the Saint Stephen's College staff and students and about the appropriate conduct of the College's staff and students. This policy forms a part of Saint Stephen's College's written processes about how the College will respond to harm, or allegations or harm, to students under 18 years old, and the appropriate conduct of the College's staff and students, to comply with legislative requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all people who access the College campus or Childcare Centre and covers information about the reporting of harm and abuse.

Responsibility

Principal and College Board.

Last Review: August 2020 Next Review: 2022

Definitions

- **Section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* - "Harm"**, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being.
 1. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
 2. Harm can be caused by:
 - a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - b) sexual abuse or exploitation.
 3. Harm can be caused by:
 - a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or
 - b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
- **Section 10 of the *Child Protection Act 1999* - A "child in need of protection"** is a student who:
 - a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and
 - b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.
- **Section 364 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* - "Sexual abuse"**, in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances:
 - (a) the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
 - (b) the relevant person has less power than the other person;
 - (c) there is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.
- 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.

Responding to Reports of Harm

When the College receives any information alleging 'harm' to a student (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) it will deal with the situation compassionately and fairly so as to any likely harm to the extent it reasonably can. This is set out in the College's Child Risk Management Strategy. Information relating to physical or sexual abuse is handled under obligations to report set out in this policy.

References

- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Act 2001 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulation 2001 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulations 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- Saint Stephen's College Staff Handbook
- Saint Stephen's College Child Protection Risk Management Statement
- Saint Stephen's College Child Protection Protocols

Principles

The College 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 recognition that people who are subjected to abuse are harmed by it;
- The welfare and best interests of the student will always be a primary consideration;
- An expectation that 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;
- 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;
- Act fairly and reasonably towards an employee or volunteer who is the subject of allegations of improper conduct;
- 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; however, the College 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;
- Disciplinary action will be taken against employees who harm others, and appropriate action against volunteers who harm others;
- 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;
- Will cooperate with state authorities in resolving allegations of harm.

Health and Safety

The College will protect students from harm as far as it is reasonably able. The safety, wellbeing and best interests of our students are of primary importance. The College will ensure the health and safety of staff in accordance with relevant workplace health and safety legislation.

Conduct of Staff and Students

All staff, contractors and volunteers must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students. Staff, contractors and volunteers must not cause harm to students. The College will ensure that staff and volunteers have a positive notice ("blue card") as required by the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* or that they are registered teachers.

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 (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 paedophilia 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.

Inappropriate Behaviour

If a student considers the behaviour of a staff member to be inappropriate, the student should report the behaviour to the Child Protection Officers, a member of the Pastoral Care Team or College Executive.

Child Protection Officers

Students or guardians should contact one of the Pastoral Care Team to report any reasonable suspicions of child harm or abuse. Child Protection Officers include:

- a) Kellie Solomons, Childcare Director at the College Childcare Centre (ksolomons@ssc.qld.edu.au);
- b) Katrina McLachlan, Prep to Year 6, her office is located in P-6 Administration (kmclachlan@ssc.qld.edu.au);
- c) The Dean of Students, Kathy Dendy in the Student Welfare Centre (kdendy@ssc.qld.edu.au) or other members of the College Executive.
- d) Years 7-12 Heads of Year, their offices are located in the Student Welfare Centre (Phone 5573 8633): Mick Skehan (mskehan@ssc.qld.edu.au), Sarah Standage (sstandage@ssc.qld.edu.au), Gavin Neuper (gneuper@ssc.qld.edu.au), Shelley Haines (shaines@ssc.qld.edu.au), Sam Cleary (scleary@ssc.qld.edu.au), Karen Doyle (kdoyle@ssc.qld.edu.au).

Dealing with Information about Inappropriate Behaviour

A staff member who receives a report of inappropriate behaviour must report it to the Principal or the Chairman of the College Board, or his delegate. Where the Principal is the subject of the report of inappropriate behaviour, the staff member must inform the Chairman of the College Board immediately in writing.

Reporting Sexual Abuse under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006

Section 366 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member becomes aware, or reasonably suspects in the course of their employment at the school, that any of the following has been sexually abused by another person:

- (a) a student under 18 years attending the school;
- (b) a pre-preparatory aged child registered in a pre-preparatory learning program at the school;
- (c) a person with a disability who:
 - (i) under s.420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - (ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school.

The staff member must give a written report about the abuse or suspected abuse to the Principal or to the Chairman of the College Board, or his delegate, immediately. If the staff member who becomes aware or reasonably suspects sexual abuse is the Principal, a copy of the report must be given immediately to the Chairman of the College Board, who must give a written report about the suspicion to a police officer immediately.

A report under this section must include the particulars required by s.68 of the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006* which are currently:

- (a) The name of the person giving the report (the **first person**);
- (b) The student's name and sex;
- (c) Details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused;
- (d) Details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
- (e) Any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
 - (i) the student's age;
 - (ii) the identity of the person who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the student;
 - (iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse.

Reporting Likely Sexual Abuse under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006

Section 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member becomes aware, or reasonably suspects in the course of their employment at the school, that any of the following is likely to be sexually abused by another person:

- (a) A student under 18 years attending the school;
- (b) A pre-preparatory aged child registered in a pre-preparatory learning program at the school;
- (c) A person with a disability who:
 - (i) under s.420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - (ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school.

The staff member must give a written report about the suspicion to the Principal immediately. If the staff member who becomes aware or reasonably suspects likely sexual abuse is the College Principal, a copy of the report must be given immediately to the Chairman of the College Board, or his delegate, who must give a written report about the suspicion to a police officer immediately.

A report under this section must include the particulars required by s.68 of the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006* which are currently:

- (a) The name of the person giving the report (the **first person**);
- (b) The student's name and sex;
- (c) Details of the basis for the first person reasonably suspecting that the student is likely to be sexually abused by another person;
- (d) Any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
 - (i) the student's age;
 - (ii) the identity of the person who is suspected to be likely to abuse the student;
 - (iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the suspected likelihood of abuse.

Reporting Physical and Sexual Abuse

Under Section 13E (3) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, if a doctor, a registered nurse or a teacher forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child in the course of their engagement in their profession, they must make a written report.

A **reportable suspicion** about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child:

- a) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and
- b) may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

The doctor, nurse or teacher must give a written report to the Chief Executive of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (or other department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999*). The doctor, nurse or teacher should give a copy of the report to the Principal.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) state the basis on which the person has formed the reportable suspicion; and
 - b) include the information prescribed by regulation, to the extent of the person's knowledge.
- Teachers should complete the prescribed form available from members of the Pastoral Care Team.

Accessibility and Awareness of Policy

This policy is accessible on the College website and will be available on request from the College Administration. Each new staff member will be made aware of the policy as part of their induction. Staff and students will be made aware of the policy by its display on the College website.

Training

The College will train new staff in processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students as a part of their induction, which involves written acknowledgement of key policies and procedures. Staff will receive refresher training annually prior to the commencement of the school academic year. Subsequent training may be provided as determined by the College.

Implementing the Processes

The College will ensure it is implementing processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students by auditing compliance with the processes annually. This responsibility is delegated to the Assistant to the Principal - Administration and Compliance.

Accessibility of Processes

Processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students are accessible on the College website and will be available on request from the College Administration.

Complaints Procedure

Suggestions of non-compliance with the College's processes may be submitted as complaints under the College Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy to Bob Nicol, Assistant to the Principal Administration and Compliance via (bnicol@ssc.qld.edu.au)

Policy Review

Child Protection Policy and procedures will be reviewed every two years by the Assistant to the Principal Administration and Compliance. Last review completed February 2020.

Useful Contacts

Commission for Children and Young People	(07) 3247 5525
College of Teacher Registration	(07) 3377 4777
Department of Communities	(07) 5525 5888
Police	000 (emergency calls only)
Coomera Police Station	(07) 5573 6111
Regional Police Headquarters	(07) 5570 7999
Father Andrew Kinmont	(07) 5573 8600 / 0417 711 699
College Nurse	(07) 5573 8615
College Counsellor	(07) 5573 8620