

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



PREAMBLE

St Columba College is committed to providing students with excellent educational opportunities within a safe environment. Safety, a basic human right, is a pre-requisite for St Columba College to be able to carry out its mission to educate. We are committed to witnessing to Gospel values that highlight and respect the dignity of the individual person.

Children are among the most vulnerable people in society. They are vulnerable to exploitation and victimisation by those who are more powerful. Safety and protection from all forms of abuse are the fundamental rights of all children.

The St Columba College Council acknowledges the complex societal factors which contribute to child abuse and requires that the College be a place where children can be safe and feel safe. Our College operates in a wider community context where legal requirements exist and where we have an obligation to ensure that all of our legal obligations in relation to child protection are met.

1. Underlying Principles

The safety and well being of the child must be the paramount consideration in every situation.

- The dignity of the human person is fundamental to Anglican and Catholic teaching.
- Children have the right to be safe and feel safe.
- Children's development is dependent on the quality of care provided by the significant adults in their lives.
- The family is recognised as being the unit primarily responsible for the care and protection of the child.
- Where families are not providing the care consistent with their obligations or where a child's welfare is at risk, or suspected to be at risk, intervention on behalf of the child is a moral and legal obligation.
- Schools must be places where children feel safe.
- The prevention and treatment of child abuse requires a multi-disciplinary response which is sensitive to cultural diversity and special needs.
- Cultural or other reasons notwithstanding, school personnel must intervene on behalf of children.
- Cooperation with Government Departments and human service organisations in the community is essential in child protection.
- In accordance with the schools' compliance to the legal process, those involved in situations where abuse occurs or is suspected will be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

2. Aims

St Columba College Council recognises the significant role of schools in the prevention of child abuse and takes responsibility for requiring St Columba College to implement child protection practices. The Council will ensure that:

- St Columba College is a place where children are safe and feel safe.
- Our College has in place a Child Protection Policy, practices, procedures and programs.
- Resource allocation for child protection education programs is in place.
- All staff in the College are up to date with child protection and mandatory notification training requirements through the provision of training opportunities.
- Staff is aware of their legal and moral responsibility in relation to mandatory reporting, knowing that they are obliged to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.



- The College has in place a curriculum which provides information for students in relation to protection and abuse issues for students.
- The College Council has in place clear procedures to deal with allegations of child abuse against a staff member.

3. A Guide to Responsibility

3.1 Responsibilities of the College Council

- Monitor the policy and regularly review guidelines and College practices in relation to child safety/protection issues.
- Support child protection initiatives through providing adequate funding for staff training and appropriate curriculum initiatives.
- Support the Principal in carrying out the expectations contained within this policy.
- Provide the Anglican and Catholic Bishops with a copy of our current Child Protection Policy and appendices.
- Provide representation to the appropriate child protection committees established by the Anglican and Catholic Churches if requested.
- Keep the Anglican and Catholic Bishops informed of any allegations of misconduct against a staff member of the College.
- Ensure that an inter-agency approach to the management of child protection is fostered and supported.

3.2 Responsibilities of the Principal

- Provide a safe school environment which ensures that all students are protected.
- Ensure all staff members are adequately trained in Mandatory Reporting.
- Act in a manner consistent with current child protection procedures at St Columba College.
- Ensure College personnel understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations and responsibilities and follow correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect.
- Support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification.
- Ensure that policies and organisational procedures provide children with a safe school environment. This will be done in consultation with the College Council.
- Promote models of behaviour between school personnel and children based on mutual respect and consideration.
- Ensure that student management practice respects the dignity of students.
- Provide training and development for school personnel in child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- Initiate and support the implementation of child protection and abuse prevention curriculum at the classroom level to ensure that all children have access to these programs throughout their school years.
- Monitor and evaluate child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- Provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- Ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.



- Implement child protection procedures if there is an incident requiring action.
- Work with the Professional Development Committee in establishing a routine for staff to update qualifications in relation to mandatory procedures.
- Report annually to the College Council on staff training and development initiatives.
- Follow procedures set out in the 'Guidelines for Dealing with Abuse Allegations against Staff' when dealing with such allegations.

3.3 Responsibilities of College Staff

- Treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect students in their care.
- Act in a manner consistent with St Columba College Child Protection Procedures.
- Notify the Principal and other legal authorities if, in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.
- Provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for students.
- Undertake and actively participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification.
- Teach students skills, and develop understanding within students which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety.
- Assist students to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.