

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy



St Columba
College

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Policy Title	Safeguarding Children and Young People
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1. Purpose

Our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy aims to demonstrate the strong commitment of the College to promoting children's wellbeing and safeguarding children from harm, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

It is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of our approach to the College as a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the College's entire Child Safeguarding practices, processes and culture.

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the Principles of Good Practice
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in South Australia.

See also, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

2. Scope

The College's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy applies to all adults in the College community, including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/caregivers and other family members. This policy applies in all College environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site College grounds (e.g., camps and excursions).

3. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people who come to St Columba College have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The College regards its child safeguarding responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the College community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

4. Child Safeguarding Standards

In addition to implementing the Principles of Good Practice, the College's commitment to child safety is based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd., which set out the following overarching standards that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and other harm. These standards directly align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles), which have been endorsed by all Australian states and territories. They are also similar to the Principles of Good Practice.

5. The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) expand on the National Principles. They set out 10 overarching standards that guide the development of a child safe culture for Catholic entities. Compliance

with the NCSS is mandatory for all Catholic entities. As an Anglican and Catholic school we endorse these standards.

They are:



Standard 1
Committed leadership, governance and culture



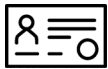
Standard 2
Children are safe, informed and participate



Standard 3
Partnering with families, carers and communities



Standard 4
Equity is promoted and diversity is respected



Standard 5
Robust human resource management



Standard 6
Effective complaints management



Standard 7
Ongoing education and training



Standard 8
Safe physical and online environments



Standard 9
Continuous improvement



Standard 10
Policies and procedures support child safety

6. Children and Young People's Rights to Safety, Information and Participation

St Columba College is a child safe and child-centred organisation. Our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about classroom learning, assessment environments, organisational structure, delivery of services and management of facilities.

We ensure students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our school environment and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

7. Parents/Caregivers, Families and Community Involvement at the College

The College recognises that parents and caregivers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure families and the community know about the College's operations and policies, including its Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Student Personal Responsibility Policy, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and the community in receiving feedback about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments. We build cultural safety at the College through partnerships with families.

8. Valuing Diversity in the College Community

Our College values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- welcome students and families of diverse sexual identity and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensure all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

9. Child Safeguarding

St Columba College is committed to the effective implementation of our approach child safeguarding and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach, identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our approach to child safeguarding relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from abuse or other harm, and establishes practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the College. It includes:

- Student Personal Responsibility Policy
- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse or other harm
- clear procedures for reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to allegations of child abuse or other harm
- strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents and caregivers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Leadership Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Notifications to DCP, and reporting to SAPOL
- pastoral care and wellbeing strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability

- child safeguarding professional development
- protocols regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
- guidelines for record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of St Columba College's induction process, all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors are required to complete induction in our child safeguarding policies, practices and procedures. All Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing child safeguarding training. Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors are supported and supervised by the College's WHS Compliance Officer and Leadership Team to ensure that they are compliant with the College's commitment to child safety.

10. Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the College

Our child safeguarding policies and procedures provide detailed guidance for members of College Council, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally to one of our College's Child Safeguarding Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant external authorities.

Students at the College are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College. These include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/caregivers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact the College Principal. If the concern relates to the Principal, the Chairperson at St Columba College can be contacted by emailing chairperson@stcolumba.sa.edu.au

Students, parents/caregivers, family members and other community members can also raise child safety incidents or concerns through the College's Grievance Policy.

Any person can also contact a member of the Leadership Team if they have concerns regarding the College's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police must be called on 000.

11. Responsibilities for Child Safeguarding at the College

Child Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the College community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students. Specific responsibilities include:

Senior Staff Members

A number of senior staff members are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child safeguarding within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents. Contact details for our senior staff members are set out below:

Name	Position	Email
Darren Pitt	Deputy Principal	darren.pitt@stcolumba.sa.edu.au
Deirdre Walters	Head of Senior School	deirdre.walters@stcolumba.sa.edu.au

Shane Dowling	Head of Middle School	shane.dowling@stcolumba.sa.edu.au
Julie Hancock	Head of Junior School	julie.hancock@stcolumba.sa.edu.au
Craig Bonnett	Director of Wellbeing	craig.bonnett@stcolumba.sa.edu.au
Melissa Williams	Director of OSHC	melissa.williams@stcolumba.sa.edu.au
Sara Young	Human Resources Manager	sara.young@stcolumba.sa.edu.au

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the College, and the Child Safeguarding Program. The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the College.

The College Principal has additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries from the wider community and coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Leadership Team and College Council.

College Council

Under the St Columba College governance structure, the College Council is responsible for working in collaboration with the Principal to ensure consistency and commitment to the mission and vision of the College. As part of this role, the College Council has responsibility for approving major College policies, their implementation and review.

The College Leadership Team

Each member of the College Leadership Team is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the College's child safeguarding processes and practices to be effectively implemented within the College, and to support the Principal in the practical application of the College's child safeguarding policies, strategies, procedures and work systems.

Staff Members

All Staff are required to know and comply with our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Student Personal Responsibility Policy, be familiar with our child safeguarding approach and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm and hold a current Working with Children Checks.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers.

Volunteers

All Volunteers at the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

All Volunteers are required to comply with our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Volunteers are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers.

Contractors

All Contractors engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

All Contractors engaged by the College are required to comply with our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Contractors are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm. The College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and College cleaners. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, and have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.

External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College. The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in all College environments. All External Education Providers engaged by the College are required by the College to comply with our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Student Personal Responsibility Policy.

St Columba College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Safe Human Resources Management

St Columba College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors. Our recruitment procedures ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. All Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

The College ensures that the College Leadership Team, Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors undergo child safeguarding induction, and ongoing education and training as part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from harm.

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors are subject to regular supervision and performance monitoring while engaging with students.

The College ensures that professional development programs for Staff include child safeguarding education and training programs.

12. Child Safe Risk Management

The College recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. The College has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Register to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all College environments.

13. Record Keeping

The College is committed to best practice record keeping. In accordance with our policy, and as required by our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the College are recorded using the Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse or Other Harm Template.

In maintaining records of child safety incidents or concerns, the College maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

14. Policy and Procedures

St Columba College is committed to the continuous improvement of our child safeguarding procedures. The College's approach is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

The College is committed to actively seeking, actioning, and incorporating into this Policy, feedback from students, families, the wider College community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, and will communicate any adjustments or amendments widely throughout the College community.

15. Auditing

Internal and external audits will be undertaken periodically.

16. Non-Compliance with Our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

St Columba College enforces this Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and our Student Personal Responsibility Policy. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

17. Related Policies, Procedures and Resources

The College considers itself bound by the following additional procedures and resources:

- Code of Conduct for Staff employed at St Columba College
- St Columba College Student Personal Responsibility Policy
- Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young people
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- SACCS Reporting Harm of Children and Young People Procedure
- Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young people
- Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

Our policies and procedures are informed by the following documents:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (Archdiocese of Adelaide)
- SACCS Duty of Care Policy
- SACCS Duty of Care Procedure
- SACCS Managing Allegations of Misconduct – Guidelines