



# ST MARY'S COLLEGE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Child Protection Policy is framed within the VISION STATEMENT for South Australian Catholic Schools and is underpinned by the *Keeping Them Safe: Child Protection Curriculum*. The Catholic School is a community that:
  - witnesses to Gospel values
  - respects individual dignity
  - values cooperation
  - challenges its members to be critical and reflective in their search for truth.
- 1.2 The policy is based on the Gospel values of freedom and justice for all people and an underlying belief in their dignity and uniqueness.
- 1.3 Safety, a basic human right, is a pre-requisite for the Catholic school to be able to carry out its mission to educate.
- 1.4 Children are among the least powerful 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 fundamental rights of all children.
- 1.5 St Mary's College acknowledges the complex societal factors that contribute to child abuse and asks that society is a place where children are safe and feel safe. This requirement is met by providing a Child Protection Policy that develops and implements relevant practices, procedures and programs for all students.
- 1.6 Catholic Schools operate in a wider community context where legal requirements exist and where they have an obligation to
  - protect children
  - provide a secure, safe environment where children can be safe and feel safe
  - intervene on behalf of children
  - actively work towards empowering children
  - ensure the principles of care, protection and safety are implemented.

## 2. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The dignity of the human person is fundamental to Catholic teaching.
- 2.2 Children have the right to be safe and feel safe.

- 2.3 Children's development is dependent on the quality of care provided by the significant adults in their lives.
- 2.4 The family is recognised as being the unit primarily responsible for the care and protection of the child, and schools work in partnership with families.
- 2.5 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 obligatory.
- 2.6 St Mary's College must be a place where children feel safe.
- 2.7 The prevention and treatment of child abuse requires a multi-disciplinary response that is sensitive to cultural diversity and special needs.
- 2.8 Cultural or other reasons, notwithstanding, school personnel must intervene on behalf of children.
- 2.9 Cooperation with Government Departments and Human Service organisations in the community is essential in child protection.
- 2.10 Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and co-operation with Church, government, police and human service agencies.
- 2.11 People who are involved in situations where abuse occurs or is suspected are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

St Mary's College recognises the significant role it shares in the prevention of child abuse and takes responsibility for implementing child protection practices.

St Mary's College ensures adequate resource allocation for child protection education and programs in addition, and accepts that schools must be a place where children are safe and feel safe.

St Mary's College has a responsibility to ensure that it meets these requirements through the provision of child protection policy, practices, procedures and programs.

St Mary's College requires that all staff are educated in the area of child protection and mandatory notification, are legally mandated, and therefore obliged to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

St Mary's College provides protection and abuse prevention curriculum, including the *Keeping Them Safe: Child Protection Curriculum* for students primarily through the Care Education Program, as well as integrated through other curriculum areas such as: Physical Education/Health and Religious Education.

### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Responsibilities of College Personnel**

- To treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children in their care.

- Provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.
- Participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification.
- Teach children skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety.
- Assist children to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours that recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.

If anyone suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is being abused or neglected they are required as mandated notifiers to report. To make a report, you need to phone the **Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78** or email <https://reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au>

When making a notification staff are required to:

1. Complete the *Pre-Notification Checklist: Education & Care*. This is available on the J Drive > Policies & Procedures > Mandatory Notification. It is recommended that anyone making a notification consult with the Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing (SWB).
2. If the notification involves the principal, contact the Chairperson of the St Mary's College Board of Directors, Sue Kennedy-Branford. Sue can be contacted on 8301 6600 or at [sue.kennedy-branford@cesa.catholic.edu.au](mailto:sue.kennedy-branford@cesa.catholic.edu.au). If the notification involves allegations of abuse by a staff member towards a student, the Principal must be notified immediately for follow up.
3. Undertake the report to CARL on 13 14 78 or via email at <https://reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au>
4. Complete Mandatory Notification Record. This is completed in consultation with the Deputy Principal: SWB. It is available from the Deputy Principal: SWB and must:
  - Be completed electronically
  - Printed but not saved electronically
  - Signed by the Deputy Principal: SWB
  - Stored securely in the Principal's office in a file called "Mandatory Notifications".

If you are not sure about reporting, you can call the **Child Abuse Report Line** and get advice - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on **13 14 78** or via email <https://reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au>

5. Notify the Deputy Principal: SWB if they have contacted the Child Abuse Report Line and filed a report.

## **Responsibilities of College Leaders**

- Provide a safe school environment that ensures that children are protected.
- Ensure school personnel understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations, responsibilities and 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 school Board and the parent community.
- Promote models of behaviour between school personnel and children based on mutual respect and consideration.
- Ensure that student management practice respects the dignity of children.
- Provide training and development for school personnel in child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- Initiate and support the implementation of *Keeping Them Safe: Child Protection Curriculum* at the classroom level to ensure that all children have access to this and other child protection curriculum 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.
- Allocate training resources for personnel to assist in the delivery of professional development programs for mandated notifiers.
- Provide advice and support for school personnel dealing with issues of child abuse.

## **Responsibilities of the St Mary's College School Board**

- Monitor and review the policy in accordance with legal requirements and the Church's teachings.
- Ensure that resources are available to facilitate ongoing training and support for mandated notifiers.

## 5. ENACTING THE POLICY AT ST MARY'S COLLEGE

The St Mary's College Child Protection Policy interacts with other aspects of the College, in particular the development of policy, practices and procedures at school level.

Specifically:

- The Care Education Program
- *Keeping Them Safe: Child Protection Curriculum*
- Staff Induction and Training requirements
- Workplace Safety requirements
- Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Students
- The St Mary's College Development of Personal Responsibility Policy
- The St Mary's College Anti-Harassment Procedure
- Visitors to the College Protocol

## 6. Useful Contacts

Child Abuse Report Line	13 14 78 <a href="https://reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au">https://reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au</a>
Yarrow Place Rape & Sexual Assault Service	1800 817 121 <a href="http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au">www.sahealth.sa.gov.au</a>
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800 <a href="https://kidshelpline.com.au">https://kidshelpline.com.au</a>
Parent Helpline	1300 364 100 <a href="http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au/helpline.htm">www.parenting.sa.gov.au/helpline.htm</a>
Central Domestic Violence Service	8365 5033 <a href="http://www.cdvs.com.au">www.cdvs.com.au</a>
Centacare	8210 8200 <a href="http://www.centacare.org.au">www.centacare.org.au</a>
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277 <a href="http://www.rasa.org.au">www.rasa.org.au</a>
Lifeline	13 11 14 <a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>
Headspace	<a href="http://www.headspace.org.au">www.headspace.org.au</a>

## **7. Additional Resources**

Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools Policy

CESA Code of Conduct for Schools

SACCS Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People