CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

APPROVAL OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Principal
College Board Chair

Date: 28 August 2012
Review Date: August 2017
INDEX

VISION STATEMENT ....................................................................................................................... 4
OUR MISSION ................................................................................................................................. 4
PHILOSOPHY ................................................................................................................................. 4
PROTECTIVE PRACTICES ............................................................................................................. 4
DUTY OF CARE - A COMMON LAW CONCEPT ........................................................................... 5
PURPOSES AND AIMS .................................................................................................................... 5
MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH STUDENTS ........................................... 5
Good practice in managing professional boundaries ............................................................ 6
Responding to inappropriate/sexual behaviour of staff towards students ......................... 6
Responding to inappropriate/sexual behaviour of students towards staff ......................... 6
Managing boundaries for staff in specialist roles ................................................................. 7
Counsellors/pastoral care/health providers ........................................................................... 7
Appropriate physical contact by a staff member to assist or encourage a student ............ 7
Good practice with school age children ................................................................................. 7
Using physical restraint where a student’s safety is threatened ........................................... 8
Working with students with special needs ............................................................................. 9
GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES ............................................................................................. 9
RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF ................................................................................................ 9
GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION ....................................................................................... 10
MANDATORY NOTIFICATION PROCESS .............................................................................. 11
Reporting suspected abuse and neglect to Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) ....................... 11
MONITOR AND REVIEW ............................................................................................................. 11
APPENDIX A: MANDATORY NOTIFICATION REPORT TEMPLATE ...................................... 12
VISION STATEMENT
We nurture in our endeavours God’s gifts of holy friendship, a passion for learning and celebration of personal excellence.

OUR MISSION
St Francis de Sales College is a learning community that works together to build an environment in which faith is nurtured in a Catholic Christian tradition. It does this by recognising individuals’ skills and talents while appreciating and accepting their uniqueness.

The College is committed to promoting community and personal fulfillment through life enhancing relationships.

St Francis de Sales, as patron, symbolised the high hopes that are held for every St Francis de Sales student, so that, inspired and guided by his example, each child may:

- promote a culture of life through courage in responding to the challenges that life brings
- foster the engagement of faith and reason
- develop a love of learning and independent thinking
- value and respect individuals, irrespective of position, wealth, racial origin or religious beliefs
- become a socially responsible contributor in the community and to society
- acquire virtue and wisdom and respond generously to others throughout life.

PHILOSOPHY
At St Francis de Sales College we are a believing community where the gospel values of freedom, justice, respect for individual dignity and uniqueness forms the basis of this policy. We believe that safety is a basic human right and a necessary pre-requisite for the College to be able to carry out its mission to educate within a Christian context.

PROTECTIVE PRACTICES
Catholic Education SA is committed to fostering mutual trust and respect between the children, young people and adults who make up their educational communities.

Under the National Safe Schools Framework, Australian schools:

- ensure that roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment are explicit, clearly understood and disseminated
- take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect
- affirm the right of all school community members to feel safe at school.

We at St Francis de Sales College believe that:

- the dignity of the human person is fundamental to Catholic teaching
- young people have the right to be safe and feel safe
- development is dependent on the quality of care provided by the significant adults in young people’s lives
- the family is recognised as being primarily responsible for the care and protection of the children
- where families are not providing the care consistent with their obligations or where a student’s welfare is at risk, or suspected to be at risk, intervention on behalf of the child is obligatory
• the College must be a place where students 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, College personnel must intervene on behalf of children
• cooperation with Government departments and human service organisations in the community is essential in child protection
• people who are involved in situations where abuse occurs or is suspected, are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

DUTY OF CARE - A common law concept
Duty of care refers to the responsibility of staff to provide students with an adequate level of protection against harm. Courts have found that the duty of care owed by teachers to students is extremely high. Staff are required to ensure that the physical and emotional welfare of students is safeguarded. Staff must ensure their own behaviour with students is always regulated by this duty of care both within and beyond the school setting.

PURPOSES AND AIMS
The role of the College is significant in the prevention of child abuse. We take responsibility for implementing child protection practices.

We meet these requirements through the provision of child protection policy, practices, procedures and programs by reviewing them and inducting new staff members.

Our staff are educated in the area of child protection and mandatory notification. We recognise that we are legally mandated, and therefore obliged to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

We provide appropriate learning programs.

MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH STUDENTS
Schools are places where all staff can have significant influence in students’ lives.

The relationship of an adult staff member and student is characterised by differing roles and an imbalance of power based on several things including age, authority and gender.

The staff member is responsible for maintaining a professional role with the student, i.e. establish clear professional boundaries with students.

Professional boundary violations by a staff member represent a breach of trust and a failure to meet a duty of care to students. When staff violate boundaries they risk:

• harmful consequences for the student
• seriously undermining the learning process
• seriously undermining the professional reputation of the staff member
• disciplinary action for the staff member.

Staff need to ensure that they operate within the responsibilities of their role and their expertise. Staff must not, under any circumstances, engage in an intimate, overly familiar or sexual relationship with a
Improper conduct of a sexual nature by a staff member against a student includes all forms of sexual activity.

**Good practice in managing professional boundaries**

Questions to ask:

- Am I dealing in a different manner with a particular student than with others under the same circumstances?
- Is my dress/availability/language different from the normal with a particular student?
- Would I do or say this if a colleague were present?
- Would I condone my conduct if I observed it in another adult?
- Are the consequences of my actions likely to have negative outcomes for students?
- If I were a parent would I want an adult behaving this way towards my own children?

**Responding to inappropriate/sexual behaviour of staff towards students**

A report must be made irrespective of who is implicated.

Staff members must also notify the Principal of their concerns about the colleague so that appropriate procedures can be followed within the school.

If the Principal is the subject of the suspicion, staff must report to the Principal's appropriate Catholic Education Office (Personnel) – the Principal Consultant.

Staff are encouraged to discuss these issues and procedures as part of their mandatory notification training.

Staff may observe behaviours in colleagues that they view to be inappropriate or perhaps are on the border of violating a professional boundary. Through the Principal, the adult concerned must be made aware of the consequences of their actions.

Staff must take action if students disclose information about inappropriate behaviours of other adults on the site. It is not acceptable to minimise, ignore or delay responding to such information.

**Responding to inappropriate/sexual behaviour of students towards staff**

Should a student engage in inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature, immediate respectful steps must be taken to discourage the student. The matter must be reported, documented promptly and a plan of action developed to support the student.

This may involve:

- communication with parents
- referral to and liaison with specialist counselling
- formalised support within the schools which may include closer monitoring or supervision
- referral to and liaison with the appropriate agency with disability specific expertise.

Inappropriate sexual behaviour towards staff, in younger children can elicit a suspicion that a child has been sexually abused him/herself. Staff must:

- make a mandatory notification to the Child Abuse Report line (CARL) on 13 14 78
- consider the safety of other students with whom the student has contact
- develop and document a plan of action and communication with all relevant parties
- seek advice, if required, from Child Protection Services at the WCH or FMC.
If students actively seek a relationship with a staff member that would constitute an inappropriate relationship, staff should immediately report the information to the Principal.

The situation should be managed in a way that respects the emotional wellbeing of the student and provides support to the staff member.

Examples of behaviours that should be reported and addressed are: receiving gifts of an inappropriate nature or at inappropriate times, flirtatious gestures and comments, inappropriate social invitations, and correspondence that suggests or invites an inappropriate relationship.

Serious sexual harassment or assault of a staff member by a student must be dealt with by following normal behaviour management protocols with the involvement of parents and police.

Appropriate counselling and support should be provided to the student and family.

**Managing boundaries for staff in specialist roles**

Counselling, conducting educational/physical assessments, conducting home visits, providing health care, mentoring, coaching or tutoring fall into this category and must be an authorised school activity so that arrangements can be put in place to minimise risk.

The main considerations to these one to one situations are location, time and parental consent/knowledge.

**Counsellors/pastoral care/health providers**

Schools need to find a careful balance between respecting the sensitive and private nature of counselling and, the counsellor’s duty of care obligations for the safety and wellbeing of the student.

Staff in these positions should avoid out of hours contact.

**Appropriate physical contact by a staff member to assist or encourage a student**

At times, staff members will be required to provide practical assistance to a student who is hurt or needs particular assistance or encouragement. The following examples of physical contact that are acceptable are:

- administration of first aid
- helping a child who has fallen
- assisting with the toileting and personal care needs of a disabled student – an individual plan for students with these needs must have been negotiated with parents/carers
- non-intrusive gestures to comfort a student who is experiencing grief or loss
- non-intrusive touch, e.g. congratulating a student by shaking hands. Staff should remember the importance of accompanying such touch with positive and encouraging words.

**Good practice with school age children**

- seek student’s permission to touch
- avoid touching a student other than on the hand, arm, shoulder, or upper back
- don’t be with a student in a one-on-one, out of sight situation and never touch a student in such a situation
- don’t presume that a hug or a touch is acceptable to a particular student
- respect and respond to signs that a student is uncomfortable with touch
• discourage younger children from unnecessary reliance on touching such as holding hands or wanting to have hugs or cuddles.

Under no circumstances should staff engage in any form of conduct which might cause physical or emotional harm to students.

**Using physical restraint where a student’s safety is threatened**

This can involve:

• coming between children
• blocking a child’s path
• leading a child by the hand or arm, shepherding a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the upper back
• removing potentially dangerous objects
• using more forceful restraint.

Physical restraint should only be used after all non-physical interventions have been exhausted and a student is:

• attacking another student or staff member
• posing an immediate danger to themselves or others.

Physical restraint is not to be used as a response to:

• property destruction
• school disruption
• refusal to comply
• verbal threats
• leaving a classroom or the school

unless student safety is clearly threatened.

Appropriate physical force may be permitted to ensure the employer’s duty of care to protect students and staff from foreseeable risks of injury is met.

The restraint must be reasonable in proportion to the circumstances of the incident.

Parents should be informed at the enrolment stage of the College policy on physical contact with students.

It is necessary to document:

• the name of the child/children involved
• the location of the incident
• the name of witnesses (staff and/or children)
• incident outline (including child’s behaviour, what was said, steps taken, degree of force applied, and how applied)
• child’s response and outcome
• details of any injury or damage to property.
Other actions to be taken:
- inform parents promptly and fully of any incident involving the physical restraint of their child
- ensure sector specific guidelines re documentation are followed
- provide/offer confidential debriefing etc.

Don’t use restraint that involves:
- force applied to the head or neck
- restrictions to breathing
- punching
- kicking
- holding by the hair or ear
- confining a student in a locked room or limited space without access to staff.

**Working with students with special needs**

Their vulnerabilities mean they have an increased reliance on the adults providing their care to protect them from harm. Immediately reporting any inappropriate behaviour towards students from other adults is a critical obligation of staff.

**GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

In support of this policy St Francis de Sales College will:
- work to provide a safe school environment which ensures that young people are protected
- ensure staff 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 staff directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification
- ensure in consultation with the Executive team and parents, that policies and organisational procedures provide students with a safe school environment
- ensure that the way staff and students relate is based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensure that behavioural practices respect the dignity of children
- ensure knowledge of and compliance with custody orders and restraining orders
- provide training and development for staff in child protection and abuse prevention curriculum
- implement child protection and abuse prevention curriculum and ensure that all students have access to these programs appropriate to their year level
- ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning students in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF**

Staff must ensure that they:
- treat students with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide duty of care and protect students in their care.
- participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification.
- recognise they are a mandated notifier and therefore required to report suspected child abuse to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78
- inform the Principal that they have completed a notification to the Child Abuse Report Line
- provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for students
• teach students skills and understanding 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.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

We seek to develop education and care practices which:
• ensure a safe environment for students at St Francis de Sales College
• support students to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths
• respect the diverse and special needs of students
• are sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour which may be indicative of abuse.

We seek to provide training and development opportunities to:
• ensure staff understand their obligations and responsibilities as mandated notifiers and develop appropriate procedures
• provide the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for students and enable them to continually build on this.

We seek to develop partnerships between the College, parents and the community which:
• promotes safe environments for our students wherever they are
• are based on effective communication
• promote community understanding of personal safety programs
• acknowledge and provide for diversity e.g. cultural, special needs.

We seek to develop mandatory reporting systems which are clear and understood by all staff so that they:
• are provided with clear written information relevant to their employment
• know about support mechanisms in the school
• are able to participate in training and development.

We seek to provide programs which support students to:
• develop knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and maintain personal safety
• participate in a range of programs which respond to their individual needs and interests
• 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.

We will review policy practices and procedures so that:
• mandated reporting training records are kept and regularly updated
• access to child protection curriculum training is provided
• support mechanisms for school personnel notifying are regularly communicated
• school personnel are informed of any changes to legislation, policy and procedures.
MANDATORY NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Reporting suspected abuse and neglect to Child Abuse Report Line (CARL)

It is a legislated requirement for teachers/support staff to report suspected abuse and neglect to CARL (the checklists and proformas are for your assistance).


The Mandatory Notification Report template is a means of record keeping. This document would not be stored on the student's file, but in a separate file in the Principal's office for suspected abuse reports. The message in the DVD is that it is best practice to record notes CARL reports and the proformas provided are to assist with this process.

MONITOR AND REVIEW

The Principal and the College Board reserve the right to review policies, as they deem necessary. In general policies will be routinely reviewed every two (2) years unless stated otherwise in a given policy.

Supporting Documents
SACCS Child Protection Policy 2000
South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People
Catholic Education South Australia Child Protection Curriculum, Teacher Support Module for SA Catholic Schools
Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young People
Fact Sheet 1. What is Child Abuse and Neglect?
Sexual Behaviour Policy
### Mandatory Notification Record

**Name of Child / Young Person including Also Known As:**

Type text here

**DOB and Year Level:**

Type date here

**Aboriginal:**

☐ YES

**Torres Strait Island:**

☐ YES

**Student with Disability:**

☐ YES

**Under the Guardianship of the Minister:**

☐ YES

**Name of Notifier:**

Type text here

**Names of other contributing to Notification:**

Type text here

**Date of Notification:**

Type date here

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<th>Non-Family Related</th>
<th>Type of Notification</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult (Employee/volunteer/contractor at the site?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minor (Child/young person at the site?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-notification Phone Call to: Child abuse report line OR Case worker</td>
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Child Protection Policy 12
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<th>Additional Information if relevant (for example advice received in conversation with CARL).</th>
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