



**St Francis de Sales**  
COLLEGE

# **CHILD PROTECTION**

# **POLICY**

**Principal: Gavin McGlaughlin**

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**College Board Chair: David Kyriacou**

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## **1. VISION STATEMENT**

St Francis de Sales College aspires to be a leader in education serving the Adelaide Hills community. Grounded in our Catholic values and in partnership with families, all community members are known and loved as an individual made in the image of God.

Providing a contemporary and inclusive education, relationship and engagement empowers students to be self-motivated creative and courageous learners.

Our students' growth mindset inspires them to achieve their personal best in all aspects of their school life and develops confident graduates eager to impact their local and global community.

## **2. OUR MISSION**

"Be who you are and be that well" - St Francis de Sales

## **3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE**

This policy identifies the breadth of procedures committed to by St Francis de Sales College in the provision of education and care services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the young people entrusted to its care.

## **4. RATIONALE**

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.

The St Francis de Sales College community believe that:

- The dignity of the human person is fundamental to Catholic teaching
- Young people have the right to be safe and feel safe
- The College must be a place where students feel safe
- Unencumbered 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 their children
- Where families are not providing the care consistent with their obligations, or where a young person's welfare is at risk, or suspected to be at risk, intervention on behalf of the child is obligatory
- College personnel must intervene on behalf of children where need dictates
- Cooperation with Government departments and human service organisations in the community is essential in meeting our full commitment to child protection
- People who are involved in situations where abuse occurs, or is suspected, are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

## 5. ALIGNMENT WITH ARCHDIOCESE

The College develops its procedures and practices ensuring they align with the principles applicable to all agencies of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, seeking to:

- Ensure all children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm and risk of harm through:
  - Compliance with all legislative requirements
  - Professional duty of care
  - Pastoral care
- Promote safeguarding children and young people as everyone's responsibility
- Build a culture which prioritises and maintains safe environments for all through policy compliance and review for continuous improvement
- Provide children and young people with opportunities to be heard
- Acknowledge and respond to the particular needs of children and young people from diverse backgrounds, including children with disability and children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage
- Plan for safe, open and supportive environments and identify any areas of risk
- Deliver relevant safeguarding training, education programs and provide guidance to those with roles which engage children and young people
- Develop and implement protective systems and safe transparent practices which are both preventative and responsive
- Raise, report and respond appropriately to all signs, indicators of harm, risk of harm and abuse including disclosures and concerns of inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people.

## 6. EDUCATION

The College prioritises education as the key preventative tool in maintain safe environments for our students, in their lives at school and beyond.

We commit 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.

St Francis de Sales College is a mandated child safe environment with legal, policy and procedural requirements for staff and volunteers, and the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) requires its schools to implement child safety policies and practices, including child safety education.

The Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum provides the framework to teach children and young people from Reception to Year 12, in an age-appropriate way, to recognise abuse, talk to trusted adults and understand ways to keep themselves safe.

The *Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum* is mandated in all Catholic schools in South Australia and our teachers undertake professional learning to implement this important area of curriculum.

## 7. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Parents and Carers are encouraged to be involved with the College in relation to child safety and wellbeing initiatives.

These websites have further information for schools, families, children and young people as resources and can provide support.

[Bullying. No Way!](#) - developing safe and supportive schools together.

[Think U Know Australia](#) - an internet safety program for families and schools.

[ESafety Commissioner](#) - The Commissioner provides a number of resources for families and schools that help young people know how to stay safe online.

The following organisations assist schools, families and young people with information regarding the health and wellbeing of young people. These websites provide helpful resources and fact sheets on topics such as anxiety, depression, bullying and how to support children.

<https://headspace.org.au/>

<https://www.youthbeyondblue.com/>

Where families, children and young people need urgent assistance, these services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

### **Kids Helpline**

Free call 1800 55 1800

### **Parents Helpline (Child and Youth Health)**

1300 364 100

## 8. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct, provided to all staff at time of employment, (<https://cesacatholic.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/CESAShare/Governance/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=Dk7O5c>) provides a framework for decisions and actions and articulates the standards of conduct required of all staff employed by Catholic Education SA. The document explains the principles covering appropriate conduct in a variety of contexts and outlines the minimum standard of behaviour expected from staff.

It includes a section for staff on “Child Safeguarding” which outlines the legal and professional obligation to safeguard the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people with whom they come into contact as part of their employment. This obligation applies to all children and young people including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with particular vulnerabilities, for example, children who can’t live at home. It reiterates that all staff must understand and observe child protection legislation and follow all relevant policies, procedures, standards and instructions with regard to the safety of children and young people, and maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their behaviour towards children and young people.

## 9. STAFF ACCREDITATION AND TRAINING

Staff require a current Working With Children Check (WWCC), which must be updated every 5 years. This process, undertaken by the Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit, involves checking criminal history and other relevant information to determine an individual's suitability to work safely with children.

WWCC requirements also apply to volunteers and third party providers, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is always the priority.

The College supports staff to meet their requirements under this policy through regular training and professional development opportunities, designed to:

- Ensure staff understand their obligations and responsibilities, including but not limited to, their responsibility as mandated notifiers
- Build capacity in the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for students that enables continuous improvement to occur in this space.

Additional opportunities are provided for staff training to respond to changing priorities, such as "Supporting young people with trauma backgrounds" training accessed as part of the College's commitment to the system-wide DCP scholarship program.

## 10. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

College staff are provided, at time of employment and at regular intervals as professional learning, access and unpacking of the tri-sectorial guidelines "Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people"

[https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/protective\\_practices\\_for\\_staff\\_in\\_their\\_interactions\\_with\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people.pdf](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/protective_practices_for_staff_in_their_interactions_with_children_and_young_people.pdf)

Protective practices for staff provide clear advice about how to build positive, caring and respectful relationships with children and young people in education and care settings. The main intent of this document is to safeguard the emotional and physical wellbeing of children and young people by helping adults to understand appropriate boundaries in relation to their professional role and all interactions with children and young people. By following these guidelines, staff can feel confident about meeting their responsibilities to children and young people as well as their professional ethics and conduct obligations.

The document provides guidelines for staff in areas of:

- Relevant convention, law and policy
- Legal issues and professional boundaries for adults working or volunteering with children and young people
- Guidance for staff in managing professional boundaries
- Staff responsibilities in responding to behaviour
- Appropriate physical contact by a staff member to assist or encourage a child or young person
- Managing challenging behaviour
- Working with children and young people with additional and complex needs

## 11. MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

All College staff are mandated notifiers and required by law to notify the Department for Child Protection if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm. This obligation arises when a mandated notifier forms this suspicion in the course of their employment. All staff and volunteers are required to hold *Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC)* training, to ensure they are aware and empowered to meet their legal responsibility, and to renew their qualification every three years.

A mandated notifier must make the notification as soon as is reasonably practicable after forming the suspicion. College staff use the [Mandatory Reporting Guide \(PDF, 603.0 KB\)](#) for helpful guidance around deciding when to report concerns to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL), and are made aware of their responsibility for a pre-notification discussion with the Principal.

## 12. RESPONDING TO PROBLEM SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Members of staff, and especially members of Leadership and Student Wellbeing teams, are familiar with this tri-sectorial document that is used to shape the College response to supporting individuals and the community when problem sexual behaviour is exhibited.

[https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/responding\\_to\\_problem\\_sexual\\_behaviour\\_in\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_people.pdf](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/responding_to_problem_sexual_behaviour_in_children_and_young_people.pdf)

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist staff to respond effectively to incidents of problem sexual behaviour involving children and young people, as the actions of staff in these situations can be critical to the ongoing safety, wellbeing and recovery of children and young people; to the intervention in family violence, abuse and neglect; and to the safety of people on the site and in the community. Of special importance and use to staff, is the section of the document that provides a matrix to assess observed behaviours as “Age Appropriate”, “Concerning” or “Serious”, with suggested responses for the community to consider.