



Child Protection Policy

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1 Purpose

Scripture informs us that children are a precious gift from God (Psalm 127:3). The inherent value and dignity of each child made in God's image (Genesis 1: 27-28) is reflected by Jesus in Matthew 19:14, where He says, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Accordingly, children deserve protection and adults have the privilege and responsibility to nurture, care, train, and safeguard children to help them live safely and in the abundant life that God seeks for all children. Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society and their safety is of utmost importance. Children need to know and believe that they have the right to feel and be safe at all times.

This policy describes Emmaus Christian College's Child Protection practices. The College affirms that every child has the right to be safe from harm at all times. Child Protection is paramount to schools, which are required to provide safe physical and online environments.

All schools in Australia are required to implement appropriate Policies and Procedures to establish and maintain child safe environments (and which Policies & Procedures must be regularly reviewed and updated).

Emmaus Christian College believes that creating child safe environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by all sectors and stakeholders of the College community. Sharing responsibility for the care and protection of children helps to develop a stronger, more child-focused community.

Emmaus Christian College is committed to adhering to the SA Department of Human Services' *Child safe environments: Principles of good practice*, which state that a child safe organisation:

- takes a preventative, proactive, and participatory stance on child protection issues where the safety and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration when developing activities, policies, and management practices;
- is one that values and embraces the opinions and views of children;
- encourages and assists children to build skills that will assist them to participate in society; and
- takes actions to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

2 Scope of Policy

This Policy applies across Emmaus Christian College to all stakeholders. This includes staff, volunteers, parents/guardians/carers, children, and other stakeholders involved with the College including contractors and visitors. Such involvement with the College across this diversity of stakeholders may be on a regular or occasional basis.

The Policy and its Procedures apply to on the school premises; at functions, excursions, camps as part of the College's activities; College transporting of students; and other situations when stakeholders are representing the College.

Legal Obligations

The College is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and participation of children and young people.

This includes:

- a commitment to:
 - Supporting mandatory notifiers to report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm as outlined in the mandatory notification section of this Policy and its accompanying Procedures;
 - Ensuring safe environments for children and young people are maintained; and
- lodging a Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement with the SA Department of Human Services.

<https://www.esb.sa.gov.au/news/requirements-comply-child-safety-legislation-sa>

It is highlighted that the Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act, 2021 creates a criminal offence of a failure to report child sexual abuse to Police, and a failure to protect a child from sexual abuse. These offences carry a penalty of imprisonment and it is critical that College staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders (e.g. contractors, visitors, etc.) understand their legal obligations. These offences are designed to require adults in institutions including schools to take responsibility for reporting and preventing child sexual abuse in institutional contexts.

3 Policy

3.1 Statement of Intent

Emmaus Christian College affirms that being safe and supported at school is essential for student well-being, development, and effective learning.

The intent of Emmaus Christian College is to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people, which includes keeping children and young people from harm, having zero tolerance towards any child and young person abuse, and ensuring that the whole College community has a responsibility to hold these values and thus obey this Policy & Procedures at all times.

The College strives for the on-going development of a positive, child safe environment and culture with rigorous policies and procedures, seeking to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities and so are prepared and contribute to a constructive, vigilant, and responsive College community.

All staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders are to promote the health, safety, and welfare of students including Child Protection. It is essential that such stakeholders fully comply with the College's Child Protection Policy and Procedures, and behave as positive role models.

At all times, students are to be treated with dignity and respect, are to be supported, and educated appropriately about Child Protection in the College's curriculum.

The College supports the rights of children, values student contributions, and seeks to empower children with the skills and knowledge to help keep themselves and others safe.

3.2 Legislation

The College abides by all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. For further information, please refer to Section 7 of this Policy.

3.3 Risk Management

The College develops and implements a risk management strategy that identifies, assesses, and takes steps to minimise any risk of harm to children.

This involves identifying risks through a comprehensive review of College activities, thoroughly assessing risks, and minimising the risk of harm, as far as is practically possible, through implementing child safe practices.

3.4 Screening and Assessment

All staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders where appropriate e.g. those working with or likely to work with children of the College are to complete Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse, and Neglect – Education and Care (RAN-EC/RRHAN-EC) training. Other third parties are to have completed Working with Children Checks where required.

Working with Children Checks are to be current and updated every five years. The College will not employ a person or permit a volunteer, or other stakeholder as required, to operate for the College unless a Working with Children Check (WWCC) has been conducted in the preceding five years.

The College's screening and assessment processes of potential staff, volunteers, and contractors will also include conducting background checks and risk assessments.

Appropriate documentation of screening and assessment is to be obtained and securely stored.

3.5 Induction and Training

Staff, volunteer, and other stakeholder induction is to include a thorough understanding of the legislative, administrative, social, and educational requirements to protect children and explain a proactive and positive child safe ethos, culture, and practices.

The Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 requires schools are to ensure that staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders who work with children or their records have ongoing supervision, support, and training. Regular information, updates, and training are to be provided. The aim is to develop and enhance performance in order to promote a child safe environment.

Training includes being aware, vigilant, and able to recognise when children and young people's well-being is being compromised; and understanding the needs of children and

young people who have been harmed through violence, abuse, or neglect with the aim of to have connection and recovery advancing their health, safety, and wellbeing.

Appropriate training records are to be maintained and securely stored.

All teachers are required to have current registration with the Teacher's Board of South Australia (TBSA) and it is the individual teacher's responsibility to maintain the currency of their Teacher Registration (every three to five years) and provide a copy of their current certificate to College Leadership (and prior to its expiration).

3.6 Child Safe environments – supervision

Students are to be actively supervised by staff with such supervision appropriate to the age of the students, purposes, type, and location of activity. A comprehensive risk management approach is to occur.

3.7 Mandatory Reporting and Support

The College, as do all schools, has obligations in relation to reporting child abuse and neglect ensuring that all staff and volunteers and other relevant stakeholders are able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm.

Any person who, while in the course of their work or volunteering or other stakeholders (e.g. contracting, visiting, etc.) engaging suspects that a child is being or has been abused or neglected, must report their suspicion to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) Phone 13 14 78. This includes all persons who are not mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the legislation.

Ringling 000 should always be called in an emergency situation.

Mandatory notifiers are required to report suspected risk of harm, child abuse, and neglect.

The Executive Principal is to be fully informed of any mandatory notifications made. This will ensure that the Executive Principal can put in place the appropriate action to support the child and ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of all students. If the concerns or allegations raised in the notification involve the Executive Principal, then the College Board Chairperson must be informed instead.

Emmaus Christian College will maintain records of all mandated reports made.

Students and staff (non abuser) are to receive care and support if involved in a child abuse situation.

The Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021 requires that a prescribed person (refer Definitions at 4 below) **is to report to police** if they know or suspect that another person (the abuser) is an employee of the College who is, has, or is likely to sexually abuse a child.

The requirement to report to police is a different obligation to reporting a child at risk of harm of sexual abuse to the Department of Child Protection (CARL), which still needs to occur.

3.8 Protection of a child from sexual abuse

It is essential that all stakeholders protect, as far as practically possible, a child from sexual abuse. The College has a zero tolerance of any form of sexual abuse.

Under the Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021, a prescribed person (refer Definitions at 4 below) is guilty of an offence if;

- They know there is a substantial risk that another person, who is also an employee of the College, will engage in the sexual abuse of a child, and
- The prescribed person has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove that risk but negligently fails to do so.

All action should be taken commensurate with one's role and responsibility to reduce or remove the risk. It is essential to intervene in a situation where sexual harassment is occurring. In an emergency situation 000 (triple zero) emergency services should always be called.

3.9 Reporting and Responding to Breaches of the College's Child Protection Policy & Procedure

It is essential that any breaches of the College's Child Protection Policy and Procedures, which includes the College's Code of Conduct, Professional Boundaries, and Expectations of Staff, Volunteers & Other Stakeholders outlined in the accompanying Procedures, must be reported as soon as possible to the College's Executive Principal, who will be responsible for an appropriate plan of action and compliance to ensure the safety and support of children and young people. If the concerns or allegations raised in the notification involve the Executive Principal, then the College Board Chairperson must be informed instead.

This communication includes where children and young people have disclosed information about inappropriate behaviours of other adults or where concerning behaviour has been observed. It is essential that appropriate actions are promptly undertaken including Mandatory Reporting as detailed above.

3.10 Privacy and Confidentiality

The privacy of all students is to be respected and personal information is to be managed in accordance with the College's Privacy Policy.

There is no legal confidentiality between College employees or volunteers or other relevant stakeholders that overrides any obligation to report matters of concern to the appropriate government authorities and the College's Executive Principal (or Chairperson if the matter involves the Executive Principal).

3.11 Recognition of Vulnerable Students

The College recognises that vulnerable students may be at a higher risk of neglect or experiencing abuse due to their circumstances. This may include students with disability, students in care, and new arrival students. The College will ensure staff consult with a student with disability, their parent/guardian, and or other relevant associates (e.g. health provider) to determine their ability to advocate for themselves, be mindful of the potential signs of neglect or child abuse that vulnerable students may exhibit, and consider individual student needs and circumstances when teaching the child protection curriculum.

3.12 Child Protection Curriculum

The College recognises the importance of addressing matters raised in the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (KS:CPC) of the children's right to safety and helping keep ourselves safe by talking to people we trust and implementing the Curriculum into appropriate learning areas.

The College is committed to ensuring the curriculum addresses student agency where children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.

Familiarity with and sensitivity to cultural differences of students at the College is considered important given different cultural backgrounds may have different attitudes and traditions surrounding, for example, the concept of touch.

3.13 Online Safety

Online Safety is an essential element in child protection and the College is committed to creating a safer online environment by implementing online cyber safety programs and other resources as considered necessary.

The College's Acceptable Use of ICT and Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedures are to be followed at all times.

3.14 Billeting and Homestay

In situations where billeting and homestay may be involved, it is essential that appropriate and specific planning and risk assessment occur and detailed considerations be given to management and supervision, child protection safety requirements, consent and medical information forms, check of and sign offs by host/homestay families, and Working with Children Checks (WWCC) undertaken by all adults residing in the household of billeting/homestay Australian families. All relevant compliance with legislative requirements and standards is required at all times.

3.15 Discipline, Dismissal for breaching Child Protection Policy & Procedures

Where the College's Child Protection Policy & Procedures including its Code of Conduct, Professional Behaviours, and Expectations of Stakeholders contained in Procedures is breached by stakeholders then disciplinary action, or in the case of serious breaches, dismissal may result.

3.16 Review of Policy & Procedures

The Policy and its accompanying Procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated. Given the importance of the Policy & Procedures to child safety, health and well-being this will be every two years. Furthermore, the Policy and Procedures will be updated when the College materially expands its services to children and young people, or undergoes a substantial change to the responsible or managing authority, or experiences an event or incident where children & young people were or could have been at risk of harm.

3.17 Compliance Statement Reporting

When any changes are made to the College's Child Protection Policy, the College will relodge its Compliance Statement with the SA Department of Human Services.

<https://www.esb.sa.gov.au/news/requirements-comply-child-safety-legislation-sa>

It is noted that the Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement sets minimum criteria for Child Protection Policies & Procedures including:

- A risk management plan
- A code of conduct document
- Procedures for dealing with personal and sensitive information
- Staff and Volunteer recruitment processes including ensuring a Working with Children Check
- Supervision and professional development
- Procedure for reporting a suspicion that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk; and
- Procedure for dealing with breaches of an organisation's child safe environment policy.

3.18 Protective Practices Guidelines

The College utilises "Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people", which was developed collaboratively by the Government of South Australia Department for Education, Catholic Education South Australia, and the Association of Independent Schools of SA (AISSA).

4 Definitions

Duty of Care – is a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety or well-being of others. In an education context, schools and teachers have a duty to take or exercise 'reasonable care' to protect students from risks of harm that are 'reasonably foreseeable' whilst they are involved in school activities or are present for the purpose of a school activity. Child Protection is a key obligation in regard to the College's duty of care.

Harm - is deliberate injury or damage caused to someone or something. A reference to physical harm or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), includes harm caused by sexual, physical mental or emotional abuse or neglect. Psychological harm does not include emotional reactions such as distress, grief, fear, or anger that are a response to the ordinary fluctuations of life.

Mandated notifier – is a person who is 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 the suspicion in the course of their employment (whether paid or voluntary).

Mandatory Notification – is a term used to describe the legislative requirement imposed on selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, and 'notifiable conduct' to government authorities.

Prescribed Person – A prescribed person means an adult who is an employee of an institution which includes a person who is self-employed who carries out work for the institution or who carries out work under a contract of services for the institution or a person who carries out work as a minister of religion or as part of the duties of a religious or spiritual vocation, or a person who undertakes practical training with the institution or carries out work as a volunteer for an institution. Employee therefore includes (but is not limited to) any Principal, teacher, SSO, grounds-person, student teacher, contractor who does not work for the College, ELC, and OSHC employee. It also includes a volunteer such as a Governing Council member i.e. Board or parent volunteer.

Risk of Harm – is defined under the Child and Young People (Safety) Act, 2017 in terms of the impact of behaviour (or an omission) or conditions have upon a child or young person, while ‘abuse and neglect’ may be associated with actions (or omissions) of a caregiver. It is recognised that the scope of behaviours (omission/negligence) or conditions that may put a child or young person at risk of harm may include homelessness, abandonment by a parent or guardian, persistent school absence, child marriage or enabling a child or young person to participate in criminal activity.

Reasonable suspicion – is a requirement which precedes the use of many police powers in Australia and provides validity to subsequent police action. The grounds for reasonable suspicion include sufficient facts to induce suspicion of a reasonable person, belief formed and accountability of the arresting person, and factual basis for suspicion.

Child – means a person under the age of 18 years.

5 Responsibility for implementation, monitoring, and continual improvement

Responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review of the policy is vested at the level appropriate to the following roles:

Emmaus Christian College
Leadership Group
Executive Principal

6 Related policies, procedures and support documents

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with, and is additional to, any other relevant Emmaus Christian College or AISSA policy, procedure or support document. All staff, volunteers, and other College stakeholders are required to comply with the provisions of any such documents, including (but not limited to) the following; Statement of Faith, Statement of Life and Conduct Behaviour Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technologies for Staff/Students, Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedures, etc.

7 Resources

Legislative Context

[Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)

[Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016](#)

[Statutes Amendment \(Child Sexual Abuse\) Act 2021](#)

[Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 \(SA\)](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)

[Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)

[Teacher Registration and Standards Act 2004 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011\(SA\)](#)

[Education Act 2013 \(Cth\)](#)

[Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 \(including National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018\)](#)
[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)

Relevant Conventions

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
[The United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child](#)

Relevant Standards and Frameworks

[Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)
[National Quality Framework](#)
[Safe & Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 - 2031](#)
[Child Safe Organisations National Principles](#)
[Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
[Homestay Standards](#)

Relevant Cross Sector Guidelines

[Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people](#)
[Managing allegations of sexual misconduct in SA education and care settings](#)
[Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people](#)
[Suicide Postvention Guidelines](#)

8 Revision Record

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