

Child Protection Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 VISION STATEMENT for South Australian Catholic Schools.

The Catholic School is a community which:

- *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 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 Holy Family uses the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (2019) as a framework to promote the safety of children through the implementation of policies and activities, prevent, respond to and report concerns regarding child abuse.

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.

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 Schools must be places where children feel safe.

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Approval Date:	18 February 2019	Reviewed:	July 2021
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- 2.7 The prevention and treatment of child abuse requires multi-disciplinary response which 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 Co-operation with Government Departments and human service organisations in the community is essential in child protection.
- 2.10 People who are involved in situations where abuse occurs or is suspected are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 All school staff are to be educated in the area of child protection and mandatory notification.
- 3.2 All staff and approved volunteers are legally mandated, therefore are obliged to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- 3.3 Schools are to provide protection and abuse prevention curriculum for students.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL LEADERS

- 4.1 To provide a safe school environment which ensures that children are protected.
- 4.2 To 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.
- 4.3 To support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification.
- 4.4 To ensure that policies and organisational procedures provide children with a safe school environment. This will be done in consultation with school's board and the parent community.
- 4.5 To promote models of behaviour between school personnel and children based on mutual respect and consideration.
- 4.6 To ensure that student management practice respects the dignity of children.
- 4.7 To provide training and development for school personnel in child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- 4.8 To initiate and support the implementation of child protection and abuse prevention curriculum at the classroom level to ensure that all children have access to these programs throughout their school years.
- 4.9 To monitor and evaluate child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- 4.10 To provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- 4.11 To ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND APPROVED VOLUNTEERS

- 5.1 To treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children in their care.
- 5.2 To notify the Child Abuse Report Line if, in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

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Approval Date:	18 February 2019	Reviewed:	July 2021
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- 5.3 To provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.
- 5.4 To participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification.
- 5.5 To teach children skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety
- 5.6 To assist children 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.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 Develop education and care practices which:
 - ensure a safe environment for children at Holy Family
 - support children to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths
 - respect the diverse and special needs of children
 - are sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour which may be indicative of abuse.
- 6.2 Provide training and development opportunities for education and care-workers which:
 - ensure they understand their obligations and responsibilities as mandated notifiers and develop appropriate procedures at their work site
 - provide the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for children and enable them to continually build on this
 - assist them in their role as advocates, particularly on behalf of very young children
- 6.3 Develop partnerships between the School, parents and community which:
 - promote safe environments for children wherever they are
 - are based on effective communication
 - promote community understanding of personal safety programs
 - acknowledge and provide for diversity eg cultural, special needs
- 6.4 Develop mandatory reporting systems which are clear and understood by Holy Family personnel so that they:
 - are provided with clear written information relevant to their employment
 - establish support mechanisms
 - are able to participate in training and development
- 6.5 Provide child protection programs which support children to:
 - develop knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and maintain personal safety
 - participate in a range of developmentally appropriate experiences, which are responsive to their individual needs and interests
 - gain appropriate support and advocacy from adults
 - 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.
- 6.6 Review policy practices and procedures so that:
 - mandated reporting training records are kept and regularly updated
 - access to child protection curriculum training is provided
 - school personnel are fully trained on a regular basis in Mandatory Reporting, Protective Practices and Child Protection curriculum
 - school personnel are informed of any changes to legislation, policy and procedures.

7. FURTHER READING AND GUIDELINES

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards 2019
Children and Young People Safety Act 2017, SA Government

Document Control:

Approval Date:	18 February 2019	Reviewed:	July 2021
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