

# Child Protection and Obligations of Reporting Policy/Procedures



## INTRODUCTION

Scotch College is committed to protecting the children and young people to whom it delivers a service. Accordingly, the School has developed this policy indicating an appropriate response to child abuse reports and allegations as a guide to all our people in meeting their responsibilities in this area. College personnel are required to report, and respond to any concerns about, or incidents of, child abuse or neglect towards children or young people to whom services are provided. Our personnel are required to respond to abuse or neglect perpetrated by personnel within our organisation or by other persons.

Scotch College will promote equity and respect diversity of the children and young people and their parents who access our services as part of our reporting policy. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children and young people with a disability.

Scotch College takes seriously its responsibility to deliver an educational environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. The School's Child Protection Commitment Statement clearly articulates the commitment to establish and maintain an environment where the safety of every child is paramount.

As part of the School's commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect, this Reporting Policy/Procedure has been approved by the Principal and endorsed by the School Council.

The Scotch College Child Protection and Obligations of Reporting Policy follows the *'Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people'* joint protocol endorsed by the Department of Human Services Child Protection, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Catholic Education Office and Independent Schools Victoria (2010).

A full version of the protocol can be accessed at:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/school/principals/spag/safety/protectionofchildren.pdf>

## RELATED POLICIES

The Child Protection and Obligations of reporting Policy/Procedures should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection Commitment Statement
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Bullying and Harassment – Student Policy
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy

## RELATED LEGISLATION

This policy and prescribed procedures is underpinned by the following legislation:

- Children's Services Act, 1996
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (CYFA)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETRA)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007
- Children's Services Regulations 2009
- Family Law Act

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- Crimes Act 1958
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Well-Being and safety Act (2005)

## SCOPE

**All staff are required to adhere to this policy and the procedures described, which must be read and acknowledged as part of the employment process.**

This policy/procedures document applies to all aspects of the School programme. The application of this policy/procedure incorporates activity at the Hawthorn campus, including the Senior and Junior schools and the boarding precinct, all other external campuses owned by the School, all sporting events, camps and excursions, as well as special events conducted, organised or attended by the School.

## CHILD PROTECTION

### Children in need of protection

Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection must report their belief and the grounds to Child Protection or the Police.

The grounds on which a child is in need of protection include:

- where the child has been abandoned by his or her parents and after reasonable enquiries the parents cannot be found, and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child;
- where the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child;
- where the child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that his or her emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, damaged and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child; or
- where the child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly harmed, and the child's parents have not or are unlikely to arrange for basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care for the child.

### Indications of child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming;
- inflicting on a child any physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; and,
- serious neglect of a child.

There are numerous indications of possible child abuse and indicators of harm. They include:

- *Physical abuse* Physical indicators could include bruises, burns, fractures (broken bones), cuts and grazes to the face, and multiple injuries including internal injuries. Behavioural indicators could include disclosure of an injury inflicted by someone else, wearing unusual clothes to hide injuries, wariness or fear of a parent, reluctance to go home, habitual absences from school without explanation, regressive behaviour, and alcohol or drug misuse.

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- *Sexual abuse* Physical indicators could include injury to the genital area, discomfort in toileting, the Presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, bruising to breasts, buttocks and thighs, and anxiety-related illnesses (anorexia/bulimia). Behavioural indicators could include disclosure of sexual abuse, age-inappropriate sexual activity or behaviour, drawings that are sexually explicit, writing stories that are sexually explicit, regressive behaviour, truancy, depression, delinquent or aggressive behaviour, and sudden decline in academic performance.
- *Emotional abuse* Physical indicators could include speech disorders, delays in physical development and failure to thrive. Behavioural indicators could include being overly compliant, passive and undemanding behaviour, attention-seeking behaviour, poor self-image, age inappropriate behaviour, fear of failure, setting overly high standards, excessive neatness, and depression.
- *Serious neglect and medical neglect* Physical indicators could include consistently being unwashed, inappropriate dressing for weather conditions, consistent hunger and tiredness, and unattended health problems. Behavioural indicators could include begging or stealing food, gorging food, alienation from peers, withdrawal, aggressive behaviour, appearing miserable and irritable, and poor attendance at school.

The child may disclose that he or she has been abused or neglected.

## MANDATORY REPORTING LEGISLATION

Mandated staff are required by law to report to relevant authorities all matters in which they have formed a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection because he/she (the child) has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and his/her (the child's) parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, him/her (the child).

The role of investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or the Police.

Mandated staff are obliged by law to report to Child Protection if, in the course of undertaking their professional duties, they form any reasonable belief that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child.

The following persons employed or engaged by Scotch College are mandated staff:

- any person who is registered teacher with the VIT under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*;
- any person who has been granted permission to teach by the VIT under that Act;
- the Principal; and,
- a nurse.

Mandated staff members should discuss any concerns they may have about the safety and wellbeing of students with the Principal (or his delegate) or the Child Protection Officer, prior to making a report to authorities. This will enable the School to best provide support to the child, or young person, their family and our personnel, where appropriate. Note that Child First can also be contacted for advice if desired.

There may be times when two or more mandated staff members – for example, a teacher and the Principal – have formed a belief about the same child or young person on the same occasion. In this situation it is sufficient for only one of the mandated staff members to make a report. The other staff member is obliged to ensure that the report has been made, and that all of the grounds for that staff member's own belief were included in the report made by the other staff member.

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If the Principal or a member of the School leadership team does not wish to make a mandatory report, this does not discharge the mandated staff member's obligation to do so if he or she has formed a reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. If the mandated staff member's concerns continue, even after consultation with the Principal or member of the School leadership team, that staff member is still legally obliged to make a mandatory report of his or her concerns.

## MAKING A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (CYFA) allows for two types of reports to be made in relation to significant concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a child – a report to Child Protection or a referral to Child FIRST.

A report to Child Protection should be considered if, after taking into account all of the available information, the staff member forms a view that the child or young person is in need of protection, because:

- the harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development;
- the harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development; or
- the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child or young person from harm.

Where during the course of carrying out his or her normal duties, a staff member forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, a report to Child Protection regarding this belief, and the reasonable grounds for it, should be made as soon as practicable.

Staff members may form a professional judgment or belief, in the course of undertaking their professional duties, based on:

- warning signs or indicators of harm which have been observed or inferred from information about the child;
- legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting;
- knowledge of child and adolescent development;
- consultation with colleagues and other professionals;
- professional obligations and duty of care responsibilities;
- established protocols; or
- internal policies and procedures in an individual licensed children's service or school.

The following information is requested when making a report:

- the child's name, age and address;
- the reporting person's reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse;
- the reporting person's assessment of immediate danger to the child or children (information may be requested about the whereabouts of the alleged abuser/s);
- the reporting person's description of the injury or behaviour observed;
- the current whereabouts of the child;
- any other information about the family; and
- the reporting person's relationship to the child.

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When making a report to Protective Services, the name of the Protective Worker receiving the report must be obtained. When receiving a report, Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required. In most circumstances, Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report.

## MAKING A REFERRAL TO CHILD FIRST

A referral to Child FIRST should be considered if, after taking into account the available information, a staff member forms a view that the concerns have a low to moderate impact on the child, and the immediate safety of the child is not compromised.

A referral to Child FIRST can connect children, young people and their families to the services they need, when the following factors may affect a child's safety, stability or development:

- significant parenting problems that may be affecting the child's development;
- family conflict, including family breakdown;
- families under pressure due to a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability or bereavement;
- young, isolated and/or unsupported families; or
- significant social or economic disadvantage that may adversely impact on a child's care or development.

On receiving a referral from a staff or community member, the Child FIRST team will conduct a further assessment of the family and may consult an experienced community-based Child Protection practitioner. This assessment may lead to the involvement of a local family services organisation. In most circumstances, Child FIRST will inform the referrer of the outcome of the referral.

If a Child FIRST team or a registered family services organisation forms a view that a child or young person is in need of protection, they must report the matter to Child Protection.

**If there is uncertainty about whom to report or refer to, contact should be made with either Child Protection or Child FIRST for further advice.**

## PROTECTING THE IDENTITY OF THE REPORTER

Confidentiality is provided for reporters under the CYFA. The CYFA prevents disclosure of the name of, or any information likely to lead to, the identification of a person who has made a report under the Act, except in specific circumstances.

It is an offence for any person, other than the person making the report, to breach this obligation of confidentiality.

The identity of a reporter must remain confidential, unless:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family of the report;
- the reporter consents in writing to his or her identity being disclosed;
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child; or
- a court or tribunal decides that, in the interests of justice, the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

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Information provided during a protective investigation may be used in a court report if the risks to the child or young person require the case to proceed to court. In these circumstances, the reporter may be required to provide evidence to the court.

If Child Protection decides that the report raises significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, it may refer the report to a community-based child and family service, and disclose the identity of the reporter to that service.

However, the CYFA provides that neither Child Protection nor the community-based child and family service may disclose the reporter's identity to any other person without the reporter's consent.

Note, in addition, that if a report is made in good faith:

- it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter;
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report; and,
- it is the responsibility of Child Protection, Child FIRST or the Police to investigate the matters reported.

## WHEN TO REPORT TO VICTORIA POLICE

If there is an allegation of physical abuse or sexual abuse against a staff member or visitor to the School, the Principal must be informed and the matter must be immediately reported directly to Victoria Police for investigation, by telephoning the emergency number 000. If the allegation relates to the Principal, the Chairman of Council is to be informed, and is required to report the matter to the Police.

## FAILURE TO REPORT

A failure by mandated staff members to report a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse is an offence under the Act, and may result in the staff member being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine.

## ADVISING PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

Staff members do not require the permission of parents or guardians to make a report to or undertake an interview with Child Protection, nor are they required to tell parents or guardians that they have done so.

It is the responsibility of Child Protection to advise parents or guardians as soon as possible of any interview. This should occur by the time the child arrives home, or before this time.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff members must respect confidentiality when dealing with cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. They may only discuss case details and the identity of the child and the child's family with those directly involved in the management of the child's situation.

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## CONTACT DETAILS

Department of Human Services Child Protection  
East Division Intake: **1300 360 391**

Child Protection Emergency after hours: **131 278**

Child FIRST (Boroondara): **1300 762 125**

## CRIMINAL OFFENCES

An act that is sexual in nature including: rape, indecent assault, incest, sexual penetration of or indecent act with a child and grooming (which is communicating with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person under whose care, supervision or authority the child is, with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in a sexual act) is a criminal offence reportable to the Police.

Note that the following are now also criminal offences:

### Failure to Disclose

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 has an obligation to report that information to the Police.

However, a report is not required to be made to the Police if the person required to make the report has a reasonable excuse for not doing so. A reasonable excuse includes:

- the person reasonably fears for the safety of any person (other than the alleged perpetrator of the offence) if the Police were informed;
- the person reasonably believes that the Police have already been informed about the information;
- the information came from the victim when he or she was over 16 years of age and the victim requested that the information not be disclosed (except if the victim had an intellectual disability and did not have the capacity to make an informed decision);
- where the information was a confidential communication from the victim to a registered medical practitioner or counsellor who is treating the victim for an emotional or psychological condition.

A person who makes a report to the Police in good faith will not be liable in any way for making the disclosure and their identity will be confidential, unless they disclose their identity themselves or consent to it being disclosed or a Court consider it necessary for them to be identified.

### Failure to Protect

This offence provides, that a person, who by reason of the position of authority he or she occupies within a relevant organisation, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of , or over, the age of 18 years who is associated with the relevant organisation and, who knows that there is a substantial risk that the person will commit a sexual offence against a relevant child must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk.

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## RAISING STAFF AWARENESS

The following strategies will be employed to raise the awareness of all staff to their responsibilities with regard to child protection. All staff will be reminded at the start of each year:

- that each boy has the right to a safe and protective environment at all times; and,
- of their responsibilities with regard to reporting allegations or beliefs of sexual offences against a child under the age of 16.

In addition to this, all mandated staff will be reminded at the start of each year of:

- their obligations with regard to mandatory reporting as outlined in this policy; and,
- their obligations, and expectations of behaviour, with regard to duty of care, as outlined in the VIT Code of Conduct, the VIT Code of Ethics, the Scotch College Code of Conduct and the Scotch College Staff Manual.

## RAISING STUDENT AWARENESS

At the start of each year, each boy will be reminded that he has the right to a safe and protective environment at all times, and that he can seek assistance from a School Psychologist or a counsellor in the Junior School Educational Support Unit if a situation arises that he feels threatens his safety. In the Senior School this reminder will be given by either the boy's Form Teacher or his Head of House; in the Junior School it will be given by the boy's class teacher.

## RAISING COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The School community, including parents and volunteers, will be informed of their responsibilities with regard to reporting allegations or beliefs of a sexual offence against a child under the age of 16 via the Torch newsletter, the Junior School newsletter and the Scotch College website.

A copy of this policy/procedures document will be placed on the School's website so that it is accessible to all members of our community and visitors to the School.

## REPORTING PROCEDURE

These procedures form part of the commitment of Scotch College to child safety, and applies to all forms of child abuse. It sets out how Scotch College will respond to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by, or in relation to, a student of Scotch College, school staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors or other persons while connected to the Scotch College school environment.

The Scotch College school environment is a place made available by the School for use by a child during or outside school hours. It includes our campus in Hawthorn incorporating the Senior and Junior Schools and the Boarding precinct, our online environment (including email and intranet systems), and other locations provided for a child's use, such as locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

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The reporting procedures the School has adopted have been formulated to ensure that:

- the welfare of the alleged victim(s) involved remains paramount;
- the trust of the person making the allegation is maintained;
- confidentiality is provided for all boys, teachers and families involved; and,
- access to support is provided, both internally and through any appropriate external agency, to all boys, teachers and families involved, as needed.

By following these procedures, those charged with the responsibility of reporting allegations of abuse can form a comprehensive understanding of all related matters and incidents. These procedures acknowledge that issues of abuse and reporting are often highly emotional, and by discussing concerns with a designated coordinator, the person making the allegation can:

- view their concerns objectively;
- be supported against feelings of isolation and vulnerability;
- be supported in dealing with their emotional responses or related personal experiences; and,
- further support the alleged victim.

## KEY REQUIREMENTS

If a child or young person is at imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger, our personnel may report the situation directly to the local Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT): Melbourne: **(03) 8690 4056** and/or Department of Human Services Child Protection (East Division Intake: **1300 360 391**, Child Protection Emergency after hours: **131 278**)

Our personnel are required to report any instance of serious abuse or neglect (cases in which a child or young person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm from abuse or neglect) to the Police or Child Protection and to document the report with advice/support from one of the designated Safeguarding Co-ordinators listed below immediately or no later than before ending that person's shift or session of work with our organisation.

- Principal
- Bursar
- Vice Principal
- Head of the Junior School
- Deputy Head of the Junior School
- Dean of Boarding
- The Senior Psychologist and the
- Child Protection Officer

Together these Coordinators form the Principal's Child Protection Committee.

Note that these Coordinators are available for advice and support in any matter concerning potential child abuse.

The Principal has ultimate responsibility for managing the response of Scotch College to any allegations or disclosures of child abuse, and for monitoring the School's compliance with this procedure.

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## REPORTING OF CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS REGARDING ABUSE OR NEGLECT

The person making the allegation, or the staff member contacted, should, in the first instance, and as soon as practicable, discuss the matter with one of the designated coordinators. In the case of an allegation of sexual abuse, the Principal should also be informed as soon as is practicable.

As part of our policy for responding to reports or allegations of child abuse, we have developed a 'Child Abuse Incident Form', which should be used to document any allegation, disclosure, incident or concern regarding child abuse. In situations where our personnel become aware of abuse whether through observation of potential indicators, such as bruises or cuts, or by directly observing potentially abusive behaviour towards a child or young person, they should use our Child Abuse Incident Form to record their observations and concerns as accurately as possible.

The Principal's Child Protection Committee will, in consultation with appropriate authorities, oversee creation of a report to include the completed Child Abuse Incident Form and any other documentation relating to the allegation and subsequent action.

In cases where a report has not already been made under mandatory reporting legislation, the Principal, with the assistance of one or more designated coordinators, will make a report to SOCIT and/or Child Protection Services (Department of Human Services). This contact will be documented by the Principal's Child Protection Committee, and the person who brought the matter forward will be informed that the relevant agency has been contacted.

Once a report has been made, the School will act under the direction of the relevant agency. An investigation of an allegation at school level will not proceed without clearance from the relevant authorities.

### Documentation

Staff members will make a clear and contemporaneous record of any disclosure or allegation of child abuse made to them. Accurate records of all supportive and protective measures, meetings, interviews, telephone conversations and the procedures followed by the School and its response will be maintained and stored securely in accordance with the School's privacy obligations and under the supervision of the Principal.

In taking a report of concern, or of an incident, from others within our organisation our personnel are:

- not to assess the validity of such allegations or concerns, but to report all allegations or concerns to the nominated person or persons within our organisation as described in this policy (the validity of an allegation will then be assessed in the manner described in this policy.)
- to disregard factors such as the authority or position of the persons involved and any pre-existing views about the good character, or otherwise, of any person involved or under investigation.

In situations where a child or young person is making an allegation, our personnel are required to:

- listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without dispute;
- clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions, using our organisation's 'Child Abuse Incident Form';
- record on the 'Child Abuse Incident Form' what was said (where possible, noting the exact words used by the person making the allegation);
- date and sign the record;
- explain to the child (if present) that other people may need to be told, in order to stop what is happening;
- provide reassurance that our organisation will take immediate action in response to the allegation; and,
- report the matter as per organisational policy requirements (as stated earlier).

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## Additional requirements where concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect involve our employees or volunteers

School personnel must report, immediately, to a designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator any breach of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct arising from an action by an employee or volunteer within our organisation. In response to any instance of 'serious' breaches which relate to abuse or neglect ('serious' being cases in which the abuse or neglect has resulted in, or is likely to result in, significant harm to a child or young person) the Principal's Child Protection Committee will investigate and deal with allegations of inappropriate and unacceptable behavior towards a child in line with the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme (See Scotch College Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy), our organisation's general procedures for complaint resolution and disciplinary measures and in consultation with the Police and other authorities.

In response to a serious breach of the Code of Conduct resulting in significant harm to a child or children the Principal's Child Protection Committee will;

- take any action necessary to safeguard the child or young person (or other children or young people in our care) from additional harm through options such as:
  - redeploying that staff member to a position where they do not work with children;
  - additional supervision of that staff member; and,
  - removing/suspending that staff member from duty until the validity of the allegations is determined.
- assist in addressing the support needs of those impacted by the allegation including considerations of cultural safety for:
  - the child and their family (this includes any specific support needs for those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Culturally and Linguistically Diverse; or person with a disability background;
  - the person against whom the complaint is made by, for example, offering professional counselling; and,
  - other personnel impacted by the allegations.
- make clear to all other personnel who are aware of the allegation that:
  - the allegation does not mean the person is guilty, and that the allegation will be properly investigated; and,
  - they are not to discuss the matter with any person, except as directed by the police, child protection authorities and/or the Principal and only in direct relation to investigation of the allegation.

If the allegation is made against a member of the Principal's Child Protection Committee, that person will be excluded from the Committee's process and subject to the same conditions as indicated above.

All instances, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns of abuse or neglect of a child or young person arising from an action by an employee or volunteer within our organisation will be investigated (after the necessary clearance from the Police where required) and will be the subject of a critical incident review. This will also be reported to the Australian Childhood Foundation within 28 days, in accordance with the requirements of the Safeguarding Children Program. This report will be made by the Principal.

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## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Our organisation maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator), except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or young person and/or investigation of the allegation. So as to prevent access by unauthorised persons, our organisation stores any documentation associated with an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child or young person by having:

- hard-copy documentation stored in a locked filing cabinet (or similar); and,
- electronic documentation stored in a password-protected folder (or similar).

The School will maintain and regularly monitor records of child abuse reports as part of our Incident Management processes to ensure that they are responded to effectively in accordance with this policy and that requirements for reporting to external authorities are complied with. These records will inform reviews of the policy.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in this policy/procedures document is not intended to displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

## CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING POLICY

If the School's personnel fail to report instances, allegations, disclosures or concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child or young person – by personnel within the organisation or by others – the School will view such failure as a serious matter.

This policy prohibits all personnel from:

- discussing any concerns or allegations with unauthorised personnel – within or outside our organisation – such prohibition not being designed to limit, in any way, their rights and responsibilities to report their concerns or allegations, but rather as part of our organisation's commitment to ensuring privacy, confidentiality and adherence to the principles of natural justice; and,
- making deliberately false, misleading or vexatious allegations.

Our personnel are obliged to raise any concerns they might have in relation to:

- our organisational policies designed to safeguard children and young people – such as outlined in our 'Safeguarding Code of Conduct' and in our 'Child Protection and Obligations of Reporting Policy/Procedures'; and,
- actions of other personnel within our organisation that contravene our policies, or that may otherwise have the potential to harm a child or young person.

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## SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN CONNECTED TO ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

Any communication of the allegation will appropriately take into account the confidentiality and welfare of all children involved, their families and those making the allegations. In the case of an allegation of sexual abuse, the Principal will inform the Chairman of Council.

Once aware of the allegation, the School will act immediately to provide appropriate support and protection for the alleged victim of abuse and all other children involved. Advice regarding the form and source of this support and protection will be sought from the School Psychologist or relevant external agencies, ensuring that the School is sensitive to the diversity of all children, including the needs of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and children who are vulnerable.

The support might include:

- developing a case management plan for vulnerable students;
- working with the student's family to ensure the School's response is in the best interests of the safety and welfare of the student; and,
- appointing a support staff member to oversee the student's safety and welfare while at school, and to monitor the student's ongoing needs.

Support and protection for the children involved, their families and anyone else affected will be arranged through the Principal's Child Protection Committee.

**MR I TOM BATTY, PRINCIPAL  
(AUGUST 2017)**