POLICY

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Safeguarding Incident Management policy is to outline the actions required to ensure the effective management of safeguarding incidents. Effectively managing incidents includes taking the appropriate actions in relation to incidents while also identifying any changes required to help prevent or reduce harm to our students, and other children and young people who access our activities, programs and facilities; their families; our personnel; and other stakeholders.

Compliance with this policy ensures all incidents are reported and managed in a way that is responsive to the immediate circumstances of the incident, the rights of those involved, and wherever possible, any risks of recurrence are minimised.

This policy assists our School to:

- identify roles and responsibilities for incident management and implementation
- review incident information over time to identify lessons and practical implications, and make recommendations for improvement
- generate and implement improvement strategies and action plans, and
- monitor and review the effectiveness of actions taken.

In adhering to this policy, personnel of Scotch College will promote equity and respect the diversity of the children and young people and their parents/care givers who access our services. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children, young people with a disability, LGBTQI+ children and children who cannot live at home. Our School upholds a family's right to have their safeguarding concerns resolved.

Our policies and procedures reflect child safe legislation and promote best practice and care for the children and young people within our School. Our School Council approves and endorses our Incident Management Policy.

SCOPE

The Incident Management Policy applies to all personnel, including employees, casual staff, Council members, other volunteers and contractors involved with Scotch College.

This policy applies in all our physical and online environments and without fail wherever children and young people are participating in our School's activities, programs, services and/or facilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All personnel within our School have a duty of care and, at times, a legal obligation, and specific roles and responsibilities to ensure that incidents are responded to and managed appropriately. 'Reasonable steps' are taken to prevent harm to children and young people. An incident can occur at any time and may be triggered from a conversation, email, phone call or an alarm.

Our personnel are obliged to report any information relating to:

- incidents, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child or young person, either by personnel within our School or by others
- breaches or actions of other personnel within our School that contravene our policies and procedures, such as outlined in our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

We view failure by personnel to fulfil their role as outlined in the Incident Management Policy as serious misconduct that, depending on the circumstances, may result in disciplinary action or be grounds for dismissal. Further legal implications may also apply.

REPORTING SUMMARY

In the event of an incident, all personnel must follow the steps outlined in the Safeguarding Reporting Policy.

- responding- immediate response to incident or disclosure
- reporting- internal and external reporting, including mandatory reporting
- sharing of Information- confidentiality and sharing between authorities and other stakeholders
- supporting- provision of support for children and young people and others involved

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CATEGORISATION OF INCIDENTS

The effective reporting of safeguarding incidents is a critical component of the Scotch College Safeguarding Program. All staff of the College are encouraged to remain vigilant and alert to the possibility of incidents that potentially expose children and young people to risk. Observing or personally contributing to an incident that represents risk, either real or potential, warrants the submission of a report. Accurate and timely reports enable appropriate actions to proceed to ensure the safety of children and young people. Records of incident reports over time can reveal trends and help to identify areas where further action is required to minimise risk factors. Quarterly reports prepared by the Child Protection Officer (CPO) will be submitted to the Scotch College Council through the Risk Committee.

Safeguarding incidents as described below must be reported on the Scotch College Safeguarding and Code of Conduct Related Incident Reporting form available to all staff online. Incidents can also be reported directly to the CPO or senior staff member who will submit a report on behalf of a staff member if required.

INCIDENT TYPES

SEXUAL

Any act by a person connected to the school (employee, contractor, volunteer, parent, student) that exposes a child to, or involves the child or young person in, any activity that is sexualised in nature beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards.

GROOMING

Predatory conduct undertaken by a person connected to the School to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

PHYSICAL

Any unwelcome, uninvited, physical act inflicted upon a child by a person connected to the school (employee, contractor, volunteer, parent, student).

EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL

Any act by a person connected to the school (employee, contractor, volunteer, parent, student) that results in the child suffering any kind of significant emotional deprivation or trauma. Children affected by exposure to family violence would also be included in this category.

NEGLECT

Any serious act or omission by a person connected to the school (employee, contractor, volunteer, parent) having the care of a child that, within the bounds of cultural tradition, constitutes a failure to provide conditions that are essential for the healthy physical and emotional development of a child.

CODE OF CONDUCT BREACH

An action that contravenes the Scotch College Child Safety Code of Conduct, includes deliberate, inadvertent and unavoidable actions either witnessed or undertaken personally.

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ACTION FOLLOWING RECEPTION OF AN INCIDENT REPORT

An incident report is received by the Incident Reception Group comprising the CPO, Vice Principal, Head of Junior School, Senior Psychologist, Human Resource Manager, Risk Manager.

Based on the indicators present, the CPO proceeds to categorise the incident in discussion with relevant stakeholders if necessary. Determination is made regarding the type and severity of the incident. The incident category is confirmed as either CRITICAL, HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW. Action proceeds appropriate to the category as indicated below.

CRITICAL

Indicators:
- Victim(s) suffered significant harm under one or more of the abuse types requiring immediate protection and possibly medical and/or psychological attention.
- Actions of perpetrator criminal in nature as defined by Victoria Police Reporting Guidelines.

Examples:
- Sexual abuse
- Sexualised touching and/or language
- Grooming behaviour
- Physical assault (persistent bullying, punching/kicking)
- Psychological assault (persistent cyber bullying, verbal threats, derogatory comments including racial slurs)

Actions:
- Incident file created on secure system
- If victim's safety at risk - report made to Child Protection services (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing)
- Reported to Police
- Child Protection Committee convened.
- Council Chair informed.
- Counselling support provided
- No internal investigation unless clearance obtained from police.
- Reported to CCYP (under Reportable Conduct Policy if alleged perpetrator engaged by school)
- CCYP kept informed in line with Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy.
- Reported to ACF (if incident involves a member of Scotch staff).

HIGH

Indicators:
- Victim(s) suffered some harm (or potential harm) under one or more of the abuse types. No immediate protection necessary, medical attention may be required.
- Actions of perpetrator represent a significant breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct or school rules but not considered criminal as defined by Victoria Police Reporting Guidelines.

Examples:
- Taking and keeping photographs of boys on a personal device
- Consuming alcohol while on active duty
- Ad hoc or random act of child-child bullying behaviour of a physical or psychological nature

Actions:
- Counselling support provided if required.
- Relevant members of Child Protection Committee consulted regarding appropriate action.
- Incident investigated internally.
- Incident description and any action taken, reported to School Executive as soon as possible.
- Outcomes/Actions recorded on Safeguarding Incident System.

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MEDIUM

Indicators:
- Victim(s) suffered insignificant or no harm under one or more of the abuse types.
- No protection or medical attention required.
- Actions of perpetrator represent a minor breach of Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Examples:
- Isolated incident of child - child minor inappropriate behaviour such as slap, pushing with intent to harm.
- Accepting a gift from parent/child or young person in excess of the $200 limit
- Single incident of driving a child or young person alone (other than one's own child) in vehicle with/without parental permission

Actions:
- Counselling support provided if required.
- Incident investigated internally where appropriate by VP (SS), Deputy Head (JS), Child Protection Officer, Psychologist, Head of House, Head of School (Junior School, Middle School, Upper School)
- Outcomes/Actions recorded on Safeguarding Incident system.

LOW

Incident investigated internally by VP (SS), Deputy Head (JS), Child Protection Officer, Psychologist concluding;

- No identifiable victim(s) OR
- Alleged victim(s) suffered no harm under the abuse types. Actions of alleged perpetrator(s) deemed not to be a breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct. OR
- Actions of alleged perpetrator(s) deemed to be an inadvertent breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct. OR
- Actions of alleged perpetrator(s) were taken in the interests of ensuring the safety of a child and therefore deemed to be an acceptable breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct. OR
- Claim shown to be unfounded or vexatious in nature
- Outcomes and summary of actions taken recorded on Safeguarding Incident System.

REPORTING TO ACF

As an **ACF accredited** School, reports of incidents **classified as critical** must be made to ACF by completing the Child Abuse Incident - ACF Report Form as follows:

i.   All critical incidents to be verbally reported to ACF within 24 hours; and
ii. Any allegations of child abuse or neglect, that involves our personnel within 28 days of the incident in accordance with the requirements of the Safeguarding Children Program.

Reports to the ACF will be made by the Child Protection Officer.

INVESTIGATION

Internal Investigation

In the absence of an investigation by an independent authority such as the police, after each incident, an internal investigation is conducted by the Child Protection Officer, the Vice Principal and/or Head of Junior School and other staff with direct knowledge of the incident, unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case one or more of them may excluded from the investigation.

- events that led up to the incident
- what the nature of the incident was
- category of the incident

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- impact to children and young people
- action taken by personnel to report
- causes and influencing factors in the lead up to the incident
- procedure followed and actions made by personnel
- support provided to individuals impacted by the incident
- follow up actions to be completed
- corrective actions to be taken by the School which informs continuous improvement
- report to School Council through the Risk Committee of high and critical incidents

When the School lacks the specific skills or impartiality to complete a fair investigation, an incident may be contracted out to an external investigator. The Principal may also initiate an external review. If the Principal is the subject of the allegation, the investigation will be managed by the Chairperson of School Council.

Key Consideration for all Investigations

Careful planning is key to conducting an accurate and procedurally fair investigation. All investigations should consider:

- fairness- ensuring the most appropriate investigator is engaged to complete a fair and unbiased analysis. Investigations should be clear in their purpose, scope and plan. Each reportable allegation should be investigated. Investigations may still need to be completed regardless of if there has already been a police investigation
- sensitivity- The rights of all parties involved should be upheld. Consideration for when, how and with whom interviews are conducted, avoiding any potential conflicts of interest. Interviews must be carried out sensitively and culturally appropriately with victims and witnesses. There should be procedural fairness towards the personnel involved and a reasonable opportunity to respond
- confidentiality- Gathering relevant and appropriate evidence which is clearly documented and stored appropriately. Managing risks during investigations such as impact on service, welfare of children and young people
- outcomes and recommendations- Recommending findings and opportunities for continuous improvement should be clear. Any action which goes against the recommendations should be thoroughly explained and justified.

External Investigation

An external investigation may be carried out by an appropriately qualified independent investigator engaged by the School or by the appropriate authorities, for example Police, child protection, NDIS, Quality and Safeguards Commission.

In some cases, an external investigation may be instigated by an external regulatory body as part of a licencing or compliance requirement eg. Victorian Institute of Teaching.

CRIMINAL ACTS AND MISCONDUCT

Criminal Acts

If while categorising, investigating or reviewing an incident, it is suspected that the incident may involve criminal acts, the incident will be referred to the appropriate external body (i.e. police / child protection) so it can be addressed using the appropriate legal processes.

The internal investigation or incident review may continue separately to the criminal / child protection investigation however the School must act under their guidance, and it will usually be appropriate to suspend the review because of issues relating to the disclosure of information and potential tampering of evidence.

All suspected criminal activity must be reported to the Principal who then becomes the point of contact for the police.

Misconduct

If while categorising, investigating or reviewing an incident, it is suspected that the incident may contain elements of misconduct, the matter should be referred to the School Executive so it can be addressed using the appropriate personnel management processes.

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Where an allegation involves personnel within our School, the School Executive will consider if such conduct contravenes the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct. The School will act in accordance with legal requirements under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The internal investigation or incident review may continue separately to the misconduct processes unless advised by the School Executive to cease the review because of issues relating to procedural fairness and transparency.

INCIDENT REVIEW

The management of incidents categorised as high or critical that impact significantly on the persons directly concerned and more broadly on the safe delivery of services and programs will be independently reviewed. An independent internal or external review of the management of the incident may be initiated by the School Executive.

Incident Reviews and investigations are required for incidents where:

- children and young people or personnel are seriously injured, or their health and well-being is compromised
- external authorities / emergency services are involved
- insurance claims arise
- the reputation of the School may be brought into disrepute
- Work Health and Safety systems and procedures fail.

A root cause analysis of the incident forms part of this review.

A member of the School Executive will be assigned as the Incident Review Coordinator. Incident Reviews must be completed by the Incident Review Coordinator in conjunction with relevant personnel who may include external consultants. These personnel will form an Incident Review Team. To support the objectivity of incident review processes the Incident Review Coordinator and Team should not have been involved in the management of the incident or have a relationship with any of the involved parties, including family, intimate, enmity or friendship.

A review should be completed within 21 days of the initiating date with a further 21 days for completion of any follow-up actions.

Follow-up actions may be identified throughout the process of an Incident Review. These actions will be assigned to a responsible person and a timeframe for completion be established. Follow-up actions arising will be added to the Risk Register to ensure that effective mitigation activities are implemented. The School Executive is responsible for ensuring that actions on the Risk Register are completed within required timeframes.

If there is a risk, then immediate controls will be put in place to control the hazard. This control may be temporary in nature whilst longer term solutions are determined.

The Incident Review Report must be provided to the School Executive. Where follow-up action is required of service / program areas the Incident Review Coordinator will advise the appropriate Manager of the actions to be taken and the timeframes for completion of the actions.

All Incident Review Reports are to be stored on a central and secure system. Regular thematic analysis review of all incidents will be overseen by the School Council through its Risk Committee as a minimum twice per year.

MONITORING

All Incident Reports recorded on the Incident Register are to be regularly reviewed, every quarter by the Risk Committee of Council to exercise governance in relation to the effectiveness of actions taken and to identify areas for improvement.

All follow-up actions arising from an incident review, will be monitored by the School Executive via the Risk Register.

Data trend reports from both the Incident and Risk Registers are to be provided to School Council through the Risk Committee at least every six months to assist with School incident and risk management strategies.

Incidents are not to be closed until actions have been completed and reviewed by the School Executive and persons reporting the incident have been informed of the final outcome.

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Position	Overall Responsibility for Incident Management	Responsibility in the event of an Incident
School Council	• Authorisation of this policy • Media oversight	• Chairman to provide advice and support to School Executive during specified incidents • Manage media interviews and coverage
School Council Risk Committee	• Endorsement of this policy • Receive incident reports for specified categories of incidents, provide support and advice as appropriate, and utilise data to inform School incident and risk management strategies. • Receive incident report trends from Child Protection Officer • Receive thematic analysis review of all incidents • Regulatory reporting oversight	• Review incident reports for specified categories to ensure the effectiveness of actions taken and identify improvements.
Principal and School Executive	• Implement policies and procedures across the School • Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures • Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support and advice to understand and implement this policy and related procedures	• Child Protection Committee convened where the incident is categorised as Critical. • Lead internal and external incident reviews and investigations • Receive a Critical Incident Debriefing Report from the Child Protection Committee • Establish an Incident Review Team and Coordinator where required.
Child Protection Officer and Director of Human Resources	• Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders • Provide training and advice in the application of this policy and procedures • Maintain a current WWCC Register and report any non-compliance issues to the principal • Ensure this policy and related procedures are communicated, followed and implemented • Provide training, support and advice to personnel to help understand and implement this policy and related procedures	• Coordination of personnel performance management and disciplinary procedures • If required contact relevant state department for working with children checks • Assess each situation reported and notify appropriate personnel of the incident as indicated on this policy • Responsible for the response and recovery coordination of an incident • Immediately control the situation including liaising with key stakeholders, obtaining and documenting details of the incident • Report on all high and critical incidents to the Principal and/or the Critical Incident Response Team where required
Child Protection Committee	N/A	• Coordinate the response and recovery of an incident, including coordination of Emergency Evacuation Procedures (if required) • Notifying relevant emergency contacts for staff or clients/service users involved in the incident and provide appropriate support • Coordinate appropriate counselling and support services • Manage internal and external communications include liaising with external authorities • Implementing an ongoing plan of support to ensure follow up concerning the well-being of individuals involved in the incident • Ensuring that the School complies with any additional external / legislative reporting requirements that may arise from the incident
Incident Review Coordinator	N/A	Coordinate an Incident Review including: • Providing a confidential Incident Review Report to the CEO • Making recommendations for the management of such incidents in the future. *(This would usually be a person with no management responsibility for the effected program and who has appropriate skills and knowledge of Incident Management Policy requirements).*
Incident Review Team	N/A	• Assisting the Incident Review Coordinator to acquit their responsibilities as outlined above • *(This would usually be persons who have with no line management responsibility for the effected program and who have appropriate skills and knowledge of Incident Management Policy requirements)*
Personnel	• Awareness of and compliance with this policy and related procedure.	• Where necessary and if safe to do so, provide an immediate management of incident as stated in Reporting Policy • Notify and report to Child Protection Officer as soon as possible of the incident.

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COMMUNICATION

The Incident Management Policy will be communicated to all personnel. Personnel will be involved in reviews of the Incident Management requirements. Any significant alterations to the Incident Management requirements and resources will be communicated to all personnel.

POLICY REVIEW

This document will be reviewed every three years, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but not limited to legislative changes, School changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the School Executive or School Council. Records are retained to document each review undertaken. Such records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Incident Report Form
- Reporting to Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) – Incident Report Form
- Incident Review Report
- Incident Register
- Risk Register
- Risk Assessment

RELATED FRAMEWORKS AND LEGISLATION

Our guidelines comply with relevant legislation.

This policy is in line with the following legislation and frameworks:

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
- Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- WHS Act, 2011

Term	Definition
Incident Register	A register of incidents identified through incident report system.
Incident Review	A review of the management of an incident that: • assesses whether the incident has been effectively managed • assesses whether the Incident Management Policy and processes are effective • makes recommendation(s) to ameliorate any deficiencies in policies and processes.
Personnel	All who work for the School whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including; employees, casual employees, volunteers, Council and Council committee members and contractors
Risk Register	A register of risks identified through risk assessments and incident reviews. Risk mitigation activities and time frames for their completion are recorded. Risks remain on the risk register until risk mitigation activities are completed.

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