

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

This policy describes Southern Vale Christian College's Child Protection practices. Southern Vale Christian College acknowledges 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. Schools are required to implement appropriate Policies and Procedures to establish and maintain child safe environments. These must be regularly reviewed and updated.

Background

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

Southern Vale Christian College is committed to adhering to the *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 action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

Statement of Intent

Southern Vales Christian College acknowledges that being safe and supported at school is essential of student wellbeing, development and effective learning. The safety and wellbeing of our students is a paramount consideration in all that we do.

We acknowledge the vulnerability of children and young people in our care and take a proactive, preventative, and participatory approach to protecting them through:

- the ongoing development of a positive, child safe culture;
- the development, implementation and monitoring of rigorous policies and procedures;
- seeking to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibility, vigilant and if required, prepared to respond in an appropriate and timely manner.

We are committed to:

- Supporting the rights of the child as set out in the *UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child*;
- Acting without hesitation to seek to ensure a child-safe and child-focused environment is maintained at all times;
- Valuing and embracing the opinions and views of children;
- Abiding by all legislation and regulatory obligations including but not limited to the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, and striving for our practices to be regarded as best practice and 'beyond compliance';
- Diversity which is respected, and equity upheld;
- Empowering children with the skills and knowledge to keep themselves and others safe;
- Taking whatever necessary action is required to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

Legal Obligations

Southern Vales Christian 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 in accordance with the Child Safety (prohibited Persons) Act 2016;
 - Ensuring safe environments for children and young people are maintained in accordance with Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017; and
- Lodging a Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement with the SA Department of Human Services.

Responsibilities

Various staff members of Southern Vales Christian College will have different responsibilities regarding Child Protection, including requirements relating to mandatory reporting.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the following:

- Promoting Child Protection wherever possible, and ensuring that Child Protection is included regularly in staff training;
- Ensuring that Child Protection is included in the school's curriculum;
- When a mandatory report has been made, assisting staff to complete site documentation, and then sign the mandatory notification record and ensure this is stored correctly;
- Ensuring that students and staff receive adequate support if involved in a child abuse situation; and
- Ensuring that staff are supported when making a mandatory report; and
- Ensuring that staff, volunteers have completed Working with Children Checks and Responding to Risks of Harm Abuse and Neglect – Education & Care (RRHAN-EC) training, and that third parties have completed Working with Children Checks where required.

Staff

All staff of Southern Vales Christian College are responsible for the following:

- Reporting any suspected abuse to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78;
- Advising the Principal when a report is being/has been made (unless the report involves the Principal in which case it should be reported to a senior leader);
- When inappropriate behaviour has been observed, the staff member or student who witnessed it must advise the Principal who will then discuss the incident with the other person involved; and
- Taking action if children and young people have disclosed information about inappropriate behaviours of other adults on the site.

Code of Conduct, Professional Boundaries and Expectations of Staff and Volunteers

Southern Vales Christian College has developed a Code of Conduct to specify standards of conduct and care, professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour when working and interacting with children. This is based on and must be read together with information outlined in the Department for Education's *Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people guidelines*. The aim is to provide guidance to staff on how best to support students, and how to avoid or manage difficult situations. The Code of Conduct applies to all staff and breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action

or, in the case of serious breaches, dismissal. In all circumstances of a breach or suspected breach, the safety of the child or young person involved, if any, shall be treated with priority, while a fair procedure shall be followed for the person suspected of breaching the code.

Compulsory behaviour:

- Staff and volunteers must comply with the school's Child Protection Policy;
- Staff and volunteers must behave as a positive role model to students;
- Staff and volunteers must promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students;
- Staff and volunteers must promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability;
- Suspicions of child abuse must be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL – 13 14 78) and to the Principal, or to the Board Chair if the situation involves the Principal;
- Concerning behaviour or breaches of the Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal, or to the Board Chair if the breach concerns the Principal. The Principal (or other person) will be responsible for developing an appropriate plan of action and ensuring it is followed;
- Students must be treated with respect and encouraged to speak up and participate;
- Actions must be undertaken transparently and with the knowledge and consent of the Principal;
- When working one-on-one with children and young people, actions must be:
 - Public – ensure the environment is visible, public and busy. Use the site's authorised ICT systems;
 - Authorised – parents must be informed and have given consent and the activity must be authorised by the Principal;
 - Timely – the activity must be a legitimate part of your role, support must be provided within normal work hours where possible, and sessions should be concise and not unnecessarily prolonged; and
 - Purposeful – the activity should address or be linked to an identified wellbeing and/or learning need of the child or young person;
- Manage challenging behaviour through non-physical intervention, such as directing other children and young people to move away from the situation, talking to the child, directing the child or young person to a safe place, and directing other children to a safe place. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort and must only be used when the safety of a child or young person or adult is threatened. Physical restraint must not be used as a response to property destruction, disruption to the education or care activity, refusal to comply, verbal threats, leaving an education care setting, or a need to maintain good order unless someone's safety is clearly threatened;
- Become as familiar as possible with the values of various cultural groups enrolled in an education or care site, as different cultures have different attitudes and traditions surrounding the concept of appropriate touch; and
- Ensure that the privacy of students is respected, and that personal information is managed in accordance with the school's Privacy Policy.
- Report to the police if staff knows or suspects that another person (the abuser) is an employee of the College and is, has, or is likely to sexually abuse a child;
- If in a position of authority, take measures to ensure the protection of a child where they know there is substantial risk that another person (employed by the College) will sexually abuse a child.

Unacceptable behaviour:

- Failure to act when an allegation of child abuse is made, including failure to report the allegation;
- Failure to intervene in situations where sexual harassment is occurring;

- Inappropriate comments about a child or young person's appearance, including excessive flattering comments;
- Inappropriate comments, conversations or enquiries of a sexual nature;
- Use of inappropriate nicknames;
- Obscene gestures and/or language;
- Jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature;
- Facilitating/permitting access to pornographic material;
- Facilitating/permitting access to sexually explicit material that is not part of an endorsed curriculum;
- Correspondence of a personal nature via any medium (including phone, text message, letters, email, social media, internet posts) that is unrelated to the staff member's role. This does not include class cards or bereavement cards;
- Discussing personal lifestyle details or opinions of self, other staff or children and young people unless directly relevant to the learning topic and with the individual's consent;
- Corporal punishment (for example,, physical discipline or smacking);
- Inappropriate use of physical restraint/restrictive practices;
- Unwarranted or unwanted touching of a child or young person personally or with objects (for example, pencil or ruler);
- Initiating, permitting or requesting inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person (for example, massage, kisses, tickling games) or facilitating situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child or young person;
- Inviting/allowing/encouraging children and young people to attend the staff member's home;
- Attending children and young people's homes or their social gatherings;
- Being alone with a child or young person outside a staff member's responsibilities;
- Entering change rooms or toilets occupied by children or young people when supervision is not required or appropriate;
- Transporting a child or young person unaccompanied;
- Using toilet facilities allocated to children and young people;
- Undressing using facilities allocated to children and young people, or in their presence;
- Tutoring (outside education sector's directions or knowledge);
- Giving personal gifts or special favours;
- Singling the same children and young people out for special duties and responsibilities;
- Privately giving money and/or gifts to individual children/young people;
- Photographing, audio recording or filming children or young people via any medium when not authorised by the site leader to do so and without required parental consent;
- Using personal rather than school equipment for approved activities, unless authorised by the site leader to do so;
- Correspondence or communication (via any medium) to or from children and young people where a violation of professional boundaries is indicated and where the correspondence has not been provided to the Principal/leader via the staff member;
- Still/moving images or audio recordings of children and young people on personal equipment or kept in personal locations such as car or home that have not been authorised by the Principal;
- Uploading or publishing still/moving images or audio recordings of children and young people to any location, without parental and site leader's consent;
- Creating or using private chat rooms; and
- Filing/recording students for the use of behaviour training/modification without obtaining prior permission from the Principal and parents.

Recruitment, Selection, Screening and Background Checks

Southern Vales Christian College will ensure that all employees and volunteers have a current Working with Children Check, and that these are updated every 5 years. Southern Vales Christian College will not employ a person or allow someone to volunteer unless a Working with Children Check has been conducted in the preceding 5 years.

In order to thoroughly screen and assess potential employees and volunteers, Southern Vales Christian College will also conduct background checks and risk assessments. This may involve:

- Undertaking face-to-face interviews;
- Confirming educational status;
- Requesting referee reports and obtaining reference checks;
- Conducting criminal history assessments; and/or
- Undertaking other background checks (for example, psychological testing, or on the job observation).

Training and Development

All volunteers and employees who work with children will have ongoing supervision, support and training such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) Training:

All school staff must complete the full-day RRHAN-EC training and then the regular (every three years) update training (online). A current certificate must be provided to the Human Resources Office prior to the commencement of duties or the expiration date.

All teachers are required to undertake the full-day RRHAN-EC training to obtain their registration with the Teacher's Registration Board of SA, and undertake the update training to renew registration. A Working With Children Check is a compulsory component of the Teacher Registration process. It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain the currency of their teacher registration and provided the HR Officer with a copy of their certificate prior to the expiration date. No teacher will be allowed to teach without a current registration and Working With Children Check.

Volunteers are required to complete a Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting and RRHAN -EC, Child Protection Declaration and provide a Working With Children Check before commencing their role.

Regular training and updates are provided to employees in regard to: School policies, practices, Code of Conduct, Protective Practices for staff and volunteers, legal obligations and mandatory notification.

Staff Induction

All new staff undergo an induction process. The school's child protection principles, policies and procedures, as well as their role and responsibilities, form an integral component of the induction. It is essential that new staff not only develop a thorough understanding of the legislative, administrative, social and educational requirements to protect children but that they also engage with our proactive and positive child-safe ethos, culture and practices.

Mandatory Reporting

Any person who, while in the course of their work or volunteering suspects that a child is being or has been abused, must report their suspicion to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL). This includes all persons who are

not mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the legislation. 000 should always be called in an emergency situation.

All serious concerns of suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported via CARL by phoning 13 14 78. The telephone line is available 24 hours a day. Serious concerns include the suspicion that a child or infant is in imminent or immediate danger of serious harm, serious injury, chronic neglect, or when a child is in care of the department and you suspect they are being abused or neglected. The following information is required to be provided when making a report to CARL:

- The child's name, age, date of birth and address;
- A description of the injury, abuse and/or neglect (current and previous);
- The child's current situation;
- The location of the child, parent or caregiver and alleged perpetrator; and
- When and how you found out about the abuse.

Non-serious concerns can be reported via eCARL, which is the online Child Protection reporting system.

Southern Vales Christian College will maintain records of all mandated reports made.

Southern Vales Christian College will ensure that adequate support and appropriate protection is provided to the student involved.

After any mandatory report is made, Southern Vales Christian College will continue to support the student involved through pastoral care and/or referring the student to other appropriate services. This will be done in compliance and in conjunction with the support and requirements of the police and Department of Child Protection. Southern Vales Christian College will continue to monitor the Student's circumstances and provide appropriate continuing assistance.

It is a requirement that employees and volunteers inform the Principal of any mandatory notifications made. This will ensure that the Principal can take the appropriate action to support the child. If the concerns or allegations raised in the notification involve the Principal, then the Board Chair must be informed instead.

Vulnerable Students

Southern Vales Christian College acknowledges that there are vulnerable students who may be at a higher risk of experiencing abuse and neglect due to their circumstances. These students may struggle with advocating for themselves or communicating their experiences to other people. Vulnerable students include students with disability, students in care and new arrival students. Southern Vales Christian College will ensure that:

- School staff will consult with a student with disability, their parent and/or other associates (such as external allied health professionals). During consultation, staff will discuss the impact of the disability to assess the student's ability to advocate for themselves;
- Staff will be mindful of the individual circumstances of vulnerable students and will be mindful of the potential signs of child abuse or neglect that vulnerable students may exhibit; and
- Individual student needs and circumstances will be considered when teaching the Child Protection curriculum. This includes being mindful of and sensitive to cultural differences.

Risk Management

Southern Vales Christian College has an established Risk Plan for the process of assessing and managing risks associated with College Events, Experiential Learning and Excursions. In addition, the College maintains appropriate records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to risks to children. The high-risk

management strategy incorporates key criteria of physical, emotional and cultural harm and is conducted in accordance with industry standards and fulfilment of industry requirements.

Curriculum

Southern Vales Christian College recognises the importance of addressing matters of child protection and safety through curriculum including but not limited to the following:

Genesis Beginnings Sex Education;
SAPOL ThinkUKnow Cyber Safety Education;
FYI Education programs;
What's the Buzz: Social Skills Programs;
Wise Safety programs;
Wellio program;
Genesis Be Ready Sex Education
SMG Cyber Safety Years
SMG "Against Bullying"
SMG "Sexting and Pornography"
Health Curriculum Secondary (Through PE Curriculum): addressing healthy relationships, stress management, safe participation, mental health choices;
Rite Journey addressing online presence, setting maximum privacy, not chatting to strangers. Topics relating to sex, sexuality, and healthy relationships.
Health Curriculum Primary positive and negative choices, what makes a good friend, Respect for self, others and things, Peer pressure, Positive self and body image, Healthy eating, Puberty and Bullying.

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

Pastoral Program

Our Pastoral program is fully integrated throughout the teaching and learning and structural organisation to effectively meet the personal, social, wellbeing and academic needs of students. A greater understanding of themselves and others is nurtured; they develop resilience and gain confidence to manage and cope with the opportunities and challenges of real life. A focus on positive psychology and wellbeing empowers students to keep themselves and others safe.

Student Voice

We believe our students have unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling, and we encourage them to actively shape their own education. Student voice allows students to engage, participate, lead and learn. We foster in our students a sense of social justice and develop their self-confidence and the skills to stand up for what they believe is just and fair. Students are encouraged to voice any matters of concern and seek adult support and assistance.

Online Safety

Southern Vales Christian College acknowledges and accepts its responsibility to ensure that children are protected from harm when participating online.

Southern Vales Christian College is committed to creating a safer online environment and in doing so it has various software and programmes which filters and monitors website usage when students use the College network and allows the College to manage profiles on students' devices so that restrictions can be set on

content level. These programs and software include: Linewize (School Zone); FortiNet Firewall and Lightspeed Mobile Device Manager.

In addition to the resources listed above, Southern Vales Christian College includes matters of cybersafety as part of its child protection curriculum as set out in the section above.

Southern Vales Christian College has developed an Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technology Policy and Harassment and Bullying Policy. These documents also address online safety.

Policy Access & Grievances

Southern Vales Christian College's Child Protection Policy can be accessed by staff, volunteers, families and students through the College Website and will be made available upon request.

Southern Vales Christian College will seek to ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of, has had the opportunity to read and understand the policy, and obtain further clarification on the policy and related documents.

The College prides itself on the proactive and vigilant approach to protecting all students to the best of our ability. Child protection is a very high priority and embedded in our daily operations. Our policies and procedures are available to our community and feedback for improvement is welcomed and regularly sought. Grievances and concerns are taken seriously and will be addressed promptly in accordance with our Grievance & Concerns Policy.

Record Keeping

Documentation of any incident and follow up actions, e.g. reports, records of interviews and meetings will be stored in a locked, confidential file. These records will be held by the Principal in a secure place and will not be accessible unless strictly required and subject to the Principal's prior authorisation and direct supervision.

Accurate, up to date and confidential records are kept of the following:

- Staff and volunteer training
- Criminal History Checks
- Reports of any abuse or neglect and association documentation.

Policy Review

Southern Vales Christian College's Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be reviewed and updated every three years or at a minimum, once every 5 years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. The Child Protection Policy and Procedures will also be reviewed and updated when the school:

- Expands the services it offers to children and young people;
- Undergoes a substantial change to the responsible or managing authority; or
- Experiences an event or incident where children or young people were or could have been at risk of harm.

When changes are made to the Child Protection Policy, Southern Vales Christian College will relodge its Compliance Statement with the SA Department of Human Services.

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
Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: national framework for protecting Australia's children 2009 – 2020
Child Safe Organisations National Principles
Disability Standards for Education 2005

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
Sexual behaviour in children and young people - Guidelines
Suicide Postvention Guidelines

Relevant Related School Policies and Procedures

Mandatory Notification Procedure
Code of Conduct (Staff)
Code of Conduct (Students)
Harassment and Bullying Policy
Volunteer Information Booklet
Grievance & Concerns Policy
Critical Incident/ Emergency Management Policy
Pastoral Care Program
Positive Behaviour Policy
Camps and Excursion Policy
Privacy Policy
Sexual Harassment Policy
Duty of Care
Medication Policy

Risk Management Policy

Drug Policy

Acceptable Use of Information & Communication Technology (Student) Policy

Acceptable Use of Information & Communication Technology (Staff) Policy

Child Protection Policy

Reviewed: 2022

Next Review Date: 2025

**Approved by the
Board:**

Managed by: Leadership