



Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

The protection of the rights of a child cannot be safely based on changing trends in thinking, but only on the Biblical view of true humanity.

All adults have a responsibility to care for children and to protect them from any kind of abuse or neglect. The School is responsible to provide a safe environment for children and to provide an educational environment and curriculum, which fosters their health spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and socially.

We are entrusted by parents with the care of their children, who are precious in the sight of God. This policy outlines the requirements in relation to Child Protection at Sapphire Coast Anglican College. It relates to suspected or reported cases of abuse against students by staff, parents, other students, or by other persons outside the school. Such abuse can also constitute sexual harassment. Therefore, this policy is to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Procedures, Student Welfare Policy, Employment Policy, and Sexual Harassment Policy of Sapphire Coast Anglican College.

2. Guiding Principles

Scripture indicates the nurture of children is a great responsibility given to the community with specific responsibility given to their parents. The family is the most important agency for nurturing children (Deut 6:4-7, 11:18-21 Ps 78).

Parents are given an injunction to ensure balance and natural justice. 'Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.' **Ephesians 6:4 (NIV)**

Nurturing goes beyond the family and the immediate church. Scripture indicates the broader Christian community has a responsibility to teach children. '... do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to

their children after them.’ Deuteronomy 4:9 (NIV) ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (NIV)**

The school purposes to support parents and students to each effectively pursue their God-given capacities responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of staff to love the children in their care.

This love will guide staff’s actions and direction as they stand in the place of parents. ‘Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.’ 1 Corinthians 13:6,7 (NIV)

When a child is enrolled at Sapphire Coast Anglican College the school enters a contract with the parents to assist the parents with the responsibility of the nurture of their children. Specifically the school focuses on the education of the child. The school strives to fulfill this contract and support the family unit but not at the detriment of the welfare of the children. In every action related to child abuse the best interest of the child is of paramount consideration.

Child abuse has horrific consequences for the child concerned and can damage children for the rest of their lives, and the school will make every effort to protect children from this. It must be recognized, however that we all fall short of what the Lord would have us do. Therefore all persons allegedly involved in situations where abuse is suspected or disclosed are to be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect because they too, are loved by the Lord.

Staff who have access to information regarding suspected or disclosed child abuse are to observe strict confidentiality in relation to the entire matter.

3. Policy Statement

Safe Environment

- 3.1 Sapphire Coast Anglican College is committed to providing a safe environment for students, to prevent child abuse in any form and to deal with reports of abuse promptly and appropriately in full accordance with legislative requirements and in particular the Children legislation Amendment Act 2009.

- 3.2 The accompanying document Child Protection Procedures forms the procedural basis for responding to the needs of child protection.

Definition and Context

- 3.3 The term “child abuse” in this policy can take a number of forms including sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The term “sexual abuse” in this policy means the involvement of dependent children or adolescents in sexual activity with an adult or older, bigger or more mature and therefore more powerful person. The child is used as a sexual object for the gratification of the older person’s needs desires or is unable to give consent due to the unequal power in the relationship or is too young to be able to make a reasonable decision because of their age. Sexual abuse does not include sexual activity between consenting peers (see Child Protection Procedures for more detail).
- 3.4 Responsibilities of the Principal (Head of Agency)
- 3.5 The Principal, as Head of Agency, is responsible for the administration and conduct of the school and all that relates to it; therefore, the Principal is to be informed promptly of all serious matters concerning the welfare of students. The Principal will assist the reporting person to determine whether this constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion, according to the NSW Mandatory Reporting Guide, and what further action is required. All reporting requirements of legislation will be complied with.
- 3.6 The Principal is responsible for ensuring the information contained in the Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Procedures documents are promulgated to the School Board, the Association, all staff, and volunteers.
- 3.7 In as much as it possible to do so, the Principal will ensure staff members who are appointed to positions are fit and proper persons to occupy those positions, as stipulated by the appropriate Acts.
- 3.7.1 A disclosure Declaration is required from all personnel who are appointed to a Direct Contact position. The declaration is required as provided for in Section 6 and 7 of the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998. This policy requires that the Disclosure Declaration be made as a Statutory Declaration. The Declaration is to address the following issues:
- 3.7.1.1 That they are not a Prohibited Person as designated in the Act.
 - 3.7.1.2 Their status regarding conviction for a serious sex offence.
 - 3.7.1.3 They are aware of the nature and type of offence, which constitutes a serious sex offence.
 - 3.7.1.4 They are aware of the events, which may constitute a conviction.

- 3.7.1.5 They are aware it is an offence under the Act to knowingly make a false declaration.
 - 3.7.1.6 The status of any substantiated Child Abuse allegations against them.
 - 3.7.1.7 That they are aware of the nature and type of offences that constitute Child Abuse under this Child Protection Policy.
 - 3.7.1.8 It is an offence under Section 6 of Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 to apply to join or to remain in the school's employment if the person is a Prohibited Person under the Act.
- 3.8 The Principal will ensure there are appropriate procedures to ensure all staff members or volunteers read, understand this Child Protection Policy. All staff will demonstrate agreement with this policy and accompanying Child Protection Procedures by signing their agreement to uphold and implement care in accordance with this policy.
- 3.9 New staff will be fully instructed as to their responsibilities regarding child protection upon induction (refer Staff Induction Policy and Procedures). All staff will be further instructed regarding their legal responsibilities each year during Staff Preparation Week and subsequently through ongoing professional development at staff meetings and within faculties. The accompanying Child Protection Procedures document will serve as the reference for the legal responsibilities to be addressed.
- 3.10 From time to time, the Principal will ensure the Board of Directors is informed of current requirements for all matters relating to child protection. Where changes in Government Acts or Board of Studies are foreshadowed or enacted, the Principal will ensure the Board of Directors is informed at the earliest possible convenience.

Staff Responsibilities

- 3.11 Prior to employment at the school, it is incumbent upon all prospective staff members to ensure they understand their responsibility of disclosure in relation to child protection.
- 3.12 Through inservice and induction processes all staff will be made thoroughly conversant with this policy and related procedures.
- 3.13 All staff are to report any suspicions of abuse to the Principal. The Principal will determine whether this constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion and whether further action is required. Cases of a reasonable suspicion of child sexual assault must be reported to the Department of Community Services (DoCS) as well as the Principal. Mandatory reporting is required by Law for Teachers, Counsellors, Principals and Heads of Schools for any child under the age of 16 years for cases of sexual assault only.

- 3.14 Staff members who the Board reasonably believe, on the face of evidence, to have breached this policy may be summarily dismissed from employment.

Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness describes a presumption of innocence pending a full and fair investigation. It describes a process clearly articulated, accessible and understood by all stake holders, and an unbiased and objective investigation (refer Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedures).

- 3.15 The School acknowledges the potential of mischievous or false allegations, which may be made against staff members.

To this end, the Board of Directors and Principal will ensure procedural fairness in the event an allegation is made against a staff member.

Relationships with Community Agencies

- 3.16 The school upholds the Government's responsibility to protect its citizens and address wrong doing in a spirit of procedural fairness (refer Complaints and Grievances and ACE Manual, p33). To this end, the School recognises that the Department of Community Services (DoCS) has a valid role in this process. The School aims to develop a relationship with DoCS that will enable the school to be involved in the process of protecting children. In proceeding to take action under the Children (Care and Protection) Act 1987 school staff must satisfy themselves that they are acting on reasonable grounds.
- 3.17 If evidence of a crime, sexual or otherwise, exists the matter will be reported directly to the police by DoCS by the Principal as Head of Agency, or his delegate, usually the Director of Student Welfare.
- 3.18 Accurate documentation will be kept concerning reports made about possible child abuse, details of notification, actions within the school resulting from notification, and other details related to reported cases of abuse.

Informing Students

- 3.19 Child Protection curriculum will be effectively incorporated and implemented within the school curriculum.

Policy Review

- 3.20 This policy and associated procedures will be re-examined on a regular basis as part of the general review of policies. Alterations made to this policy will be recorded in the section Policy Document Information: Date of issue/last revision. Amendments will be promulgated to the Board, staff, parents, students and other agencies as required.

Appendix

Policy - Primary (K-4) Student Travel to and from School

1. Introduction

Students at SCAC are in our duty of care from the time they arrive at school in the morning until such time as we deliver them into the care of their parent or nominated adult i.e. - bus driver.

We understand that some children live close to the school or along the cycleway path and would be able to cycle or walk to school. However, we acknowledge that young children are still developing their peripheral vision and so crossing roads or cycling is a high risk and therefore we have put the following procedures in place.

We also understand that there are times when a child will not travel home in the afternoon but rather travel to a sport training session or in some other way experience a variation to routine and so it is important that the school is aware of these arrangements by written permission from the parents.

2. Policy

It is the policy of Sapphire Coast Anglican College to allow students in Years 5-6 to ride their bikes or to walk to school only if written parental permission is given. Students in K – Year 4 may ride their bikes or walk only if accompanied by their parent or adult.

It is also the policy of Sapphire Coast Anglican College to allow students to travel to their special after school sport or activity only if written permission is received by the school clearly stating the arrangements for safe transport for the Primary (K-4) child.

3. Procedures

- 3.1 Children in K-Year 4 may ride their bikes to and from school only under full supervision and accompanied by their parent to ensure safety on road and cycle ways.
- 3.2 Children from Year 5-6 may ride their bikes to and from school only with written permission from their parent.
- 3.3 Children from K-Year 4 may walk to and from school only under full supervision and accompanied by their parent to ensure safety crossing roads and whilst on public thoroughfares.
- 3.4 Children from Year 5-6 may walk to and from school only with written parent permission.

- 3.5 Children in Year 3-6 who wish to walk to another venue other than their home i.e. for sport must have permission in writing for each trip or the applicable sports season.
- 3.6 Children in K-Year 6 who wish to travel by bus to another venue other than their home i.e. parents' place of work, sport must have written parent permission to do so.
- 3.7 In the case of an emergency, parents may ring the school to give verbal permission for a change in travel routine for the child. However this is to be the exception.