GREAT SOUTHERN GRAMMAR

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

EMBARK ON A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

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1 PURPOSE

The Child Safety Policy implements the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment the School has developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm. This is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of our approach to the School's entire Child Safety Program.

This policy provides the framework for:

- The implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- The development of work processes, practices, policies and procedures that promote child safety and wellbeing within the School
- The creation of a safe and supportive school environment and a positive and robust child safe culture
- The promotion and open discussion of child safe issues with the School and
- Compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and child safety in Western Australia.

2 SCOPE

This policy, as amended from time to time, applies to all Great Southern Grammar School staff and includes volunteers in all school environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site school campus (eg camps and excursions).

3 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children and young people who come to Great Southern Grammar have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The School regards its child safe responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the importance and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The School's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety has been designed to reflect the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

4 DEFINITIONS

Abuse and Neglect	This is comprised of maltreatment of a student as a result of an action or inaction on the part of the person who has responsibility to care for the child resulting in harm or injury; can be, but is not limited to physical, emotional, psychological, neglect or sexual.
Duty of Care	The duty a person has to use reasonable care towards others in order to protect them from known or reasonable foreseeable risk of harm and/or injury.

Emotional abuse	Emotional abuse is a sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, belittling, teasing, humiliating, bullying, confusing, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to have a reduced capacity to experience a range of emotions, to express emotion appropriately and to modulate their emotional experience. Children who have been emotionally abused are likely to be fearful, withdrawn and/or resentful, distressed and despairing.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a child has experienced severe and/or persistent ill-treatment. The use of corporal punishment defined by physical punishment to cause pain or other degrading punishment is forbidden. Physical abuse can include, but is not limited by injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and fractures caused by a range of acts including beating, shaking, illicit administration of alcohol and other drugs, attempted suffocation, excessive discipline or physical punishment; it does not include accidental injury.
Psychological abuse	Psychological abuse is the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill treatment of a child or young person through behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.
Neglect	Neglect is the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide a child with the necessities of life. These include adequate supervision, adequate food or shelter, suitable clothing, effective medical, therapeutic or remedial care and emotional security. Neglect can be acute, chronic or episodic, and can result in detrimental effects on the child or young person's social, psychological, educational or physical development and/or physical injury. Neglect should be considered in the context of physical, emotional or psychological abuse.
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse covers a wide range of behaviour or activities that expose or subject a child to sexual activity that is exploitative and/or inappropriate to his/her age and developmental level. These behaviours include observation or involvement with inappropriate fondling of a child's body, making a child touch an adult's genitalia, showing pornographic material or sexual acts to a child, and sexual penetration of the child. Harm from sexual abuse may include significant emotional trauma, physical injury, infections and impaired emotional and psychological development.

Grooming	Refers to deliberate actions undertaken to engage in sexual activity with a child. It differs from sexual abuse in that it is primarily a preparatory activity occurring before abuse occurs but is continued during and after the abuse to ensure the safety of the groomer. Grooming is a subtle, gradual and escalating process of building trust with a child and those around the child, with the express purpose of sexual gratification of the perpetrator, this generally involves engaging in sexual activity with the child. Abusers may groom children and supporting adults for weeks, months or even years before any sexual abuse actually takes place. Grooming may occur in person, via cyber and/or other forms of communication. A groomer may manipulate, guilt, shame, bribe, coerce or exploit low self-esteem to psychologically manipulate the child. As a result, the child becomes increasingly dependent on the groomer and increasingly alienated from protective elements including possible sources to disclose to. This is a deliberate strategy employed to maintain the secrecy of the abuse and to ensure the silence of the child.

5 RELATIVE LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

The School refers to the United Nations Conventions on the rights of the child which reinforces that no child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

Our Strategic Plan confirms the School will continue to measure against the standards of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The School keeps abreast of relevant Commonwealth and WA legislative requirements in Working with Children checks and mandatory reporting.

6 ACRONYMS

MRS	Mandatory Reporting Service
CPFS	Communities, Child Protection and Family Support
GSG	Great Southern Grammar

7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students.

The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy. The Principal will:

- Ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers, School Council members and the parent community are aware of the Child Safety Policy
- Ensure that all adults within the School are aware of their obligations to report suspected sexual abuse
- Provide support and direction for staff and volunteers in undertaking their responsibility in this area.

School Council will:

- Approve this policy and regularly seek from the Principal, information and monitor any breaches.

Staff will:

- Be aware of the School's Child Safety Policy, mandatory reporting and other related policies
- Fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters (if applicable)
- Contribute to the educational environment that is supportive of all children's emotional, physical and cultural safety
- Ensure that child protection education and programs are accessible and understood by students of all ages, cultural background and abilities.

Parents/contractors and volunteers will:

- Be aware of the School's Child Safety Policy and related mandatory reporting requirements.

Parents or others can comment on policies by providing information to policychanges@gsg.wa.edu.au.

8 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Great Southern Grammar is a child safe and child-centred school. Our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, classroom learning and assessment environments.

We ensure students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our school and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

9 CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM

All students need to know and believe that every effort will be made to ensure their safety. All students deserve respect, care and protection.

The School is committed to the effective implementation of our child safety program and ensuring that is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of the School's activities, physical and online environments, and the characteristics of the student body.

Our child safety program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse, grooming and other harm and establishes work systems, practices, policies, and procedures to protect children from abuse and to promote a child safe environment. It includes:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Clear information as to what constitutes child abuse, grooming and other harm and associated key indicators of child abuse, grooming and other harm
- Clear procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding incidents or allegations of child abuse, grooming or other harm
- Strategies to support, encourage and enable staff and volunteers, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- Procedures for recruiting and screening members of Executive, staff and volunteers
- Procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection and Family Support and reporting to police
- Pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe

- Strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities
- Child safe training for staff
- Information regarding steps to take after a disclosure of abuse, grooming or other harm to protect, support and assist children
- Guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentially
- Policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including National Principal for Child Safe Organisations)
- A system for continuous review and improvement

New staff and volunteers are required to complete an induction in our Child Safe Policies, practices and procedures. All staff receive refresher and ongoing child safe training at least annually.

Staff and volunteers are supported and supervised by the School's Executive team to ensure they are compliant with the School's approach to child safety.

9.1 Child Safety for External Education Providers

An external provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specific course of study that is part of the curriculum, or school offerings, to a student or students enrolled at the School. The delivery of such a course may take place on-site or elsewhere.

External education providers engaged by the School are responsible for adhering to the safety and protection of students in all School environments and are required to comply with the School's Child Safety policies and Code of Conduct. GSG may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

9.2 Mitigating Risks of Harm

GSG will consider the following factors when assessing child safety for a student or activity:

- Possible close contact with staff, including 1:1 time
- Assessing the level of risk involved in any individual activity in accordance with the School's Risk Management Policy (refer Risk Management Policy).
- Student's age, experience and capabilities: The level of care will generally be greater the younger the student.
- Physical and intellectual impairment: A student with a disability is generally at greater risk of injury than a student without a disability. This could be due to a physical inability to complete the activity without difficulty or an intellectual inability to appreciate the risks involved.
- Medical condition: Some medical conditions require special attention to ensure that students are not exposed to a greater risk of injury.
- Behavioural characteristics: If a student is known to behave inappropriately then the level of care increases.
- Nature of the activity and the environment in which the activity is held: School activities with a higher level of risk, or those held in hazardous environments require a higher level of care.
- Carer's level of experience, attribute, skills and the nature of the relationship between the carer and students.

There are several ways staff may reduce the inherent risk of harm, these include but are not limited to:

- Share concerns with other staff, including staff leaders
- Assessing any possible danger in the activities and taking appropriate steps to minimise or eliminate the danger
- Ensuring staff have the required and necessary skills and abilities to perform their duties

- Ensuring that all relevant policies and procedures are complied with
- Providing supervision of students to ensure they comply with the rules and practices of GSG designed for their own safety and others in our care
- Designing and implementing appropriate programmes, procedures, policies and rules to ensure the safety of people in our care
- Ensuring buildings, equipment and facilities used meet all relevant building standards and codes
- Knowing and utilising relevant procedures for dealing with accidents

9.3 When does a mandatory reporter make a report?

Mandatory reporters must report a belief, based on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that a child has been or is being sexually abused. This may be based on but not limited to:

- Reports of abuse by a third party;
- Disclosure of information provided by a child or parent/carer;
- Observed evidence of physical and/or behavioural indicators.

A mandated reporter is also protected from liability. If a report is made in good faith, they will not incur any civil or criminal liability by making a report.

9.3.1 Forming a Belief

A teacher, nurse or boarding supervisor can form the necessary belief, based on reasonable grounds, by noting the presence of indicators, disclosures, injuries, signs, symptoms and behaviours that heighten concerns about child sexual abuse.

If the staff member forms a belief or suspicion that sexual abuse has occurred or is occurring, the staff member may consult the Principal for guidance. However, it is the staff member's responsibility to make the report directly to the Mandatory Reporting Service when a reasonable belief or suspicion that sexual abuse is formed.

9.4 Record Keeping

The School is committed to best practice record keeping. In maintaining records of child safety incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

9.5 Strategies for Minimising Abuse, Neglect or grooming

9.5.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

The school has in place staff selection and training policies to ensure all new employees, volunteers and contractors are adequately screened, trained and supervised. Refer to the Code of Conduct, Recruitment and Selection Policy and Staff Handbook

9.5.2 Staff Conduct & Electronic Communication

Staff may not enter into a personal relationship with current students via social media as this may exceed the accepted bounds of a teacher/student relationship and may leave the staff member open to allegations of improper conduct. Staff should not store student personal mobile phone numbers in their personal phones unless temporarily to ensure the safety of children.

9.5.3 Working with Children Check

The Principal and Executive must confirm that all staff, volunteers, visitors and external providers in child-related work adhere to Working with Children Check guidelines.

9.5.4 Prevention programs

The school implements preventive curriculum and protective behaviours programmes for all students. Programs are included in the health and wellbeing curriculum and are fundamental in achieving the best outcome and empower children who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, harm resulting from abuse and/or neglect.

9.5.5 Cyber Safety

Ensuring the safe use of ICT by our students is a priority for GSG. The School has rigorous cyber safety practices in place, which include cyber safety ICT Use Agreements for school staff and students. The overall goal of the school is to create and maintain a cyber safety culture which is in keeping with the values of the school, legislative and professional obligations. The ICT Use Agreement includes information about students' responsibilities and the nature of possible consequences associated with cyber safety.

The *Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006* is the legislation in Western Australia that protects children under the age of 16, or that the offender believes is under the age of 16, from an adult who uses electronic communications with the intent to procure the child to engage in sexual activity; or to expose the child to any indecent matter.

9.5.5.1. Staff Education

The School staff, including the Executive will complete units of work recommended by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

7. REFERENCE/COMPLIANCE

The following documents are associated with this policy:

7.1 Legislation

- *Children and Community Services Act 2004*
- *Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting of Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008*
- *Criminal Code Act (1913)*
- *Criminal Code Amendment (Cyber Predators) Act 2006*
- *Civil Liability Laws*
- *Disability Discrimination Act: Standards for Education 2004 (Cth)*
- *Education Act 1999 (WA)*
- *United Nations Conventions*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Teachers Registration Board of WA*
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005 (WA)*

7.2 Related Policies

- *Acceptable Use of ICT K-12 Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Critical Incident and Emergency Response Policy*

- *Recruitment and Selection Policy*
- *Risk Management Policy*
- *Staff Use of Social Media and Networking Policy*

7.3 Internal Documents

- *Code of Conduct*
- *Risk Management assessment*
- *Staff Handbook*
- *Student Code of Conduct*

7.4 Other Resources

- *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*
- *E-Safety Commission*
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Approval

Date	Authorised	Approval
23/5/2022	School Council	Minutes dated 23/5/2022