



Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 General

The safety, protection and wellbeing of all its students is of fundamental importance to the School. The purpose of this Policy is to summarise the obligations of child protection legislation on various sections of the school community, and provide procedures as to how the School will deal with certain matters that fall within legislative requirements. The obligations, although legislative in nature, are seen as part of the School's overall commitment to the safety, care and wellbeing of our students enshrined in its Mission and Purpose statements.

The School seeks to create a safe environment with conditions that:

- reduce the likelihood of harm to children
- increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm
- respond appropriately to disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

1.2 Key Legislation

There are three key pieces of child protection legislation in New South Wales to which this Policy relates:

- the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) (the **Care and Protection Act**);
- the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW) (the **WWC Act**); and
- the Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW) (the **Ombudsman Act**).

Legislative Changes – March 2020

Children's Guardian Act 2019 came into force on 1 March 2020. Powers and functions of the Children's Guardian from the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* and *Adoption Act 2000* were consolidated into the new Act. Regulations under these Acts will remain in force until new Regulations are made under the new Act.

Apart from amendments to reporting misconduct findings, the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* remain largely unchanged



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

1.3 Mandatory Reporters and Obligations to Report

All teachers, teacher assistants and School Counsellor are mandatory reporters. If you are not sure whether you are a mandatory reporter you should speak to the Headmaster. Consequently, the School takes the view that all those in its employ are to report all persons whose behaviour has placed a child at risk of significant harm (see 2.4 definition of “significant harm” later in this document).

All stakeholders of the School have the right and obligation to report allegations of staff misconduct, whether they see themselves as mandatory reporters or not. Should they have complaints or allegations of staff misconduct involving the safety of children, they are to report according to the following Policy and procedures.

While we set out below circumstances in which the **legislation** requires reporting of particular child protection issues, the School requires you to report **any concerns** you may have about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child to **the Headmaster**. This includes students who have been identified with a disability.

If the allegation involves **the Headmaster**, you are required to report to the **Chairman of the School Council**. This obligation is part of the School's overall commitment to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.

1.4 Other Policies

There are a number of other School policies that relate to child protection which you need to be aware of, to follow and understand, including:

- the **School Code of Conduct** which sets out information about the standards of behaviour expected of all employees, contractors and volunteers of the School, including but not limited to unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- the **Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedures 2020** which summarises the obligations imposed by work health and safety legislation on the school and workers; and
- the **Cyberbullying Policy and Procedures 2020** which summarises your obligations in relation to cyberbullying; and
- The **Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedures 2019**.

These policies are available on the School's P Drive under School Policies and the School's website.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

1.5 General in-School Procedures

The following applies to all staff:

- Prior to commencing work, staff are to provide their Working with Children (WWC) number which will be recorded on their staff file. For ongoing staff their WWC number is to be renewed prior to its expiry date, the renewed WWC certification is to be provided to the Headmaster and recorded on their staff file. See Part C for further details.
- For outside tutors and external providers see Part C of this policy.
- As a precautionary measure teachers are not to be in a classroom alone with a child at morning tea, lunchtime or before or after school. If it is inevitable that follow up is required with a child, ensure that another child is also there or the interaction takes place in an open, accessible space in clear view of others i.e. not in a classroom with a closed door.
- For specialist teachers and peripatetic music staff, who by the nature of their roles, work 1:1 with a child, it is recommended that these lessons take place in the classrooms (for music staff) and for specialist teachers in the designated rooms with the door left open. The School Counsellor is covered by a 'Code of Practice' and for confidentiality requires privacy. For 1:1

counselling sessions, parents will be requested to give their consent.

- No staff member is to transport a child in their vehicle without the express permission of the Headmaster.
- A teacher is not to visit the home of a student without the knowledge and permission of the Headmaster.
- Teachers are not permitted to tutor a student of the School voluntarily or for payment outside of school hours without the permission of the Headmaster.
- Teachers are not to touch a child except in the case of physical or emotional need, and if such is warranted, it is to be conducted in public view and afterwards discussed with the teacher's supervisor.



PART A: The Implications of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) for you and the School

The Care and Protection Act 1998 provides for mandatory reporting of children at risk of significant harm.

NOTE: Any and all concerns regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student must be reported to **the Headmaster**.

2.0 Who is a mandatory reporter?

All teaching staff and the School Counsellor are mandatory reporters. Other School employees may also be mandatory reporters. If you are not sure whether you are a mandatory reporter you should speak to the Headmaster.

2.1 Reporting to Community Services

A mandatory reporter must, where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child (under 16 years of age) is at risk of significant harm, report to Community Services as soon as practicable, the name of the child and the grounds for suspecting that the child is at risk of significant harm.

2.2 Reasonable grounds

'Reasonable grounds' refers to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child may be at risk of significant harm, based on:

- a. first hand observations of the child or family
- b. what the child, parent or another person has disclosed
- c. what can reasonably be inferred based on professional training and / or experience.

'Reasonable grounds' does not mean that you are required to confirm your suspicions or have clear proof before making a report.

2.3 Significant harm

A child is 'at risk of significant harm' if current concerns exist for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child or young person because of the presence, to a significant extent, of any one or more of the circumstances described below:

- a. the child's basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met,
- b. the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to receive necessary medical care,
- c. in the case of a child who is required to attend school in accordance with the Education Act



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

- 1990 —the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to receive an education in accordance with that Act,
- d. the child has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated,
 - e. the child is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm,
 - f. a parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm,
 - g. the child was the subject of a pre-natal report under section 25 of the Care and Protection Act and the birth mother of the child did not engage successfully with support services to eliminate, or minimise to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk factors that gave rise to the report.

2.4 Other relevant definitions

Policy definition of significant harm

A child or young person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child or young person are present to a significant extent.

What is meant by 'significant' in the phrase 'to a significant extent' is that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent. What is significant is not minor or trivial, and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's safety, welfare or wellbeing. The significance can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these.

2.5 Child abuse and neglect

There are different forms of child abuse. These include neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development; such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes, but is not limited, to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation.

Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints.

Hitting a child around the head or neck and/or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

Emotional abuse can cause serious psychological harm and can occur where the behaviour of a parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma.

Although it is possible for 'one-off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child.

This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Children can be bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Child sexual abuse is a crime.

2.6 Procedures when a mandatory report is required

Reporting by the School about these matters to Community Services and, where necessary, the police, is generally undertaken by the Headmaster or next most senior member of staff. This is in accordance with best practice principles and is the expectation of the School.

If you have a concern that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm you should contact the Headmaster as soon as possible to discuss whether the case reaches the threshold of 'risk of significant harm' and the steps required to report the matter.

However, if there is an immediate danger to the child and the Headmaster or next most senior member of staff is not contactable, you should speak to the Police and/or the Child Protection Helpline directly and then advise the Headmaster or next most senior member of staff at the School as soon as possible.

You are not required to, and must not undertake any investigation of the matter yourself.

You are not to inform the parents or caregivers that a report to Community Services has been made.

All parties to an allegation are to deal with the matter confidentially and only disclose to the persons referred to above, or as required to comply with your mandatory reporting obligations.

Failure to maintain confidentiality will not only be a breach of this policy, but could expose those involved to potential civil proceedings for defamation.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

2.7 Procedures if you are unsure whether or not to report

If you are unsure whether or not an incident should be reported you should consult the mandatory reporters guide on the Child's Story website <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

Additional information that may be useful in these situations can be found on the Keep Them Safe Website www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/

2.8 What if the concern is below the mandatory reporting threshold?

While the Care and Protection Act 1998 outlines a mandatory reporter's obligation to report to Community Services, as an employee of this School, any concern regarding the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a student must be reported to the Headmaster.

You are required to deal with all reports regarding the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student confidentially and only disclose it to the Headmaster and any other person the Headmaster nominates. Failure to do so will be a breach of this policy.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

PART B: The implications for the School of The Ombudsman Act

1.0 Responsibilities

1.1 General

Part 3A of the Ombudsman Act requires the heads of certain agencies, including non government schools in New South Wales, to notify the New South Wales Ombudsman of all allegations of reportable conduct by an 'employee' and the outcome of the School's investigation of these allegations. An 'employee' includes employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience participants, clergy, a minister of religion and instructors of religion who provide pastoral or liturgical services. In this part, where there is a reference to an employee, it includes all of these persons.

1.2 The Ombudsman

The Ombudsman:

- a) must keep under scrutiny the systems for preventing reportable conduct by employees of non government schools and the handling of, or response to, reportable allegations (including allegations which are exempt from notification) or convictions;
- b) must receive and assess notifications from non government schools concerning reportable conduct or reportable convictions;
- c) is required to oversee or monitor the conduct of investigations by non government schools into allegations of reportable or reportable convictions;
- d) must determine whether an investigation that has been monitored has been conducted properly, and whether appropriate action has been taken as a result of the investigation;
- e) may directly investigate an allegation of reportable conduct or reportable conviction against an employee of a non government school, or the handling of or response to such a matter (eg arising out of complaints by the person who is the subject of an allegation); and
- f) may undertake 'own motion' investigations of non government schools where the Ombudsman considers it appropriate to do so, including where there is evidence of systemic failure or serious conflict of interests.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

1.3 Head of Agency

The Head of Agency is the Headmaster of the School.

Under the Ombudsman Act the Head of Agency must:

1.3.1 set up systems within their organisation to ensure that they are advised of any allegations of reportable conduct against employees;

1.3.2 notify the Ombudsman (using a NSWOW Part A notification form) as soon as possible, and no later than thirty days after being made aware of an allegation;

1.3.3 notify the Ombudsman whether or not the School plans to take disciplinary or other action in relation to an employee who is the subject of a reportable allegation or conviction, and the reasons for taking or not taking any such action as soon as practicable; and

1.3.4 provide the Ombudsman with any documentary and other information as the Ombudsman may from time to time request to assist in the Ombudsman's monitoring of an investigation.

This will typically include the NSWOW Part B notification form and risk assessments.

1.4 Your obligations to report

You must report any concerns you may have about any other employee engaging in reportable conduct or any allegation of 'reportable conduct' that has been made to you, to the Headmaster, including information about yourself. If you are not sure whether the conduct is reportable conduct but consider that it is inappropriate behaviour you must still report it.

You must also report to the Headmaster if you become aware that an employee has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving reportable conduct. This includes information relating to yourself. If the allegation involves the Headmaster, you are required to report to the Chairman of the School Council.

1.5 Contact for Parents

The Headmaster is the contact point for parents if they wish to report an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

2.0 What is reportable conduct?

2.1 Definition of reportable conduct

Reportable conduct is defined as:

2.1.1 any sexual offence or sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence or an offence involving child abuse material);

2.1.2 any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child; and

2.1.3 any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

Reportable conduct does not extend to:

- a) conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of the discipline, management or care of children, having regard to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the children and to any relevant codes of conduct or professional standards; or
- b) the use of physical force that, in all the circumstances, is trivial or negligible, but only if the matter is to be investigated and the result of the investigation recorded under workplace employment procedures; or
- c) conduct of a class or kind exempted from being reportable conduct by the Ombudsman under section 25CA.

2.2 Other relevant definitions

Set out below are definitions of the various terms referred to above in relation to reportable conduct.

Behaviour that causes **psychological harm** to a child is behaviour that is obviously or very clearly unreasonable and results in significant harm or trauma to a child. There needs to be a proven causal link between the inappropriate behaviour and the harm, and the harm must be more than transient.

Child is a person under the age of 18 years for the purposes of the Ombudsman Act.

Ill-treatment captures those circumstances where a person treats a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel manner. The focus is on the alleged conduct rather than the actual effect of the conduct on the child.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

Ill-treatment can include disciplining or correcting a child in an obviously unreasonable and seriously inappropriate manner; making excessive and/or degrading demands on a child; hostile use of force towards a child; and/or pattern of hostile or unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, degrading comments or behaviour towards a child.

Neglect includes either an action or inaction by a person who has care and responsibility towards a child. The nature of the employee's responsibilities provides the context against which the conduct needs to be assessed.

a) Supervisory neglect:

- An intentional or reckless failure to adequately supervise a child that results in the death of, or significant harm to, a child, or
- an intentional or reckless failure to adequately supervise a child or a significantly careless act or failure to act, that:
 - Involves a gross breach of professional standards, and
 - Has the potential to result in the death or significant harm to a child.

b) Carer neglect:

- Grossly inadequate care that involves depriving a child of the basic necessities of life: such as the provision of food and drink, clothing, critical medical care or treatment, or shelter.

c) Failure to protect from abuse:

- An obviously or very clearly unreasonable failure to respond to information strongly indicating actual or potential serious abuse of a child.

d) Reckless act (or failure to act):

- A reckless act, or failure to act, that:
 - Involves a gross breach of professional standards, and
 - Has the potential to result in the death of, or significant harm to, a child.

Physical Assault is any act by which a person intentionally inflicts unjustified use of physical force against another. An assault can also occur if a person causes another person to reasonably apprehend that unjustified force is going to be used against them. Even if a person who inflicts physical harm or causes another person to reasonably apprehend physical harm does not actually intend to inflict the harm or cause fear, they may still have committed an assault if they acted 'recklessly'.

'**Recklessness**' in this context relates to circumstances when the person ought to have known that their actions would cause a person physical harm or cause them to fear injury.

Assaults can include hitting, pushing, shoving, throwing objects or making threats to physically harm a child.

PSOA 'a person subject to the allegation'.

Reportable conviction means a conviction (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction), in NSW or elsewhere, of an offence involving reportable conduct.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

Sexual Misconduct has two categories which include:

- a) crossing professional boundaries, and
- b) sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour.

The alleged conduct must have been committed against, with or in the presence of a child.

2.2.1 Crossing professional boundaries

Sexual misconduct includes behaviour that can reasonably be construed as involving an inappropriate and overly personal or intimate:

- relationship with;
- conduct towards; or
- focus on;

a child or young person, or a group of children or young persons.

The Staff Code of Conduct outlines the nature of the professional boundaries which should exist between employees and children. If you have concerns about what constitutes appropriate behaviour please speak to one of the Executive of the School. For employees who either intentionally breach such codes or have demonstrated an inability to apply them appropriately, it may be necessary to provide more detailed written advice about what constitutes appropriate behaviour.

2.2.2 Sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour

Behaviour involving sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour can constitute sexual misconduct. Some forms of this behaviour also involve crossing professional boundaries. This conduct may include:

- a) inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
- b) comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner
- c) unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- d) sexual exhibitionism
- e) personal correspondence (including electronic communications such as e-mails and text messages) with a child or young person in relation to the adult's sexual feelings for a child or young person
- f) exposure of children and young people to sexual behaviour of others including display of pornography
- g) watching children undress. For example, in change rooms or toilets when supervision is not required or justified.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

Sexual Offences encompasses all criminal offences involving a sexual element that are 'committed against, with or in the presence of a child'. These offences include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a) indecent assault
- b) sexual assault
- c) aggravated sexual assault
- d) sexual intercourse and attempted sexual intercourse
- e) possession/ dissemination/ production of child pornography or child abuse material
- f) using children to produce pornography
- g) grooming or procuring children under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity
- h) deemed non-consensual sexual activity on the basis of special care relationships

Grooming refers to patterns of behaviour or conduct aimed at engaging with an alleged victim for sexual activity.

Types of grooming behaviours may include:

- Persuading child/ren that there is a 'special' relationship
- Inappropriate gift giving
- Special favours / breaking rules
- Inappropriate amounts of time together
- Secret relationship, tactics to keep relationship secret
- Testing boundaries (touching, physical contact, undressing in front of child, talking about sex)
- Extending relationship outside of work
- Personal communication about personal or intimate feelings

Definitions of 'grooming', within child protection legislation, are complex. Under the *Crimes Act*, grooming or procuring a child under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity is classed as a **sexual offence**. The *Crimes Act* (s73) also extends the age of consent to 18 years when a child is in a 'special care' relationship. Under Schedule 1(2) of the *Child Protection (Working With Children) Act*, grooming is recognised as a form of **sexual misconduct**. The *NSW Ombudsman Act, 1974* and this Child Protection Policy reflect all of these definitions within the context of the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Part 3A).

2.3 What will happen when an allegation of reportable conduct is made?

Initial Steps

Once an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is received, the Head of Agency/Headmaster or delegate will:

- 2.3.1 determine on face value whether it is an allegation of reportable conduct;
- 2.3.2 assess whether Community Services or the Police need to be notified (ie, if reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm or criminal offence);



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

- 2.3.3 notify the child's parents (unless to do so would be likely to compromise the investigation or any investigation by Community Services or the Police);
- 2.3.4 notify the Ombudsman within 30 days of receiving the allegation
- 2.3.5 carry out a risk assessment and take action to reduce/remove risk, where appropriate; and
- 2.3.6 investigate the allegation or appoint someone to investigate the allegation.

2.4 Investigation principles

The School will, or if considered appropriate identify through the AIS an agency to conduct an investigation based on the following:

- 2.4.1 be mindful of the principles of procedural fairness;
- 2.4.2 inform the person subject of the allegation (PSOA) of the substance of any allegations made against them and provide them with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations;
- 2.4.3 make reasonable enquiries before making a decision;
- 2.4.4 avoid conflicts of interest;
- 2.4.5 conduct the investigation without unjustifiable delay;
- 2.4.6 handle the matter as confidentially as possible; and
- 2.4.7 provide appropriate support for all parties including the child/children, witnesses and the PSOA.

2.5 Investigation steps

In an investigation the Headmaster or appointed investigator will generally:

- 2.5.1 interview relevant witnesses and gather relevant documentation;
- 2.5.2 provide a letter of allegation to the PSOA;
- 2.5.3 interview the PSOA;
- 2.5.4 consider relevant evidence and make a preliminary finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman guidelines
- 2.5.5 inform the PSOA of the preliminary finding and provide them with an opportunity to respond;
- 2.5.6 consider any response provided by the PSOA;
- 2.5.7 make a final finding in accordance with the NSW Ombudsman Guidelines;
- 2.5.8 decide on the disciplinary action, if any, to be taken against the PSOA;
- 2.5.9 apply the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) Guidelines and decide if the matter is reportable to the OCG; and
- 2.6.0 send the final report to the Ombudsman and report to the OCG (where required)



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

The steps followed in the investigative process will be guided by Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AIS). The steps outlined above may need to be varied on occasion to meet particular circumstances. For example, it may be necessary to take different steps where the matter is also being investigated by Community Services or the NSW Police.

A PSOA may have an appropriate support person with them during the interview process. Such a person is there for support only and as a witness to the proceedings and not as an advocate or to take an active role.

2.6 Risk management

Risk management means identifying the potential for an incident or accident to occur and taking steps to reduce the likelihood or severity of its occurrence. The Head of Agency/Headmaster is responsible for risk management throughout the investigation and will assess risk at the beginning of the investigation, during and at the end of the investigation.

2.7 Initial risk assessment

One of the first steps following an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee is for the Head of Agency to conduct a risk assessment. The purpose of this initial risk assessment is to identify and minimise the risks to:

- a) the child(ren) who are the subject of the allegation;
- b) other children with whom the employee may have contact;
- c) the PSOA;
- d) the School, and
- e) the proper investigation of the allegation.

The factors which will be considered during the risk assessment include:

- a) the nature and seriousness of the allegations;
- b) the vulnerability of the child(ren) the PSOA has contact with at work;
- c) the nature of the position occupied by the PSOA;
- d) the level of supervision of the PSOA; and
- e) the disciplinary history or safety of the PSOA and possible risks to the investigation.

The Head of Agency will take appropriate action to minimise risks. This may include the PSOA being temporarily relieved of some duties, being required not to have contact with certain students, or being suspended from duty. When taking action to address any risks identified, the School will take into consideration both the needs of the child(ren) and the PSOA.

Please Note: A decision to take action on the basis of a risk assessment is not indicative of the findings of the matter. Until the investigation is completed and a finding is made, any action,



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

such as an employee being suspended, is not to be considered to be an indication that the alleged conduct by the employee did occur.

2.8 Ongoing Risk Management

The Head of Agency will continually monitor risk during the investigation, including any new relevant information that emerges.

2.9 Risk Management at the Conclusion of the Investigation

At the completion of the investigation, a finding will be made in relation to the allegation and a decision made by the Head of Agency regarding what action, if any, is required in relation to the PSOA, the child(ren) involved and any other parties.

3.0 What information will be provided to the PSOA?

The PSOA will be advised:

- a) that an allegation has been made against them (at the appropriate time in the investigation); and
- b) of the substance of the allegation, or of any preliminary finding and the final finding. The PSOA does not automatically have the right to:
 - a) know or have confirmed the identity of the person who made the allegation; or
 - b) be shown the content of the Ombudsman notification form or other investigation material that reveals all information provided by other employees or witnesses.

The WWC Act enables a person who has a finding referred to the OCG under the Act to request access to the records held by the School in relation to the finding of misconduct involving children. (see Part C section 3).

4.0 Disciplinary Action

As a result of the allegations, investigation or final findings, the School may take disciplinary action against the PSOA (including termination of employment).

In relation to any disciplinary action the School will:

- a) give the PSOA details of the proposed disciplinary action; and
- b) give the PSOA a reasonable opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

5.0 Confidentiality

It is important when dealing with allegations of reportable conduct that the matter be dealt with as confidentially as possible.

The School requires that all parties maintain confidentiality during the investigation including in relation to the handling and storing of documents and records.

Records about allegations of reportable conduct against employees and will be kept and will only be accessible by the Headmaster or his designated authority.

No employee may comment to the media about an allegation of reportable conduct unless expressly authorised by the Headmaster to do so.

If you become aware of a breach of confidentiality in relation to a reportable conduct allegation you must advise the Headmaster.



PART C: The Working With Children Act

1 General

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) is responsible for employment screening for child related employment. A Working With Children Check (WWC) is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and review of reported workplace misconduct findings. The result of a Check is either a clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring by the OCG, and any relevant new records which appear against a cleared applicant's name may lead to the Check being revoked.

It is the responsibility of the child-related worker to ensure that when they are eligible to apply for a Check or when their Check is up for renewal that they do so.

If you are an existing employee, employed at this school in paid child-related work prior to the commencement of the new Working with Children system, or you are a volunteer, you are required to obtain a Check

2 Responsibilities

The objective of the WWC Act is to protect children:

- a) by not permitting certain persons to engage in child-related work; and
- b) by requiring persons engaged in child-related work to have working with children check clearances.

Schools are required to:

- a) verify online and record the status of each child-related worker's Check;
- b) only employ or engage child-related workers or eligible volunteers who have a valid Check; and
- c) report findings of misconduct involving children made against child-related workers or volunteers.

Child-related workers and eligible volunteers are required to:

- a) hold and maintain a valid Check;
- b) not engage in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a bar; and
- c) report to the Principal if they are no longer eligible for a Check, the status of their Check changes or are notified by the OCG that they are subjected to a risk assessment.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

All volunteers are required to:

- a) sign the Volunteer Declaration. (see attached)
- b) have a WWC as determined by the Headmaster.
- c) to be aware and follow the expectations of conduct expressed in the School Staff Code of Conduct

3 Relevant Definitions

3.1 Bars

A final bar is applied based on a decision made by the OCG, following a risk assessment. This person is barred against working with children.

An interim bar is issued to high risk individuals to prevent them from continuing to work with children while a risk assessment is conducted. An interim bar may be applied for up to 12 months. If an interim bar remains in place for six months or longer, it may be appealed against through the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

Not everyone who is subject to a risk assessment will receive an interim bar; only those representing a serious and immediate risk to children.

Interim bars are issued only for risks considered likely to result in a final bar.

3.2 Child-related work

Child-related work includes, but not limited to work in the following sectors:

- a) early education and childcare including education and care service, childcare centres and other childcare;
- b) education schools and other educational institutions and private coaching or tuition of children;
- c) religious services;
- d) residential services including boarding schools, homestays more than three weeks, residential services and overnight camps; or
- e) transport services for children including school bus services, taxi services for children with disability and supervision of school road crossings.

3.3 Child-related worker

A person who has physical contact or face to face contact with children in work outlined above in 3.2, including schools. This may include volunteer work.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

A child-related worker may commence work once they have completed the Check application process. An application is completed when the online application form is complete and the worker's identity has been proven at the NSW motor registry or Council Agency and the fee has been paid (if in paid work).

If you are unclear if your role is child-related you should speak with the Headmaster.

3.4 Disqualified person

A disqualified person is a person who has been convicted, or against whom proceedings have been commenced for a disqualifying offence outlined in Schedule 2 of WWC Act.

A disqualified person is a person who has a bar preventing them from working with children in child-related work.

It is an offence for an employer to knowingly engage a child-related worker when they do not hold a Check or who has a bar or an interim bar.

It is an offence for an employee to engage in child-related work when they do not hold a Check or has a bar or an interim bar.

3.5 Findings of misconduct involving children

The school will report to the OCG when a finding has been made that the person (an employee of the school) subject to the finding engaged in:

- a) sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child, including grooming of a child; or
- b) any serious physical assault of a child.

The School will advise the person that the OCG has been notified of a finding of misconduct involving children.

The WWC Act enables a person who has a finding referred to the OCG under the Act to request access to the records held by the School in relation to the finding of misconduct involving children.

3.6 Reporting body

Independent Schools which are members of the AISNSW are defined as a reporting body by the WWC Act.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

Section 35 of the WWC Act requires this School to notify the OCG findings of misconduct involving children made against a child-related worker. The school may also be obliged to report, amend or provide additional information to the OCG as outlined in the WWC Act.

3.7 Risk assessment

Risk assessment is an evaluation of an individual's suitability for child-related work.

The OCG will conduct a risk assessment on a person's suitability to work with children when a new record is received which triggers a risk assessment. This may include an offence under Schedule 1, pattern of behaviour or offences involving violence of sexual misconduct representing a risk to children, findings of misconduct involving children or notification made to OCG by the Ombudsman.

3.8 Working With Children Check Clearance

A Working with Children Check (Check) means authorisation under the WWC Act to engage in child-related work. Staff and all those engaged in child related work, will be issued with a number which is to be provided to the School to verify the status of their Check.

School procedures:

- WWC application number or clearance number is collected from all new staff, those engaged in regular child related work and persons seeking employment
- WWC clearance number is verified with the Office of the Children's Guardian
- WWC clearance number and expiry date is recorded on payroll system
- WWC clearance and number expiry date are monitored by the PA to the Headmaster to ensure currency of compliance of all current staff.



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

April 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

I _____ have read, understood and agree to comply with the terms of this Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Signature : _____

Dated : _____



Mosman Church of England Preparatory School

Volunteer Declaration

As a Volunteer at this School working with children I can state that I have never been charged with an offence involving reportable conduct as defined in the Children & Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998 NSW and the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW). Furthermore I am not a person subject to an allegation of reportable conduct as defined in the Acts.

I am aware of my obligations to uphold the School's Code of Conduct and will not share information related to students in my care that I become aware of, or observe with anyone other than the child's teachers.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____