

REPORTING CONCERNS OF HARM and ABUSE POLICY

1. RATIONALE

Ormiston College acknowledges its duty of care and its responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of all students. The College recognises the importance of protecting children from harm and is committed to preventing abuse by any person who may have access to students.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the written processes for ensuring the care and protection of children, including expectations for appropriate conduct, procedures for reporting abuse or suspected abuse, and processes for responding to disclosures of harm. These processes are designed to meet all relevant legislative requirements.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, students, children, volunteers, visitors and contractors at Ormiston College. It covers information about the reporting of harm, physical or sexual abuse and inappropriate behaviour. It also contains information to guide responses to bullying and self-harm.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy which includes the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle.

Ormiston College Early Learning Centre has a separate policy for reporting concerns of harm and abuse in early childhood and care services.

4. RELATED LEGISLATION

- a) *Child Protection Act 1999*
- b) *Child Protection Regulation 2023*
- c) *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*
- d) *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*
- e) *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017*
- f) *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017*
- g) *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017*
- h) *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005*
- i) *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*
- j) *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020*
- k) *Criminal Code Act 1899*
- l) *Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)*

5. ORMISTON COLLEGE RELATED POLICIES and DOCUMENTS

- a) Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- b) Blue Card Policy (Working with Children Check)
- c) Complaints Handling Policy
- d) Child Protection Policy & Procedure (Early Learning Centre)
- e) Child Safe & Wellbeing Policy & Procedure

- f) Workplace Health & Safety Policy
- g) Anti-Bullying Policy
- h) Sexual Harassment Policy
- i) Child Safeguarding Processes
- j) Suicide & Non-suicidal Self Harm Management
- k) Anti Discrimination Policy
- l) Disability Discrimination Policy
- m) Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- n) Safeguarding Code of Conduct

6. FAILURE TO PROTECT

- 6.1 Under section 229BB of the *Criminal Code Act 1899*, an adult (aged 18 or over) who is associated with an institution, including a school, (whether as an employee, contractor, volunteer or otherwise) will commit a crime if they know that there is a significant risk that:
- a) another adult associated with the institution will commit a child sexual offence
 - b) in relation to a child (under 16 years of age, or a person with an impairment of the mind) under the care, supervision or control of the institution; and
 - c) the person has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk; and
 - d) wilfully or negligently fails to reduce or remove the risk.
- 6.2 All staff members (whether teaching or non-teaching), members of the College's governing body, volunteers and contractors are considered to be "associated with" the school. Therefore, this offence means that action must be taken:
- a) by any staff, volunteer or contractor who has the power or responsibility to do so
 - b) to protect students aged under 16, or students with impairment of the mind
 - c) from a known significant risk of sexual abuse that is posed by an adult staff member, volunteer or contractor at the school.
- 6.3 Whether a staff member, volunteer or contractor at the school has "power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk" to the student will depend on their role at the school and on the source of the risk.
- 6.4 The Headmaster and members of the College's leadership team have the necessary degree of supervision, power and responsibility to remove or reduce a risk posed by another adult working at the school. However, on a day-to-day basis, and on tours, excursions or camps, others at the school may have the requisite power and responsibility.
- 6.5 Appropriate action that can be taken to protect students from a significant risk of a child sexual offence or a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm may include, for example:
- a) a current staff member, volunteer or contractor, who has direct contact with and is known to pose a risk of physical abuse to students, being immediately removed from contact with students and reported to external authorities
 - b) a parent who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to students not being allowed to attend excursions as a parent helper.

7. HEALTH and SAFETY

- 7.1 The College has written processes in place to enable it to comply with the requirements of the *Work Place Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)*.
- 7.2 The College abides by a code of practice to identify psycho-social hazards and to mitigate risk

8. REPORTING HARM NOT FROM PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

8.1 Reporting harm (Accreditation Regulation)

- 8.1.1 When the College receives any information alleging harm to a student (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse), they will respond to the situation compassionately and fairly so as to minimise any likely harm to the extent they reasonably can. Information relating to physical or sexual abuse is handled under obligations to report set out separately in this policy.
- 8.1.2 The Reporting Concern of Harm and Abuse Form is available to anyone from the College website.
- 8.1.3 A student who becomes aware or reasonably suspects that harm (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) has been caused by anyone to a student of Ormiston College, who was under 18 at the time, should report it to any staff member.¹
- 8.1.4 A staff member who becomes aware or reasonably suspects that harm (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) has been caused by anyone to a student of Ormiston College, who was under 18 at the time, must report it to the Headmaster and keep a written record of the actions taken.²
- 8.1.5 The Headmaster, upon receiving a report of harm or suspected harm (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) to a student of the school and upon becoming aware of the harm having been caused or reasonably suspecting the harm to have been caused will deal with the situation compassionately and fairly so as to minimise any likely harm to the extent they reasonably can.³

8.2 Inappropriate staff behaviour

- 8.2.1 A student who wishes to report behaviour by a staff member considered by that student to be inappropriate, should report the behaviour to the Headmaster, Heads of Sub-School, the Deputy Heads of Sub-School or a Child Protection Officer, whose names and roles are displayed in the Student Handbook and on the College's website. Unless the Headmaster is the subject of the report, the person receiving the report must pass it on to the Headmaster.⁴
- 8.2.2 The list of Child Protection Officers is reviewed and updated annually or whenever there is a change to staff roles.
- 8.2.3 If the Headmaster is the subject of the report, the person receiving the report must pass it to a member of the College's Governing Body.
- 8.2.4 The Headmaster or their delegate (or the member of the College's Governing Body where the Headmaster is the subject of the report), upon receiving a report by a student of inappropriate behaviour of a staff member, should interview the student, the staff member named in the report and any other person who may be able to provide useful information.⁵ Reports will be dealt with under the College's complaints handling policy.
- 8.2.5 The Headmaster (or the member of the College's Governing Body) should take action on the basis of the report and the investigation of the report.⁶

9. REPORTING SEXUAL ABUSE

9.1 Reporting sexual abuse – Education (General Provisions)

- 9.1.1 If a staff member becomes aware, or reasonably suspects, in the course of their employment at the school, that any of the following has been sexually abused by another person:
- a student under 18 years attending the school;
 - a kindergarten age child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the school;

¹ Accreditation Regulation s16(2)(a) and s16 (2)(c)

² Accreditation Regulation s16(2)(b)(i) and (ii)

³ Accreditation Regulation s16(1)(a)

⁴ Accreditation Regulation s16(2)(a) and (b) and (3)

⁵ Accreditation Regulation s16(2)(b)

⁶ Accreditation Regulation s16(2)(b)

- c) a person with a disability who:
 - (i) under s420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - (ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school,

9.1.2 then the staff member must immediately give a written report about the abuse or suspected abuse to the Headmaster or to a member of the College's Governing Body. The Headmaster or member of the Governing Body must immediately give a copy of the report to a police officer.⁷ The Headmaster or member of the Governing Body who has given a copy of the report to a Police Officer must immediately notify the staff member that he/she has done so.

9.1.3 The report must contain the information set out in 9.2.8 below.⁸

9.1.4 If the staff member gives a written report to the Ormiston College Governing Body, and if the Headmaster is not the subject of the report, the staff member will give to the Headmaster a copy of the written report.

9.1.5 The Headmaster who becomes aware, or reasonably suspects sexual abuse as the first person, must immediately give a written report to a police officer and a member of the governing body.

9.2 Reporting child sexual offence – Criminal Code

9.2.1 Any adult who gains information that:

- (a) causes the adult to believe on reasonable grounds, or that ought reasonably to cause the adult to believe, that a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another adult; and;
- (b) at the relevant time, the child is or was:
 - (i) under 16 years; or
 - (ii) a person with an impairment of the mind

9.2.2 must disclose the information to a police officer as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is, or ought reasonably to have been, formed. Failure to report this information to a police officer without reasonable excuse is a misdemeanour and carries a maximum prison term of three years imprisonment.⁹

9.2.3 the obligation to report child sexual offences to a police officer applies to everyone in Queensland aged 18 years or over, including all staff, volunteers, contractors and students aged 18 and over at the school.¹⁰ 9.2.4 The offence will not apply if the adult has a reasonable excuse for not reporting the information. Under the Criminal Code, a reasonable excuse includes:

- (a) believing, on reasonable grounds, that the information has already been disclosed to a police officer
- (b) making a mandatory report to Police or Child Safety Services under mandatory reporting laws or believing on reasonable grounds that another person has done so
- (c) gaining the information after the alleged victim turns 16 years, and reasonably believing that the alleged victim does not want the information to be disclosed to a police officer
- (d) having a reasonable belief that disclosing the information to a police officer would endanger your safety or the safety of another person, other than the alleged offender, regardless of whether the belief arises because of the fact of the disclosure or the information disclosed, and the failure to disclose the information to a police officer is a reasonable response in the circumstances.

9.2.4 Unacceptable reasons for not reporting include if there is concern about the interests (including the reputation, legal liability or financial status) of:

- (a) the person who may have committed a child sexual offence
- (b) any organisation (such as a school).

⁷ *Education (General Provisions Act) 2006* s366(2)

⁸ *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* s366(3)

⁹ *Criminal Code Act 1899* s229BC

¹⁰ *Criminal Code Act 1899* s229BC4d(i)

- 9.2.5 Information gained by an adult during, or in connection with, a religious confession is not excluded from information that must be reported to a police officer.
- 9.2.6 The list of child sexual offences that are captured by the Failure to Report offence is extensive. It includes sexual offences such as rape, sexual abuse, sexual touching, the production of child abuse material, voyeurism and grooming offences or attempts to commit those offences.
- 9.2.7 The report must contain the following particulars:
- (a) the name of the person giving the report (the first person);
 - (b) the student's name and sex/sex descriptor;
 - (c) details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused by another person;
 - (d) details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
 - (e) any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
 - (i) the student's age;
 - (ii) the identity of the person who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the student;
 - (iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse.¹¹

9.3 Reporting likely sexual abuse – Education (General Provisions)

- 9.3.1 Section 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member reasonably suspects, in the course of their employment at the school, that any of the following is likely to be sexually abused by another person:
- (a) a student under 18 years attending the school;
 - (b) a kindergarten age child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the school;
 - (c) a person with a disability who:
 - (i) under s420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - (ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at school;
- 9.3.2 then the staff member must immediately give a written report about the suspicion to the Headmaster who must then immediately give a copy of the report to a police officer. The Headmaster must then notify the staff member that a copy of the report has been given to a Police Officer.
- 9.3.3 The report must contain the particulars set out in 9.3.6 below.
- 9.3.4 If the staff member gives a written report to the Ormiston College Governing Body, and if the Headmaster is not the subject of the report, the staff member will give to the Headmaster a copy of the written report.
- 9.3.5 If the Headmaster reasonably suspects likely sexual abuse as the first person, the Headmaster must immediately give a written report about the suspicion to a police officer and the governing body.
- 9.3.6 The written report must contain the following particulars:
- (a) the name of the person giving the report (the first person);
 - (b) the student's name and sex/sex descriptor;
 - (c) details of the basis for the first person reasonably suspecting that the student is likely to be sexually abused by another person;
 - (d) any of the following information of which the first person is aware
 - (i) the student's age;
 - (ii) the identity of the person who is suspected to be likely to sexually abuse the student;
 - (iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the suspected likelihood of abuse.¹²

¹¹ *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 s68*

¹² *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 s69*

9.4 Mandatory reporting of physical and sexual abuse – *Child Protection Act 1999*

- 9.4.1 If a doctor, registered nurse, guidance counsellor or teacher forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child in the course of their engagement in their profession, they must make a written report.¹³
- 9.4.2 The doctor, registered nurse, guidance counsellor or teacher must give a written report to the Chief Executive of the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (or other department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999*).¹⁴
- 9.4.3 The doctor, registered nurse, guidance counsellor or teacher, where appropriate, should confer with the Headmaster in preparing the written report.¹⁵
- 9.4.4 Written reports to Child Safety must be made by completing the Concern of Harm or Abuse Report and submitting the report via email to the relevant Child Safety Regional Intake Service:
- (a) Brisbane: brisbanerisintake@communities.qld.gov.au
 - (b) South East Regional Intake: seintake@cs.cyjma.qld.gov.au
- 9.4.5 Where uncertainty about reporting obligations exists, the relevant Regional Intake Service can support with advice.
- 9.4.6 A report under this section must include the following particulars:¹⁶
- (a) the basis on which the person has formed the reportable suspicion; and
 - (b) information prescribed by regulation, to the extent of the person's knowledge.
- 9.4.7 The information prescribed by section 4 of the *Child Protection Regulation 2023* is:
- (a) the child's name and sex descriptor;
 - (b) the child's age;
 - (c) details of how to contact the child;
 - (d) details of the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates;
 - (e) particulars of the identity of the person suspected of causing the child to have suffered, suffer, or be at risk of suffering, the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates; and
 - (f) the identity of any other person who may be able to give information about the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates.

9.5 Reportable suspicion tests – *Child Protection Act 1999*

- 9.5.1 A reportable suspicion about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child:
- (a) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and
 - (b) may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.¹⁷
- 9.5.2 'Significant harm' has no legislative definition. Matters to consider, under the *Child Protection Act 1999* section 13C, when considering the significance of harm under mandatory reporting obligations include:
- (a) whether there are detrimental effects on the child's body or the child's psychological or emotional state:
 - (i) that are evident to the person reporting; or
 - (ii) that the person considers are likely to become evident in the future; and
 - (b) in relation to any detrimental effects mentioned in paragraph (a)-
 - (i) their nature and severity;
 - (ii) the likelihood that they will continue; and
 - (iii) the child's age.

¹³ *Child Protection Act 1999* s13E

¹⁴ *Child Protection Act 1999* s13G

¹⁵ *Child Protection Act 1999* s13H

¹⁶ *Child Protection Act 1999* s13G

¹⁷ *Child Protection Act 1999* s13E(2)

- 9.5.3 The person's consideration may be informed by an observation of the child, other knowledge about the child or any other relevant knowledge, training or experience that the person may have.
- 9.5.4 For a suspicion to be reportable it must also fulfil the "Parent Test". The parent test is fulfilled if a child may not have a parent willing and able to protect them from the significant harm. A parent willing and able has no legislative definition; however, willing goes to choice and able goes to capacity.
- 9.5.5 A parent may be willing to protect a child but not have capacity to do so and therefore they are not considered 'able'. This includes situations, for example, where the parent's inability is due to intellectual impairment or ill health. Alternatively, a parent may have the capacity to protect a child (able) but may choose not to do so (not willing). This might include situations where a parent has an ongoing relationship with a person who is abusing their child and the parent is thus unwilling to protect the child.
- 9.5.6 A doctor, registered nurse or teacher is not required to make an investigation or determination as to whether a parent is willing and able. "Reasonably suspecting" that a child may not have a parent willing and able to protect them is sufficient.

9.6 Conferrals with colleague and related information sharing

- 9.6.1 Colleagues may provide information to each other in complying with the *Child Protection Act 1999*. For example:
- (a) A teacher with a reportable suspicion about a child may give information to the Headmaster at the school to enable the Headmaster to take appropriate action to protect the child or other children from risk of harm.¹⁸

10. RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF HARM

Notifications to Queensland College of Teachers (QCT)

- 10.1 A Headmaster who deals with an allegation of harm caused, or likely to be caused, to a child because of the conduct of a teacher must, as soon as practicable after starting to deal with the allegation, give notice to the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) of the investigation, including the following details:
- (a) the names of the school and the teacher; and
- (b) particulars of the allegation, the date the College started dealing with the allegation, action taken in response to the allegation and other relevant information.¹⁹
- 10.2 If the College stops dealing with the allegation for any reason, the Headmaster must provide to the QCT as soon as practicable, in addition to the details required in sub-section 9.1 above, the allegation, particulars of the allegation, the date the investigation ended, the findings of the investigation, the outcome and any reasons for the outcome and, if relevant, the final decision and reasons for the decision.²⁰
- 10.3 If the College dismisses a teacher in circumstances that, in the opinion of the College, call into question the teacher's competency to be employed as a teacher and the College has not given notice under 9.1 or 9.2 above, the College must provide to the QCT within 14 days after the day notice of the dismissal was given to the teacher, the name of the College, the name of the teacher, the date of the notice of dismissal, the effective date of the dismissal and the reasons given by the school for the dismissal.²¹

When a disclosure is made

- 10.4 On receiving an allegation of harm or abuse, the College must only ask enough questions to assess the need to report the matter to authorities. The safety of the child is paramount. Unnecessary questions or interviews could cause distress or confusion and interfere with any subsequent investigation undertaken by the authorities.

¹⁸ *Child Protection Act 1999 s13H*

¹⁹ *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 s76*

²⁰ *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 s77*

²¹ *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 s78*

- 10.5 In the first instance, reports by the school of suspected child abuse should be made to the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety or other department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999*, which is staffed by professionally trained child protection personnel skilled in dealing with suspected child abuse reports.
- 10.6 To discuss or report an incident involving a child to police officer, contact can be made with the local Child Protection and Investigation Unit.
- 10.7 Ormiston College must not:
- (a) conduct its own investigation to substantiate claims,
 - (b) hold its own internal hearing, or
 - (c) attempt to mediate a settlement of the matter instead of notifying relevant authorities.
- 10.8 Investigations conducted by the school could lead to:
- (a) The destruction of evidence by an accused person,
 - (b) Intimidation of the person disclosing the information, or
 - (c) Intimidation of the child being harmed (if the disclosure was made by someone else).
- 10.9 Ormiston College may investigate and deal with an allegation if it does not need to be reported to authorities or, where it is reported, the authority decides at some stage that no further action is required.

Role of Ormiston College

- 10.10 To comply with the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017*, Ormiston College must ensure that:
- (a) all students, regardless of culture, faith, ability, gender or sexual orientation are aware of this policy and the processes they may access to safely report any concerns. The College provides access to the reporting platform, [Stymie](#), and has two Guidance Counsellors during school hours to assist students if required.

Posters are displayed throughout the College to identify staff members, including the nominated Child Protection Officers (College Guidance Counsellors) who can recognise signs of harm and actively listen.
 - (b) staff, students and students' parents and guardians are made aware of this policy; and
 - (b) this policy is readily accessible by staff; and
 - (c) all staff and volunteers are to complete Child Protection training annually and will receive training during induction. The training may be provided by external presenters, the ISQ Child Protection modules, the Child Protection Officers or members of the College Executive.

The College maintains a training register for all Staff. The Headmaster, or their delegate, will ensure staff who did not complete the annual training will meet their mandatory requirements.
 - (d) The College is implementing the processes.
- 10.11 If a member of the governing body receives a report of abuse or harm related to the College, the governing body will ensure that the Headmaster immediately receives the report and immediately starts to deal with it in accordance with this policy, unless the report involves the Headmaster.
- 10.12 Ormiston College acknowledges its equity and inclusion obligations through recognition of the diverse needs, backgrounds and identities of all members of the community.

Complaints Procedure

- 10.13 Reports and complaints of non-compliance with the College's safeguarding processes can be submitted in accordance with the College's Complaints Handling Policy for non-compliance with student protection processes which is [accessible via the College website](#).

Post Incident Review

10.14 Following any substantiated child protection incident the Headmaster or delegate must conduct a debrief/review to assist with continuous improvement of processes and policies.

11. POLICY DISTRIBUTION

11.1 The policy will be directed to the attention of students and parents of the school through:

- (a) the school website,
- (b) school intranet,
- (c) school communication

11.2 The Headmaster will ensure that a copy of this policy is always available from the administration of the school.

11.3 The policy will be directed to the attention of all staff through:

- (a) the staff professional development week at the commencement of each school year for school staff
- (b) to all new staff at the time of induction
- (c) staff intranet
- (d) College website.

12. DEFINITIONS

12.1 **Abuse** means activity or deliberate or careless inactivity which causes significant Harm. The Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation.

12.2 **Child** means an individual under 18 years.

12.3 **Harm**, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

Harm can be caused by:

- (a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
- (b) sexual abuse or exploitation.

Harm can be caused by:

- (c) a single act, omission or circumstance; or
- (d) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.²²

12.4 **Sexual Abuse** in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances:

- (a) the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- (b) the relevant person has less power than the other person; or
- (c) there is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.²³

12.5 **Sex Descriptor** means:

- (a) 'male'; or
- (b) 'female'; or
- (c) Any other descriptor of sex

12.6 **Staff** includes current or former employees (for example teachers, administration personnel and grounds staff), contractors and volunteers (for example sports coaches).

12.7 **Student** includes any person, regardless of age, who is enrolled at Ormiston College.

²² Child Protection Act 1999 s9

²³ Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 s364

12.8 **Child Safe Committee** is responsible for promoting and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children within the school and includes the College Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain, Nurse, Deputy Heads of Sub-School (Wellbeing), Learning Enhancement team.

12.9 **A child in need of protection** is a child who:

- (a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and
- (b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

12.10 **Violence** means:

- (a) physical violence; or
- (b) non-physical violence, including, for example, emotional or psychological abuse and coercion.

12.11 **Reportable Suspicion** is a reasonable suspicion that the child:

- (a) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and
- (b) may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

13. HARM NOT COVERED BY SPECIFIC LEGISLATION

Bullying and harassment

13.1 In most cases, harm of this nature is not required to be reported to external authorities, unless it involves criminal behaviour or is harm under the definitions supplied in this policy. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying and Sexual Harassment Policies.

Self-harm

13.2 Self-harm may occur with or without suicidal intent, or may be symptomatic of, or associated with, a known medical condition or intellectual disability.

Self-harm with suicidal intent

13.3 Common risk factors include:

- (a) Previous attempts at suicide (most powerful risk predictor)
- (b) Depression
- (c) Drugs and alcohol abuse
- (d) Conduct disorder
- (e) Disruptive and unsupportive family background
- (f) Relationship conflicts
- (g) Poor coping skills
- (h) Psychiatric illnesses
- (i) Ready availability of lethal means to commit suicide
- (j) Copycat behaviour after an incident of self-harm by another person.

13.4 Other risk factors include:

- (a) Recent bereavement
- (b) Chronic physical illness
- (c) Anniversary phenomenon (of past losses or major life events)
- (d) Early loss experiences
- (e) School failure
- (f) Perfectionism and overachievement as a result of students having high expectations of themselves.

- 13.5 Threats of self-harm by a student should be taken seriously and reported to the College Guidance Counsellor and/or Headmaster or delegate immediately.
- 13.6 A staff member who becomes aware of, or suspects that, a student is experiencing significant psychological distress, should consult in the first instance to the College Guidance Counsellor, or Deputy Head of Sub-School (Wellbeing) if Counsellor is unavailable.
- 13.7 In the case of an acutely distressed student, the immediate safety of the child is paramount.
- 13.8 A staff member should ensure the immediate safety of the student, arrange for an adult to be with the student at all times and then report concerns in the first instance to the College Guidance Counsellor, or Deputy Head of Sub-School (Wellbeing) if Counsellor is unavailable. Staff should support a student of concern but this must not substitute support for professional help.
- 13.9 Following a report, the College Guidance Counsellor should meet with the distressed student on the day of the report, to conduct an initial assessment and determine an appropriate course of action. In cases of serious concern, the College Guidance Counsellor, under the direction of the Headmaster, should notify the student's parents and make arrangements for access to professional assistance.

Self-harm without suicidal intent

- 13.10 Not all cases of self-harm relate to suicidal intent. Students may engage in a variety of high-risk behaviours, such as alcohol/substance abuse, drug-taking, unsafe promiscuity, cutting/burning oneself.
- 13.11 All College staff are expected to act to prevent all high-risk behaviours occurring within the school, and to support any other interventions undertaken to reduce the risk of such behaviours occurring outside the school.
- 13.12 Staff who are aware that a student is engaging in, or is at risk of engaging in, high-risk activities, should consult with the College Guidance Counsellor for further advice.
- 13.13 Following a report, the Headmaster should consult with the College Guidance Counsellor to determine what course of action should occur. Possible actions include:
 - (a) contacting parents
 - (b) arranging professional assistance
 - (c) consulting with the local office of the Department of Child Safety
 - (d) contacting the police where appropriate.

Self-harm as a symptom of a medical condition or intellectual disability

- 13.14 Where it is known that a student has a propensity to engage in self-harm that is symptomatic or associated with a known medical condition or intellectual disability, the Child Safe Committee, in cooperation with other qualified school staff and external treating professionals (where applicable) should devise an individual program of management to prevent or reduce the likelihood of the student engaging in self-harm at school.
- 13.15 The program should complement any other management procedures adopted outside the school setting to address the self-harm behaviour.

14. REVIEW

- 14.1 Ormiston College will review this policy annually.

15. GENERAL

- 15.1 A person who becomes aware of the identity of a person who has notified authorities about Harm must not disclose the identity of that person except in the circumstances set out in s186A(2) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

- 15.2 The Headmaster will ensure that the following are undertaken in order to reduce the chance of abuse occurring:
- (a) each staff member understands and fulfils their obligations under this policy;
 - (b) there is an acceptable reference check for each staff member engaged since the commencement of this protocol, from their previous employer;
 - (c) each non-teaching staff member and volunteer who has contact with children has a current positive notice Blue Card issued under the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 as required by the Ormiston College Blue Card (Working with Children) Policy. The College engages with the Blue Card Services Organisational Portal to maintain the Blue Card Register for all non-teaching staff and volunteers. The College responds to any notification of cancellation, suspension or refusal of a Blue Card accordingly by removing the person from child-related duties.
 - (d) each teaching staff member is a registered teacher.

15.3 The College will protect the privacy, confidentiality and wellbeing of any person who makes a report or disclosure under this policy. Information collected, used and disclosed under this policy will be handled in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles for the collection, use and disclosure and security of the collected information.²⁴

The identity of a person who reports concerns of harm or abuse will be kept confidential to the fullest extent permitted by law and will not be disclosed except where:

- a) disclosure is authorised or required by law;
- b) disclosure is necessary to protect a child from harm; or
- c) disclosure is required to facilitate a lawful investigation by a relevant authority.

College administrative processes in relation to the collection and storage of information under this policy will be strictly limited to the key staff as the Headmaster delegates. Information systems will be secured, access restricted, audited and maintained to ensure the protection of collected information stored under this policy is enduring.

²⁴ *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* s1

16. REVIEW and VERSION CONTROL REGISTER

Version	Policy Document Approver	Approval Date	Change history / Superseded Documents	Next Review Date
V160225	Ormiston College Governing Body	17 January 2025	No major changes required. Alison van Eps added to replace Ranui Hastings	January 2026
V250326	Ormiston College Governing Body	15 April 2026	New template, policy renamed. Updated to align with introduction of Child Safe Standards (CSS) under <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)</i> and to review compliance with other relevant legislation.	March 2027