



Child Protection Compliance Strategy

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of this strategy is to provide written processes to ensure that St James Lutheran College complies with legislation applying in Queensland about the care and protection of children. In particular, the strategy sets out a risk management strategy for the purpose of reducing the risk of harm to children.

Scope

This strategy applies to all staff, including volunteers, and other operators associated with the College and covers information about the school's commitment to child protection, procedures related to recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff; policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines; risk identification and management; and communication and support.

Responsibility

School Council

Point of Contact

Principal

LEGISLATION

Relevant Legislation

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014

Education (General Provisions Act) 2006

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act, 2005

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017

Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017

Education and Training Legislation Amendment Act 2011

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the St James Lutheran College Child Protection Policy.

STRATEGY

St James Lutheran College is committed to the protection of all children in its care. In order to manage the risks surrounding child protection the following policies, strategies and procedures apply at the College.

Child Protection Policy

St James Lutheran College has a current Child Protection Policy which meets criteria as set down in legislation and regulation. The Policy outlines policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines and is available:

- on the School website;
- in the Staff Policy Handbook;
- at reception; and
- a summarised copy of the policy is in staff and student handbooks.

In addition, the school's policy, strategy and attitude towards child protection is conveyed via the newsletter on a regular basis, including details about how to report harm or suspected harm. Students are also



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informed at assembly and in regular classroom meetings about how to protect themselves and who to report to if they are concerned about their safety.

Blue Cards

All staff members, volunteers, including Board members, homestay parents and other people in contact with students of the school must have current prescribed notices (blue cards) where required by legislation.

The School/College maintains a register of:

- all teacher registration numbers
- all blue card numbers of non-registered teacher employees and volunteers and the dates for renewal.

Choosing Staff

The College recognises that risk management for child protection begins with the recruiting, screening and selection of the right people to work in schools, and continues by having consistent procedures in place for all staff (including volunteers) and contractors to follow, with adequate management and supervision to ensure they comply with these procedures.

The College, therefore, has a written policy on the selection, supervision and management of staff, volunteers and contractors, such as homestay parents.

Selection

1. Job Analysis

All positions at St James Lutheran College are subject to a job analysis before they are advertised.

This analysis includes:

- summarising the duties to be performed in the job;
- deciding how much supervision it involves;
- deciding who the supervisor will be;
- the equipment/work aids used to perform the duties of the job;
- outlining the physical environment of the work;
- listing the physical skills or abilities needed to perform the work;
- determining the schools' requirements in relation to the job, e.g. criminal history check requirements, minimum educational level, first aid qualifications, bus or car licence;
- listing special skills or qualifications required for the job; and
- indicating any special training that may be necessary after the employee enters the job.

2. Duty Statement

The job analysis is used by the College as the basis for developing a job description/duty statement which targets the skills and experience necessary for working with children and young people. Duty statements are developed for all positions in the school, including voluntary and contract positions.

The duty statement makes explicit the mandatory conditions for ongoing employment, including the Code of Conduct under which staff members, volunteers and contractors are expected to work, and is the basis for the selection criteria for the position. Questions at interview will be based on the criteria developed from the duty statement.

The selection process for a position identifies whether people applying have the particular skills, knowledge, abilities and, where relevant, qualifications required to do the job, as well as the personal qualities an employer is looking for.

Before the selection interview, the selection panel develops reasonable but probing questions that relate to:

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- an applicants work history, background and attitudes; and
- the selection criteria.

Following the selection interview, and before appointment, the selection panel:

- undertakes a thorough verification from referees that the applicant has the right qualities for the position, including the ability to work effectively with children; and
- checks that the applicant is a registered teacher or has a blue card.

3. Screening

It is the policy of the School that all members of staff, volunteers and contractors are cleared to work with children:

- all teaching staff are registered or provisionally registered with the College of Teachers, or have received special dispensation from the College;
- all non-teaching members of staff and all volunteers and contractors (including Board members), who are required to hold a blue card, have a current card;
- in some cases, deemed appropriate by the School, paid or unpaid employees who work with children but are not required to hold a blue card (e.g. a parent volunteer) may be asked to consent to a criminal history check through the Queensland Police Service;
- where volunteer parents are working with children, it will always be in the presence of academic or non-teaching staff who are cleared to work with children.

Induction

The College has a written induction process which applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors (hereafter called 'staff') during the first twelve months of appointment, and includes procedures for making staff members aware of the legislation on Child Protection and the Code of Conduct expected of staff.

The Induction process includes, but is not limited to:

- professional development about identifying and reporting harm or suspected harm;
- making staff aware of the protocols for the protection of children (see below);
- working through policies related to child protection such as;
 - behaviour management;
 - anti-bullying; and
 - disabilities' policy.

Protocols

It should be noted that it is a policy of the School that:

- staff members are not alone with individual students in areas where they cannot be seen by other staff members or students;
- staff members do not use their private vehicles to transport students without the permission of the principal; and
- staff members do not invite students to their homes.

Professional Development

All staff members are required to undertake Professional Development in relation to child protection on a regular basis and a register is kept of such activities.

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DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

The School keeps a record of all incidents related to sexual abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour.

Where legislation requires, incidents of harm or suspected harm are reported to the relevant state authorities immediately, and the incident is noted in Confidential Notes on TASS and on a student's file in a sealed and marked envelope.

Where an incident of inappropriate behaviour is reported, full details, including the steps taken to resolve the incident, are entered and recorded on TASS.

Staff, parents and students can access the School's complaints handling policy in cases where an issue is not resolved to their satisfaction.

Suspicion of harm

A person has 'reasonable grounds' to suspect harm¹ if:

- A child or young person tells them they have been harmed
- Someone else, for example another child, a parent, or staff member, tells them that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- A child or young person tells them they know of someone who has been harmed (it is possible they may be referring to themselves)
- They are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child or young person, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries, or
- They see the harm happening.

Disclosures of harm

Disclosures of harm may sound like:

- "I think I saw ..."
- "Somebody told me that ..."
- "Just think you should know ..."
- "I'm not sure what I want you to do, but ..."

Any disclosure of harm is important and must be acted upon, regardless of whether:

- The harm to a child or young person has been caused by a person from within or outside your organisation, or
- The child or young person disclosing the harm to you is from within or outside your organisation.

It is crucial to have procedures in place so any disclosure from an adult, child or young person is dealt with efficiently and effectively.

What to do when a disclosure is made

- Don't panic
- Find a private place to talk
- Listen
- Believe the person, and
- Don't ask leading questions.

Where an employee has concerns or is unsure whether or not observations should be cause for concern, it is mandatory that they report their concerns to the Principal.

The Principal will contact the Child Safety Services to discuss, in the first instance, that there is a concern and to seek advice as to the appropriateness of formally reporting the matter.



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If it is deemed, after this discussion, that further investigation is warranted, then the Principal, on behalf of the employee who made the original observation will report the matter to the relevant authorities.

Reporting to the police is mandatory where an employee of the school becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects a child has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused.

Reporting to Child Safety Services is mandatory when a teacher forms a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering , significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and may not have a parent who is able and willing to protect the child from harm (i.e. a protective parent).

It is NOT the role of the person receiving a disclosure or a report to investigate allegations of harm. He/she should only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter to the Queensland Police Service or the Department of Child Safety. The safety of the child or young person is paramount. Unnecessary questions or interviews could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any subsequent investigation authorities undertake.

An organisation should not:

- Conduct its own investigation to substantiate claims
- Hold its own internal hearing, or
- Attempt to mediate a settlement of the matter instead of notifying relevant authorities.

Investigations conducted by your organisation could lead to:

- The destruction of evidence by an accused person
- Intimidation of the person disclosing the information, or
- Intimidation of the child or young person being harmed (if the disclosure was made by somebody else).

Remember, when a person makes a report to the Department of Child Safety or the Queensland Police Service, his/her details are kept confidential and the person’s identity is strictly protected. For more information, about what happens when a report is made go to: www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/child-protection/report-process.html.

Reporting of Harm

The school has reporting procedures that comply with legislation. Please refer to the College Child Protection Policy for details on reporting harm.

SCOPE AND DEFINITION OF “HARM”	
SCOPE:	applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • harm of any student of this school who was under 18 years at the time the harm was caused; and • behaviour of a staff member that a student considers is inappropriate.
DEFINITION:	“harm”:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a student’s physical psychological or emotional well being, however caused • can be caused by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or - sexual abuse or exploitation.



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STRATEGY DETAILS

Date of Strategy

October 2014

Updated for Legislative changes on 19 January 2015

Updated and Reviewed 11 December 2019

Updated and Reviewed 27 February 2020

Approved by Board

February 2020

Review Date

Biennially

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Child Protection Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Anti-bullying Policy

Privacy Policy

Complaints Policy

Anti-Discrimination Policy

After Hours Resource Centre Guidelines

Allergy Guidelines

Computer and Internet Acceptable Conduct and Use Agreement (AUP)

BYOD Agreement