CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Version: 3.0	Approved: July 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Child Safety is a specific concept, separate to Work Health and Safety and with broader responsibilities than Student Protection and Student Duty of Care. It includes concepts such as cultural safety, participation and equity. At St Rita's College we have implemented a range of strategies and policies to ensure that children feel and are safe at our College.

St Rita's College Board is the College's governing body and approves the Child Safety Policy.

PURPOSE

The **Child Safety Policy**, which includes our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing, demonstrates the College's strong commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly environment. The policy also demonstrates our compliance with:

- non-state school accreditation criteria relevant to child safety and child protection; and
- the Queensland Child Safe Standards, Universal Principle and Reportable Conduct Scheme set out in the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld) (CSO Act).

It summarises the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe from abuse and other harm.

The **Child Safety Policy** outlines the key elements of our approach to being a child safe organisation and to:

- implementing the Queensland Child Safe Standards, Universal Principle and Reportable Conduct Scheme
- implementing the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS)
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and child safety in Queensland.

The policy informs the College community about everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards students and guides the policies, processes and practices for the safety, wellbeing and protection of students across all areas of our work.

SCOPE

The **Child Safety Policy** applies to all adults in the College community, including staff, volunteers, contractors, other workers engaged by the College and visitors.

It applies in all College environments. College environments include both physical and online environments, as well as any environment (including those outside the College's grounds) where College-related activities are occurring.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of particular importance to this Policy are outlined below. Definitions of other relevant terms used in the College's Child Safety Policy can be found in our Student Protection Processes document.

Child/Child and Young Person	The term "child" and the phrase "child and young person" refer to a person who is under the age of 18.
Child Safety Incident or Concern	St Rita's College uses the phrase, "child safety incident or concern", which includes, but goes further than, the definition of "harm" in Queensland child protection laws. Child safety incidents or concerns can take many forms. These include not only harm or risk of harm to a child or young person by their parents/carers, but also conduct by other people that can cause harm to a child or young person or to a student aged 18 or over. We define a "child safety incident or concern" as: • "harm" or risk of "harm", as defined in the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld), to any child or young person or to a student aged 18 or over • a criminal offence against any child or young person, or against a student aged 18 or over, under the Criminal Code 1899 (Qld) • a practice that attempts to change or supress a child or young person's, or a student aged 18 or over's, sexual orientation or gender identity (conversion therapy), which is prohibited by the Public Health Act 2005 (Qld) • conduct by staff, volunteers, contractors or other workers engaged by the College that may be "reportable conduct" • a breach of the Child Safety Codes of Conduct, including but not limited to inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards a student. For more information about each of these concepts, refer to our Student Protection Processes.
Student	The term "student" refers to all students enrolled at the College, including those aged 18 and above.
Meaning of 'Worker' of and entity (Child Safe Organisations Act 2024)	A worker of a child safe entity like the College is an individual who performs work of any kind for the College, and includes, for example, the following— (a) an employee of the College; (b) a volunteer; (c) a contractor, subcontractor or consultant; (d) an individual supplied by a provider of labour hire services (e) an executive officer of the College, or another person who is concerned with, or takes part in the management of the College; (f) a trainee or person undertaking work experience for the College; (g) if the entity is a religious body—a minister of religion, religious leader or officer of the religious body

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Our Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

St Rita's College is committed to providing education and care to children and young people to assist them to develop into high achieving, supported students, positively connected to each other and to the communities in which they live and which they will serve.

The College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students and is dedicated to protecting them from harm.

At St Rita's College we have zero tolerance for child abuse. Our child protection responsibilities are of the utmost importance for the College and, as such, the College is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws, regulations and standards, and to maintain a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people.

St Rita's College demonstrates our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- implementing strategies that promote child safety and wellbeing through the leadership, governance and culture of the College;
- listening to the views of students and keeping students informed about decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing;
- involving families, carers and relevant communities in decision making processes that support the development of a child safe culture and environment;
- promoting equity and respecting the cultural diversity of families and reflecting this in our policies and practices;
- maintaining robust selection, recruitment and training practices for directors, staff, contractors and volunteers and supporting all personnel to uphold child safety and wellbeing values;
- responding swiftly and sensitively to any child safety concerns and applying clear procedures for managing and reporting child safety concerns;
- investing in regular training and education so that staff are able to recognise the nature and indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to build safe environments for young people;
- promoting policies and procedures that help to mitigate risks to young people in online environments and supporting teachers and parents/carers by sharing helpful advice and resources about e-safety;
- supporting and promoting the National Child Safe Principals by regularly reviewing our practices to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is at the forefront our decisions;
- implementing policies and procedures that support child safety.

CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the Queensland Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle in the CSO Act, as well as on the NCSS, which set out the following overarching standards that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and other harm.

Requiring compliance with child safety standards is one of the Board's strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the College.

Queensland Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle

Queensland's Child Safe Standards are based on, and align directly with, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission. They are:

1. Leadership and Culture	child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Voice of children	children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Family and community	families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
4. Equity and diversity	equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5. People	people working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
6. Complaints management	processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused
7. Knowledge and skills	staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training
8. Physical and online environments	physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed
9. Continuous improvement	implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved
10. Policy and procedures	policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children.

The Universal Principle sets out that when complying with and implementing each of the Child Safe Standards, the College must provide an environment that promotes and upholds the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

The NCSS are also based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, but expand on these specifically for Catholic settings. They set out 10 overarching standards that guide the development of a child safe culture for Catholic entities. Compliance with the NCSS is mandatory for all Catholic entities. They are:

Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Of particular importance are our Student Protection Contacts.

The College's Student Protection Contacts

The College nominates at least two senior staff members as the College's Student Protection Contacts. They receive additional specialised training about child safety and child protection issues.

They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child safety within the College and assist in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

They ensure that the College responds appropriately to students involved in child safety incidents and concerns, and provide assistance and advice to other members of the College community who receive or make a disclosure of abuse or other harm of a child or young person.

They are also our "stated staff members", for the purposes of non-state school accreditation requirements, to whom students can report behaviour by a staff member that the student considers inappropriate.

Our Student Protection Contacts are:

Mrs Maree Trims	Principal	principal@stritas.qld.edu.au
Mrs Erica Qureshi	Deputy Principal – Students	qur@stritas.qld.edu.au
Mrs Helen Skelton	Head of Primary	ske@stritas.qld.edu.au
Mrs Kirsty Gore	Head of Student Wellbeing	gor@stritas.qld.edu.au
Ms Melinda Jurgeneit	Guidance Counsellor	melinda.jurgeneit@stritas.qld.edu.au
Mrs Julia McDonald	Guidance Counsellor	jmcdonald@stritas.qld.edu.au
Ms Jennifer Thomas	Guidance Counsellor	jthomas@stritas.qld.edu.au

Click **here** to see our Student Protection Contacts.

The College has also appointed Mrs Maree Trims (Principal) as the College's Senior Student Protection Contact. The Principal can be contacted by phone on 07 3862 1615 or by emailing principal@stritas.qld.edu.au.

The Senior Student Protection Contact has additional child safety responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the College Leadership Team and St Rita's College Board.

St Rita's College Board

St Rita's College Board is the College's governing body. The Board:

- approves and reviews the College's child safety policies and procedures required for accreditation as a non-state school;
- ensures that the College has and implements processes to comply with its child safety legal and regulatory obligations; and
- ensures that the College has appropriate resources to effectively implement the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, and the Child Safety Program.

Mercy Partners

St Rita's College is governed under the sponsorship of Mercy Partners. As a ministry of Mercy Partners, the College has a responsibility to safeguard children through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse. Mercy Partners supports the College to:

- prioritise the safety and best interests of children;
- create a culture of safety and respect in the leadership and governance of the College;
- understand the nature and risks of abuse and taking deliberate and immediate steps to prevent it;
- encourage the participation of children, families and communities in providing feedback on and input into decisions that affect their safety; and
- respond to complaints of abuse sensitively, respectfully, actively and in a timely manner, in accordance with its lawful obligations and its policies and procedures.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible and accountable for the operational management of the College, and the Child Safety Program and for taking all practical measures to ensure that:

- the Child Safety Policy and the College's Child Safety Program are implemented effectively; and
- a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the College.
- all allegations of child abuse or harm are immediately reported and thoroughly investigated.

The College Leadership Team

Each member of the College Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the College's Child Safety Program to be effectively implemented within the College, and for supporting the Principal in the practical application of the College's child safety strategies, policies, procedures and work systems.

Staff

All Staff must:

- comply with the Child Safety Policy, the Child Safety Codes of Conduct and the Student Protection Processes;
- be familiar with the other policies and procedures in the Child Safety Program; and
- understand their legal obligations with respect to reporting abuse and other harm to children and young people
- understand their legal obligations with respect to working with children clearance (Blue Cards/Exemption Cards).

All Staff must be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, be observant, and raise all child safety incidents and concerns with a College Student Protection Contact. To meet these obligations, all Staff must:

- participate in child safety induction and ongoing training provided by the College;

- follow the Policies and Procedures in the Child Safety Program;
- act in accordance with the Child Safety Codes of Conduct;
- identify, respond to and report child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with the Student Protection Processes;
- ensure that students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them;
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students; and
- comply with all relevant child safety human resources policies and procedures.

Volunteers, Contractors and Other Workers Engaged by the College

All volunteers, contractors and other workers engaged by the college are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all volunteers, contractors and other workers must:
  - comply with the Child Safety Policy and the Child Safety Codes of Conduct
  - understand their legal obligations with respect to reporting abuse and other harm
  - raise all child safety concerns with a Student Protection Contact
  - comply with all relevant child safety human resources policies and procedures
- certain volunteers, contractors and other workers (those who are so required by the College) must:
  - either participate in child safety induction and ongoing training provided by the College or receive and acknowledge information about the Child Safety Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - identify and respond to child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with the Student Protection Processes.

For contractors, the College may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

CHILD SAFETY CODES OF CONDUCT

The College's **Child Safety Code of Conduct** sets boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults associated with the College and students, including in physical and online environments.

The **Code of Behaviour for Students** includes child safety standards of behaviour for students, and our **Staff and Student Professional Boundaries** policy includes requirements regarding professional boundaries with students and applies to everyone who works or volunteers at or for the College.

Together, we refer to these as the **Child Safety Codes of Conduct**.

We publish the Child Safety Code of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at our College and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Safety Code of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS TO SAFETY, INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

St Rita's College is a child safe and child-centred organisation. We ensure that our physical and online environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

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

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

PARENTS/CARERS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD SAFETY

The College recognises that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure parents/carers have opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their children. In addition, we:

- ensure that families and relevant communities know about the College's operations and policies, including this Child Safety Policy and the Child Safety Codes of Conduct, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes ("relevant communities" means the variety of communities that are relevant to the College, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our staff and student cohorts);

- actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments;
- build cultural safety at the College through partnerships with relevant communities.

CULTURAL SAFETY AND VALUING DIVERSITY IN THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

The College values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families;
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- support students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation;
- support other vulnerable students and their families (such as students who are unable to live at home or students and family members who are gender diverse) and act to promote their participation;
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities;
- ensure that staff and relevant volunteers, contractors and workers are made aware of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs;
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference; and
- commit to ensuring our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

We also recognise that some children and young people face additional vulnerabilities to abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns. We:

- provide guidance to staff, and relevant volunteers, contractors and workers, about identifying additional vulnerabilities/barriers; and
- implement strategies for supporting students who face additional vulnerabilities/barriers to participate in the College community and for enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the College.

CHILD SAFETY HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Recruitment and Screening

The College applies best practice standards to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. Our practices include:

- making our commitment to child safety clear in recruitment advertising and documentation;
- requiring relevant staff, volunteers, contractors and other workers to maintain a valid Working with Children Check clearance (Blue Card or Exemption Card);
- using additional selection criteria, background checking and screening processes for all staff, and for relevant volunteers, contractors and other workers, that take into account child safety considerations.

Training on and Information about the Child Safety Program

As a part of St Rita's College's induction process, all staff, as well as relevant volunteers, contractors and other workers, must complete our child safety induction program, which includes information about our child safety policies, practices and procedures.

All staff, as well as relevant volunteers, contractors and other workers, also receive child safety training at least annually.

Our child safety induction and ongoing training programs include information about:

- this Child Safety Policy;
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- recognising abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators, including harm caused by other children and young people;
- our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting (both internally and to external authorities) all child safety incidents and concerns, including mandatory reporting obligations;
- our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns; and
- Blue Cards and Exemption Cards, and other child safety human resources practices.

The College provides all visitors to the College with information about the Child Safety Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities.

Ongoing Supervision, Management and Support

The College's Student Protection Contacts and College Leadership Team provide supervision and support to all staff, volunteers, contractors and other workers to ensure that they comply with the College's approach to child safety.

Our child safety supervision and support program includes:

- annual performance reviews for all staff members;
- appointing a staff member to supervise relevant volunteers, contractors and other workers; and
- professional development programs for staff that include child safety education.

CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT

St Rita's College recognises the importance of a risk management approach to child safety and to minimising the risk of harm to children and young people in all College environments, without compromising their rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

We have a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all College environments.

We identify, assess and manage child safety risks in all College environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of our student cohort.

We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

CHILD SAFETY PRIVACY, INFORMATION SHARING AND RECORD KEEPING

The College collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Queensland privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the College to disclose information about child safety to external people and agencies. For information about how the College collects, uses and discloses this information, refer to our Privacy Policy available on the College website. In particular, the College is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns.

The College records all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the College. When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the College maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM AND PRACTICE REVIEW

St Rita's College is committed to the continuous improvement of our child safety policies, procedures and practices. We review the Child Safety Program (explained in the College Processes below) as a whole annually (or earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the College or legislation changes) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards. When undertaking these reviews, the College:

- actively seeks, actions and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider College community, staff, volunteers and contractors;
- analyses any complaints, concerns and child safety incidents that may have occurred; and
- communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the College community.

REPORTING CHILD SAFETY INCIDENTS OR CONCERNS TO THE COLLEGE

If you are concerned that a child, young person or student aged 18 or over is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.

Any person, including all staff, volunteers, contractors, other workers, parents/carers and students, can at any time contact the Department responsible for Child Safety (Child Safety Services) if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child (aged under 18) is in need of protection (Voluntary Reports).

You can make a Voluntary Report to the Department responsible for Child Safety:

- online, via the online reporting form found here
- during business hours, by calling the numbers listed on the Regional Intake Service website
- outside business hours, by calling the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 07 3235 9999 or 1800 177 135.

Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and other Workers

All staff, volunteers, contractors and other workers at the College must follow our Student Protection Processes which are published on the College website. In particular, they must report all child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Student Protection Contact or the Principal.

If the incident or concern involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the Chair of the Board (Boardchair@stritas.qld.edu.au or in writing to the Board Chair PO Box 548 Clayfield QLD 4011).

Students

Students at the College who have child safety concerns about themselves, or about any other child, young person or student aged 18 or over, can:

- disclose the child safety incident or concern to a College Student Protection Contact
- disclose the child safety incident or concern to any other staff member. This might be done:
  - verbally
  - in writing
  - through electronic means (such as email)
  - indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)

- disclose anonymously through the College website (Child Safety page) or by writing to the Principal (PO Box 548 Clayfield Qld 4011) or leaving a sealed letter marked 'Private' at Student Services Reception
- contact **Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or web chat** and/or **Lifeline 131 114.**

Parents/carers, family members and other community members

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the College, or a student aged 18 or over, may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact:

- the Principal, who is the College's Senior Student Protection Contact, by phoning 07 3862 1615 or emailing principal@stritas.qld.edu.au
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the Chair of the Board by Boardchair@stritas.qld.edu.au or writing to the Board Chair PO Box 548 Clayfield QLD 4011.

Any person can also contact the Principal or the Chair of the Board if they have concerns regarding the College's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know' basis.

RESPONDING TO AND EXTERNAL REPORTING OF CHILD SAFETY INCIDENTS OR CONCERNS

Our **Student Protection Processes** set out the procedures that the College will follow when notified of any child safety incident or concern involving the College or a student, staff member, volunteer, contractor, other worker, visitor or any other person connected to the College or the College environment.

It also provides guidance for staff, volunteers, contractors and other workers on their obligations to respond to child safety incidents or concerns and to report them to relevant external authorities. These obligations include:

- their duty to protect students
- mandatory reporting to Child Safety Services of children who may be "in need of protection" due to physical and sexual abuse
- reporting to Child Safety Services of all other forms of abuse and harm of children
- mandatory reporting to the Police of:
  - sexual offences against students aged under 16, or against students aged 16 or 17 with impairment of the mind, by people associated with the College
  - sexual abuse of students aged under 18 by any person
- reporting to the Police in other situations where a student has been or is being harmed

- reporting worker reportable conduct to the Queensland Family and Child Commission
- reporting teacher misconduct to the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT).

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND WORKERS FOLLOWING A CHILD SAFETY INCIDENT OR CONCERN

Child safety incidents or concerns can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people, and students aged 18 or over, as well as on their families. In addition to reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, the College plays a central role in addressing this trauma and has a duty of care to ensure that students feel safe and supported at College.

The College employs a range of measures to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern, depending on the particular circumstances of the matter and of the student and their family:

- a Student Protection Contact may work with the student and their family to develop a Student Support Plan
- support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include offering or organising referrals to internal or external support, such as a College Guidance Counsellor, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation which specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm.

The College offers similar support to former students who disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the College.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for staff, volunteers, contractors and other workers involved. The College assists impacted personnel to access necessary support.

EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF CHILD SAFETY: OUR CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM

We call the full collection of the College's child safety policies and procedures the "Child Safety Program". It is itself one of the strategies employed by St Rita's College to embed a culture of child safety at the College.

The Child Safety Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting children, young people and students aged 18 or over from abuse or other harm. It establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the College. It includes:

- Child Safety Codes of Conduct
- Student Protection Processes and Guidelines that include

  - clear information about abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse or other harm
  - clear procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to incidents or allegations of abuse or other harm
  - procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to Child Safety Services, reporting to Police, reporting to the Queensland Family and Child Commission and reporting to the Queensland College of Teachers
  - strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, volunteers, contractors, other workers, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
  - Information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist children, young people and students aged 18 or over
- Procedures for recruiting and screening members of the College Leadership Team, staff, volunteers, contractors and other workers.
- Pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- Strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disability and other vulnerable students
- Child safety and student protection training
- Guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- Policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards)
- A system for continuous review and improvement.

REPORTING COMPLAINTS

The College's Response to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

St Rita's College fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the College community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety. We have:

- clear pathways for raising child safety-related complaints and concerns, set out in the *Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns* above.
- clear procedures that all staff, volunteers, contractors and other workers must follow whenever they witness, suspect or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, staff member, volunteer, contractor or other worker at the College, set out in the ***Student Protection Processes*** and ***Processes for Managing Child Safety Complaints and Breaches of the Child Safety Program***.

- Clear pathways for raising a complaint relating to non-compliance with our child safety and student protection processes are set out in our ***Complaints Procedures for Non-Compliance with Child Safety and Student Protection Processes***.

These pathways and processes are summarised for students, parents/carers and other members of the College community in the **Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Harm or Allegations of Harm to Students (Summary)** and **Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Involving the College or its Staff Members (Summary)**, available on the College website.

The College will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when staff, volunteers, Contractors, other workers at the College, students, parents/carers or anyone else reports these to the College.

The safety and wellbeing of the student/s involved in the matter will be the primary consideration when responding to child safety incidents and concerns. The College follows the National Office of Child Safety's Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people when investigating and responding to child safety incidents and concerns.

The College's response will include:

- reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds externally to the Department of responsible for Child Safety (Child Safety Services) (Mandatory Reports of a Reportable Suspicion and Non-Mandatory Reports of a Child in Need of Protection), the Police (Mandatory Reports of Sexual Abuse, Mandatory Reports of Sexual Offences and Non-Mandatory Reports), the Queensland Family and Child Commission (reportable conduct), and/or the Queensland College of Teachers (Reports of Teacher Misconduct), depending on the issues raised
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- investigating child safety concerns with a trauma-informed and procedurally fair approach, ensuring risks are carefully assessed while always holding the safety and well-being of the student as our absolute priority
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until the incident is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other vulnerable students
- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the law
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the College's response
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the College (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

IMPLEMENTATION

The Child Safety Policy and Student Protection Processes and Guidelines are published on our public website. Key child safety and student protection policies and documents are provided to new staff, volunteers, and contractors at their induction or prior to them commencing their work at the College.

The College provides all visitors to the College, including casual contractors, with information about the Child Safety Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities, through our child safety training video and our Student Protection Fact Sheet.

The College also communicates the Child Safety Policy to staff, volunteers, contractors, other workers at the College and other members of the College community through the MySRC (Parent/Student Portal) and our internal policy platform.

BREACH MANAGEMENT

St Rita's College enforces the Child Safety Policy and the Child Safety Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

SOURCE OF OBLIGATION

- Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
- Child Protection Regulation 2023 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)

- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld)
- Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Name of Document	***Type of Document***
Student Protection Processes and Guidelines	Processes
Child Safety Code of Conduct	Code of Conduct
Staff and Student Professional Boundaries (Internal)	Code of Conduct
Code of Behaviour for Students	Code of Conduct
Complaints Handling Policy	Policy
Processes for Managing Child Safety Complaints and Breaches of the Child Safety Program	Processes
Complaints Procedure for Non-Compliance with Child Safety and Student Protection Processes	Procedure
Reportable Conduct Response Procedure	Internal Procedure
Reportable Conduct Reporting and Management Procedure	Internal Procedure
Training and Supervision (Child Safety) Policy and Procedures	Policy
Working with Children Checks Policies and Procedures (Blue Cards and Exemption Cards)	Policy
Annual Reviews and Continuous Improvement (Child Safety) Policy and Procedures	Policy
Communication and Support (Child Safety) Policy and Procedures	Policy

Other Related Documents

- Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Harm or Allegations of Harm to Students (Summary)
- Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Involving the College or its Staff Members (Summary)

References

National Office of Child Safety, Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Version	*Review Details*	*Document Owner*	*Authorisation*	*Approval Date*	*Next Review*
3	Update to incorporate Reportable Conduct Scheme	Maree Trims, Principal	Board	July 2026	Annually or as required
2	Updated to incorporate Queensland Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principal	Maree Trims, Principal	Board	January 2026	Annually or as required
1	Original	Maree Trims, Principal	Board	November 2022	Annually or as required