WYONG CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Child Protection Policy & Procedures

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PURPOSE

Policy objectives:

1) The primary objective of this policy is to provide a framework in order to prevent children from experiencing harm.
2) Communicate Wyong Christian Community School's (WCCS) philosophy on Child Protection.
3) To provide definitions for:
    - Child;
    - Employees; and
    - Reportable and non-reportable conduct.
4) State the legislative requirements of the school for Child Protection.
5) Explain the procedures, protocols, roles & responsibilities for prevention, response and reporting.

Wyong Christian Community School believes it is important to have current and relevant *Child Protection Policy & Procedures* to ensure:

- The safety and protection of all students under our care;
- All staff are conversant with the current Legislation;
- All staff are aware of their roles, rights and responsibilities under the Legislation;
- All staff are aware of the procedures associated with allegations and investigations; and
- The proper protocols, practices and procedures are being followed at all times.

This policy benefits the school community by ensuring exemplar practice for the safety and protection of our students. It also outlines the consequences and procedures for allegations and breaches of the Child Protection Legislation.

Philosophy

All adults have a responsibility to care for children and to protect them from harm. The school community has a 'duty of care' to provide a safe environment for children and to provide an education, which fosters their health and developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and

dignity. WCCS is entrusted by parents/carers with the care of their children, who are precious in the sight of God.

This policy is consistent with the following goals of the school:

- To provide opportunities that help families function biblically and effectively;
- To foster and develop an effective Christian community;
- To support Christian families in their task of nurturing children through providing a teaching/learning environment that is based on biblical values that are consistent with those held at home;
- To encourage teachers in their own personal, spiritual and professional development;
- To provide a curriculum based on a biblical worldview; and
- To create safe, loving relationships where community members experience justice and mercy.

DEFINITIONS

These definitions are obtained from the *Children's Guardian Act 2019 No. 25*;
https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2019-025#sec.4

Child – A child is a person under the age of 16 years.

Young Person or Persons – Persons between the ages of 16 – 18 years.

Employee – There are two groups of people who are considered to be employees.
These two groups are:

- any employee of the agency, whether or not employed in connection with any work or activities of the agency that relates to children; and
- any individual engaged by the agency to provide services to children (including in the capacity as a volunteer), e.g. contractors, sub-contractors, foster carers, volunteers, work experience participants, students on placements (Secondary or Tertiary), clergy, ministers of religion, members of religious orders and instructors of religion who provide pastoral or liturgical services for the school.

Head of Relevant Entity – The Principal of Wyong Christian Community School.

Allegation – The Legislation does not specifically define the word 'allegation'. The term, therefore, is taken to have its ordinary meaning such as 'an assertion with or without proof, or a declaration'.

Reportable Allegation –

1) ***Reportable allegation***, in relation to an employee of a Schedule 1 entity, means an allegation that the employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct is alleged to have occurred in the course of the employee's employment with the Schedule 1 entity.

2) ***Reportable allegation***, in relation to an employee of a public authority, means:
    a) if the employee holds, or is required to hold, a Working With Children Check Clearance for the purpose of employment with the public authority—an allegation that the employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct is alleged to have occurred in the course of the employee's employment; or

    b) if the employee is not required to hold a working with children check clearance for the purpose of employment with the public authority—an allegation that the employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct, unless the conduct is alleged to have occurred outside the course of the employee's employment with the public authority.

3) ***Reportable allegation***, in relation to an employee of a religious body, means an allegation that the employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct is alleged to have occurred in the course of the employee's engagement with the religious body.

Reportable Conviction –

1) ***Reportable conviction*** means a conviction, including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction, in this State or elsewhere, of an offence involving reportable conduct:
    a) in relation to an employee of a Schedule 1 entity—whether or not the conduct occurred in the course of the employee's employment with the Schedule 1 entity; or

    b) in relation to an employee of a public authority:

i) if the employee holds, or is required to hold, a Working With Children Check Clearance for the purpose of employment with the public authority—whether or not the conduct occurred in the course of the employee's employment; or

ii) if the employee is not required to hold a Working With Children Check Clearance for the purpose of employment with the public authority—unless the conviction relates to conduct that occurred outside the course of the employee's employment with the public authority; or

c) in relation to an employee of a religious body—whether or not the conduct occurred in the course of the employee's engagement with the religious body.

2) A reference in this Part to a reportable conviction includes a conviction in respect of conduct occurring before the commencement.

Reportable Conduct – Means the following conduct, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the conduct has been commenced or concluded:

a) a sexual offence;

b) sexual misconduct;

c) ill-treatment of a child;

d) neglect of a child;

e) an assault against a child;

f) an offence under section 43B (Failure to reduce or remove risk of child becoming victim of abuse) or 316A (Concealing child abuse offense) of the *Crimes Act 1900*;

g) behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child. Examples of indicators of significant emotional or psychological harm:

i) displaying behaviour patterns that are out of character;

ii) regressive behaviour; or

iii) anxiety or self-harm.

Sexual offence – Means an offence of a sexual nature under a law of the State, another State, a Territory, or the Commonwealth, committed against, with or in the presence of a child. Examples of sexual offences:

i) sexual touching of a child;

ii) a child grooming offence; or

iii) production, dissemination or possession of child abuse material.

Sexual misconduct – Means conduct with, towards or in the presence of a child that:

a) is sexual in nature, but

b) is not a sexual offence.

Examples of sexual misconduct:

i) descriptions of sexual acts without a legitimate reason to provide the descriptions;

ii) sexual comments, conversations or communications; or

iii) comments to a child that express a desire to act in a sexual manner towards the child or another child.

Ill-Treatment – Of a child, means conduct towards a child that is unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel. Examples of ill-treatment:

i) making excessive or degrading demands of a child;

ii) a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child; or

iii) using inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child.

Neglect – Of a child, means a significant failure to provide adequate and proper food, supervision, nursing, clothing, medical aid or lodging for the child, that causes or is likely to cause harm to a child, by:

a) a person with parental responsibility for the child;

b) an authorised carer of the child; or

c) an employee, if the child is in the employee's care.

Examples of neglect:

i) failing to protect a child from abuse; or

ii) exposing a child to a harmful environment, for example, an environment where there is illicit drug use or illicit drug manufacturing.

Assault –

a) the intentional or reckless application of physical force without lawful justification or excuse; or

b) any act which intentionally or recklessly causes another to apprehend immediate and unlawful violence.

Examples of assault:

i) hitting, striking, kicking, punching or dragging a child; or

ii) threatening to physically harm a child.

Reportable Conduct –

Finding of reportable conduct means a finding, by a relevant entity or the Children's Guardian, as a result of an investigation conducted under this Part, that a reportable allegation is sustained.

Non-reportable Conduct – Reportable conduct does not extend to:

a) conduct that is reasonable for the purposes of discipline, management or care of a child, having regard to:

   i) the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the child; and

   ii) any relevant code of conduct or professional standard; or

b) the use of physical force if:

   i) in all the circumstances, the physical force is trivial or negligible; and

   ii) the circumstances in which it was used have been investigated and the result of the investigation has been recorded in accordance with appropriate procedures; or

c) conduct of a class or kind exempted from being reportable conduct by the Children's Guardian under section 30.

Example of conduct for paragraph (a):

i) a school teacher raising his or her voice in order to attract attention or restore order in a classroom.

Examples of conduct for paragraph (b):

i) touching a child in order to attract the child's attention;

ii) momentarily restraining a child to prevent the child hurting themselves or others; or

iii) touching a child to guide or comfort the child.

Investigation – The purpose of an agency investigation into an allegation or conviction of reportable conduct is to obtain information upon which a sound and proper decision can be made about the validity of the allegation and any action that needs to be taken with respect to the employee. This requires the Head of Relevant Entity (or a person delegated by the Head of Relevant Entity) to conduct an agency investigation to:

- gather all the facts relevant to the allegation or conviction (this may include, but is not limited to, any relevant information obtained from Community Services and/or Police);
- report on the balance of probabilities, make a finding at the conclusion of the information gathering process, and, if appropriate, make relevant recommendations; and
- provide the Head of Relevant Entity with information to assist in any relevant employment proceedings. Even where the employee is criminally charged and convicted, the agency still has the responsibility to assess the risks that an employee may pose and take action to manage these risks.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

It is the policy of WCCS to adhere to all 10 Child Safe Standards and as such, it is incumbent on all staff to be familiar with the standards.

The 10 Child Safe standards are:

STANDARD 1 - Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

STANDARD 2 - Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

STANDARD 3 - Families and communities are informed and involved

STANDARD 4 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

STANDARD 5 - People working with children are suitable and supported

STANDARD 6 - Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

STANDARD 7 - Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

STANDARD 8 - Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

STANDARD 9 - Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

STANDARD 10 - Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

The leadership of the school will facilitate the staff being familiar with the standards by:

- At the commencement of every year (in January PD Week), all staff spend 1.5 hours in Child Protection training. This training outlines our professional responsibilities, provides current statics and up to date protocols and involves 70+ slides (see Appendix 5). The entire training is recorded for any staff who arrive during the year to watch as part of their induction process.
- All staff sign off that they are aware of the Child Safe Standards and their professional responsibilities.
- We reference the Child Safe Standards every fortnight in the staff meeting information.
- We have the Standards placed up in multiple areas in the staffroom.
- There is a designated email address childprotection@wyongccs.nsw.edu.au to make it easier for anyone to make a report should they deem it necessary.

RESPONSIBILITY

Teachers

The responsibility of the teacher is to provide an *in loco parentis* and pastoral role for the students that are under their 'duty of care'. See the *Staff Code of Conduct* and WCCS Staff Handbook for specific details.

It is a staff member's moral and legal duty to report immediately to the appropriate authority if they:

- receive any allegation of reportable conduct;
- receive a disclosure that may constitute 'risk of significant harm'; or
- suspect 'risk of significant harm' to a student; or
- witness an incident of reportable conduct.

If the teacher feels the Principal has not taken appropriate action or the Principal is the Person Subject of the Allegation (PSOA) they can report to the Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Police, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian Office or the WCCS Board Chair.

POLICY

Legislative Requirements

Wyong Christian Community School is a non-government agency under the auspices of Christian Schools Australia.

Head of Relevant Entity

The Head of Relevant Entity must ensure the entity has systems including a code of conduct, policies and processes for the following:

a) preventing and detecting reportable conduct by an employee of the entity;

b) requiring an employee of the relevant entity to give a report, as soon as possible, in relation to a reportable allegation or conviction considered to be a reportable conviction involving an employee of the entity;

c) enabling a person, other than an employee of the relevant entity, to give a report to the head of the relevant entity about a reportable allegation or conviction considered to be a reportable conviction involving an employee of the relevant entity;

d) handling or responding to a reportable allegation or conviction considered to be a reportable conviction involving an employee of the relevant entity, having regard to principles of procedural fairness;

e) receiving, handling and disclosing information relating to reportable allegations, convictions considered to be reportable convictions and information relating to investigations and determinations; and

f) identifying and dealing with matters relating to the prevention of reportable conduct by employees of the relevant entity.

***Note**: The notification of allegations of reportable conduct within 7 business days by the Head of Relevant Entity becoming aware of the allegation enables the Office of the Children's Guardian to intervene early in matters where an agency, as evidenced by its initial response to an allegation, risks compromising the safety of the child, the integrity of the investigation or fair processes for an employee.*

The Head of Relevant Entity, or their delegate, is also required to report all allegations of 'risk of significant harm' to the Department of Communities and Justice.

Staff

All employed staff are required to declare whether they are a prohibited person under the *Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Act 2005* prior to employment. Staff employment policies and procedures will ensure that staff who are appointed to positions are fit and proper persons to occupy those positions and understand their responsibilities in the area of Child Protection.

Employees are required to provide prior to commencement of employment a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) number issued through the Office of the Children's Guardian. These are provided on employment application forms. Upon receipt they are verified and filed by the Principal's Executive Assistant. A copy of all WWCC numbers and verification status is stored in the Senior Leadership fileserver. Within the spreadsheet record, there are pages allocated for Current Staff, Board Members, Casual Staff, Past Staff, Contractors, Visitors and Parents/Carers. Expiry dates are also recorded, and these are checked at the beginning of each year by the Principal's Executive Assistant.

The NSW Working With Children Check allows parents/carers to volunteer in activities that involve their own children without needing a Check. However, this is not a blanket exemption for all parent/carer volunteers.

According to the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG):

A parent or close relative can volunteer without a WWCC for:

- *the school, early education service or other educational provider for their child;*
- *a team, program or activity in which their child usually participates.*

A parent or close relative will need a WWCC if the role involves:

- *an overnight camp*
- *formal mentoring*
- *intimate personal care of a child with a disability.*

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/what-parents-need-know-about-working-children-check

If parents/carers are working or volunteering to provide service for children who are not their own, then they will need a Check.

Annual Professional Development

Annual Professional Development and new staff induction processes will ensure all staff are thoroughly conversant and compliant with this policy and related procedures.

At the commencement of each year staff will undergo training regarding their responsibilities as mandatory reporters - see Appendix 5. Key components within this training include:

- understanding the 10 Child Safe Standards;
- identification of reportable conduct;
- identification of 'risk of significant harm';
- key reporting bodies such as Department of Communities and Justice, Office of the Children's Guardian, Police;
- responsibilities as a mandatory reporter; and
- awareness of the school's *Child Protection Policy & Procedures*.

Upon completion of this training staff sign off on a *Child Protection Code of Conduct* (see Appendix 3) which is kept on file by the Principal's Executive Assistant.

Staff who are absent on the training day, casual staff and those employed during the course of the year are required to watch the recorded training presentation (from January PD Week) and read the school's *Child Protection Policy & Procedures* (available in the Staff Induction course within Canvas). They are also required to sign the *Child Protection Code of Conduct*. Records of this are kept on file by the Principal's Executive Assistant.

PROCEDURE

Prevention

As stated in the Purpose, the primary purpose of this policy, and the related procedures, is to prevent reportable conduct resulting in harm to students.

In relation to this policy, the following should be taken as guiding principles.

1) In every action related to reportable conduct the best interest of the child is of paramount consideration.
2) The value of the family unit and the biblical responsibility for parental education of children is to be respected but not to the detriment of the well-being of the child.

3) All persons involved in situations where reportable conduct is suspected or disclosed are to be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

4) All concerns regarding child protection must be referred to the Principal.

5) Staff who have access to information regarding suspected or disclosed reportable conduct are to observe strict confidentiality in relation to the entire matter.

Wyong Christian Community School demonstrates numerous preventative strategies:

- **Under legislation**
  - Screening employees and volunteers.
  - Set up systems for providing a safe environment for children in the school's care.

- **Under school initiatives**
  - Every new staff member will be supplied with the *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Child Protection Code of Conduct* on commencement of employment. The new staff member is then required to view the recorded Child Protection presentation and then formally acknowledge their understanding, and compliance to, the *Child Protection Code of Conduct* and *Staff Code of Conduct*. This is a condition of employment at Wyong Christian Community School. Any misunderstandings or confusion regarding the documents will be discussed during the new staff induction program.
  - Development and maintenance of a caring culture within the school.
  - *Staff Code of Conduct*, detailing:
    - explicit direction on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; and
    - expectations for duty of care in the classroom, playground and excursions, etc.
  - Professional Development for teachers:
    - Internally provided by Senior Leadership – training occurs annually at the commencement of the school year.
    - Possible external agencies as the need requires.
    - New staff induction procedures.
  - Curriculum based lessons on Child Protection to empower and inform students.
  - Curriculum based lessons on bullying to empower and inform students.

- At least four members of the Senior Leadership, including both male and female staff, will be trained in best practice for Child Protection Investigations.
- Volunteer information and training sessions, e.g., Red Centre Road Trip.
- Pastoral care meetings.

Risk of Significant Harm

Upon suspicion or disclosure that may constitute 'risk of significant harm' a staff member is to take the following steps:

1) Determine whether or not the disclosure does constitute 'risk of significant harm'. If unsure they can utilise the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) on the Keep Them Safe website (https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg).
2) Report the disclosure to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team (this person can also assist in using the MRG should the staff member be unsure of this process).
3) Should 'risk of significant harm' be identified a report should be made to Community Services by either the staff member receiving the disclosure or the member of the Senior Leadership Team.
4) In consultation with the Senior Leadership, determine whether or not any other referrals/reports need to be made, e.g., Police, Counsellor, Chaplain.

Allegation of Reportable Conduct

Upon becoming aware of an allegation of reportable conduct, a staff member must immediately report the allegation to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, most commonly the Assistant Principal. The Assistant Principal will then inform the Principal and follow through the procedure outlined below upon receipt of an allegation of reportable conduct.

Upon receipt of an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee, the Principal should determine whether or not it is an allegation of reportable conduct or misconduct that may be indicative of a pattern of behaviour that constitutes reportable conduct.

All allegations against employees that involve reportable conduct must be reported to the Office of the Children's Guardian within 7 business days of receipt of the allegation. The allegations should also be reported to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) if the child is at 'risk of significant harm', if there is a current concern for the safety, welfare and well-being of the

child. To assist in the determination of whether or not a report to DCJ is required staff can make use of the Mandatory Reporter Guide available on the Child Story Reporter Community website.

The Investigation Process

The Principal or Principal's delegate will:

1) Conduct or cause to be conducted a number of documented risk assessments and risk management procedures on a predetermined but flexible timeframe to ensure appropriate risk management procedures as the investigation unfolds:
    - to the child/ren who are alleged victims;
    - to the employee subject of the allegation;
    - to other children with whom the PSOA may have contact;
    - to the proper investigation of the allegation;
    - to the school; and
    - to the wider school community.

    NOTE: Any action taken as a result of the risk assessment is in no way an indication of guilt or innocence.

2) Ensure the risk assessment and risk management procedures consider factors such as:
    - The nature of the allegation;
    - vulnerability of the children;
    - nature of the position occupied by the PSOA;
    - the level of supervision of the employee;
    - disciplinary history of the employee;
    - safety of the employee; and
    - any comments made by the employee.

3) Make initial notification to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian via the 7 Day Notification Form to register the allegation. During the course of the investigation further allegations may arise. These must be documented, investigated and the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian notified.

4) Notify DCJ if the allegation constitutes immediate 'risk of significant harm' or is deemed to be beyond the capability of the school. Notify the Police if the alleged conduct involves a criminal offense.

5) Conduct or cause to be conducted, an expedient, impartial, objective and unbiased investigation of the allegation.
    - The investigation must at all times maintain procedural fairness.
    - The investigator must declare any conflict of interest if they arise.
    - Strict confidentiality procedures must be in place to ensure privacy of PSOA, witnesses and alleged victims.
    - Files need to be securely locked away in the designated Child Protection Safe.

    NOTE: No investigative files are to be stored in the employee files or student files.

6) Enquire of involved parties as to their emotional and physical wellbeing during the course of the investigation. This will be continually monitored, and appropriate intervention sought where Principal deems necessary.

7) Notify the parents/carers of alleged victim/s potential involvement in a reportable conduct incident.

8) Gain permission from the parent/carer to interview witnesses and alleged victims with an opportunity to have a support person present.

9) Produce and maintain detailed documentation of the entire investigation.
    - The documentation should be locked away in the Child Protection Safe or electronic copy securely stored in a secure network drive that only the Child Protection Team has access to.
    - Under no circumstances should hard or electronic copies of the investigation be accessible to casual scrutiny.

10) Inform the PSOA of the allegations, at an appropriate time so as not to compromise the investigation pursuant to the risk assessments.
    - At this time the PSOA will be offered appropriate support this may include professional counseling or pastoral care.

11) Ensure the PSOA be given reasonable notice to attend an interview where they are permitted to respond to the allegations in writing or with a support person present.
    - The support person is a witness and is not to take an active role in the proceedings.

12) Ensure the PSOA is directed not to discuss the allegations with students or parents/carers or other staff members without approval of the Principal.

13) Complete and submit a 30-Day Interim Report Form to the Office of the Children's Guardian if the investigation takes longer than 30 days.

14) At the conclusion of the investigation, decide as to whether, on the balance of probabilities, the allegation has been sustained or not sustained.
    - After the final findings of the investigation, make the decision regarding appropriate disciplinary action to the employee and the manner of disciplinary proceedings.
    - Inform the PSOA that they may review the details of the investigation and make a complaint to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian if they are unhappy with the handling of the investigation.
    - If the findings of the investigation are sustained or not-sustained and the PSOA is not dismissed redirect the PSOA to the *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Child Protection Policy & Procedures* and require him/her to review and sign a second letter of understanding and compliance to these documents as a condition of their continued employment.
    - Complete and forward an Entity Report Form including the findings, disciplinary action decided upon and any other recommendations to the Office of the Children's Guardian together with any information which the Person Subject of Allegation requires to be included.

Support Available to All Parties

The most challenging aspect of providing support for all parties is the need to maintain confidentiality at all levels of the school community; staff, students and parents/carers. All parties must maintain confidentiality to ensure the integrity of the investigation and to achieve the best possible outcome for the safety and wellbeing of the staff and children concerned.

All parties involved in the process should be informed of the importance of maintaining confidentiality. However, the maintenance of confidentiality should not prevent relevant parties

from receiving appropriate levels of information throughout the investigation process. To do so may give rise to the feeling that the school is trying to hide or cover up evidence.

- **Support for the staff member subject of the allegation**

  The staff member that is under investigation will generally experience great trauma regardless of their innocence or guilt. It is essential that the PSOA feels supported by the school even though it is the school that has initiated the investigation. The PSOA is to be given the offer to have a support person present at all stages throughout the investigation. Interviews should be scheduled at a time when the support person is able to be present. Support may include pastoral care or counselling personnel. The risk assessment and risk management procedure will determine the level of interruption to the PSOA's regular duties. It is possible that the PSOA be placed on different duties during, and following, the investigation process, depending on the outcome of the investigation.

- **Support for the student/s involved in the investigation**

  The students involved in the investigation will be directed to discuss the issue/s with their parents/carers, the Principal or a support person. If the students wish to engage in, or the parents/carers request, further counselling for the students a professional counsellor or experienced pastoral carer should be provided. For students from cultural backgrounds not comfortable with the investigation procedures, advice will be sought from their parents/carers or a cultural/indigenous liaison person/officer to ensure best investigative practice and support. Additionally, where a student of ESL background required an interpreter, this service would be made available wherever possible.

- **Support for parents/carers that have raised concerns about the PSOA**

  The parents/carers involved, or whose children are involved, in the investigation should have all their correspondence answered promptly and personal interviews arranged with the Principal or investigating agency, where necessary. If an apology and explanation can be elicited from the school executive or the PSOA regarding the issue then that will be arranged where appropriate. For more complicated matters the parents/carers will be invited to seek pastoral care or professional counselling. Additionally, where parents/carers of ESL background require an interpreter, this service would be made available wherever possible.

- **Support for staff involved in the investigation process**

The staff involved in the investigation will be supported by the alteration of duties where appropriate and the offer of pastoral care or professional counselling may be made.

MAINTENANCE & REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership on a regular basis, to ensure the procedures and protocols are current and relevant.

This policy will be reviewed each time there is a change or amendment to the Legislative Acts associated with the policy for Child Protection to ensure the policy is current and relevant.

This policy will be reviewed and altered as a result of NSW Office of the Children's Guardian recommendations when Child Protection matters arise.

APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1:** Examples of Sexual Abuse
- **Appendix 2:** Indicators of Abuse and Neglect
- **Appendix 3:** WCCS *Child Protection Code of Conduct*
- **Appendix 4:** Acknowledgement by School Community Member

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse can take many forms. Examples of sexual abuse include the following:

- Vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis or any other object (except where carried out for proper medical purposes);
- Oral sex;
- Indecent assault, being defined as an assault, a touching without consent, accompanied by an indecent act;
- Any indecent act, defined as one which right-minded persons would consider contrary to community standards of decency;
- Fondling or touching genitals, breasts, buttocks or thighs;
- Masturbation;
- Pornography;
- Exhibitionism;
- Suggestive behaviour;
- Taking sexual advantage of the child through misuse of power; or
- Conversations with a lewd or improper sexual theme.

Sexual abuse also includes attempting any of the above acts, or assault with such intent.

APPENDIX 2: INDICATORS OF ABUSE & NEGLECT

General Indicators

In assisting staff to identify suspected cases of child abuse, indicators of abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to, the following:

- History of previous harm to the child;
- Abuse or neglect of a sibling;
- Social or geographic isolation of the child or family;
- Family history of violence including injury to children;
- Domestic violence;
- Physical or mental health issues for the parent/carer;
- The parent's/carer's abuse of alcohol or other drugs;
- A development disability of the parent/carer;
- Parent/carer experiencing significant problems in managing the child's behaviour;
- A history of injury which is vague, bizarre or variable;
- Marked delay between injury and presentation for medical assistance;
- The child tells you he or she has been abused, or he or she knows someone who has been abused and may be referring to themselves; or
- A friend, relative etc., tells you that the child may have been abused.

Specific Indicators

- **Sexual abuse**

  Indicators of sexual abuse in children include:

  - Direct or indirect disclosures;
  - Describing sexual acts;
  - Age-inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour;
  - Self-destructive behaviour (e.g. self-mutilation, suicide attempts);
  - Overtly sexual themes in play, artwork or writing;

- Persistent running away from home;
- Anorexia, overeating;
- Unexplained accumulation of money or gifts;
- Adolescent pregnancy;
- Injuries to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen and thighs; or
- Other child stress indicators (e.g., poor concentration, nightmares and bedwetting, marked changes in behaviour, complaints of stomach aches and headaches with no physical findings).

- **Physical Abuse**

  Indicators of physical abuse include:

  - Bruising and other injuries to the face, head and neck;
  - Lacerations and welts;
  - Explanation offered by the child inconsistent with the injury;
  - Bruising and marks which takes the shape of an object (e.g. belt, buckle, etc.);
  - Bite marks and scratches;
  - Multiple injuries or bruises; or
  - Burns and scalds.

- **Emotional Abuse**

  Indicators of emotional abuse include:

  - Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves;
  - Inability to value others;
  - Lack of trust in people and expectations;
  - Extreme attention seeking behaviour;
  - Behavioural disorders; or
  - Persistent hostility in parents/carers or constant criticism of the child.

- **Neglect**

Indicators of neglect include:

- Poor standards of hygiene;
- Scavenging or stealing food;
- Extended stays at school, public places, others homes; or
- Untreated physical problems.

APPENDIX 3: WCCS CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

Wyong Christian Community School
***Child Protection Code of Conduct* (NSW)**

1. Introduction and Purpose

This *Child Protection Code of Conduct* outlines the school's values, commitments and expectations in relation to child protection matters, and reflects its commitments to:

PROVIDE	An open, welcoming and safe environment for everyone participating in the school's education programs, pastoral services and related programs.
PROVIDE	High quality education, pastoral services and related programs for students and their families that are safe and welcoming for them and set in a Christian context.
SEEK	Input and guidance from students, parents/carers, employees and others who make up the school community, so these standards are maintained.
REQUIRE	All school community members to demonstrate a commitment to the highest standards of ethics, professional behaviour and Christian standards in dealings with children and young people.
REQUIRE	All school community members to share a common responsibility to maintain the school's reputation for integrity in relation to child protection matters.

2. Scope

This *Child Protection Code of Conduct* applies to all school community members. In this Code of Conduct:

a) **student** or **students** refers to:

(i) a **child** or **children** which is defined in this Code as being person under the age of 16 years;

(ii) a **young person** or **persons** which is defined in this Code as a person between the ages of 16 and 18 years; and

(iii) any other student of the school over the age of 18 years.

b) **school community members** refers to:

(i) all paid employees whether employed on a permanent, temporary or casual basis;

(ii) all persons who have been engaged to work within the school or who have face-to-face contact with students of the school in any place and on any basis, including persons holding a church ministry licence or church-appointed position, consultants, students on tertiary practicum placements, or volunteers working with students in any capacity; and

(iii) students enrolled at the school.

3. Mission and Values in Relation to Students

The school seeks to create a caring environment where Christian values inspire and affirm the highest standard of ethical conduct in relation to the care, support, and welfare of students entrusted to it.

4. Code of Conduct

All school community members, and all students, parents/carers and visitors connected with the school, must keep to the *Child Protection Code of Conduct*.

5. Expectations of School Community Members

All school community members:

WILL	Treat everyone with respect and honesty.
WILL	Behave as a positive role model to students in all interactions with them.
WILL	Follow school policies and procedures for the safety of students as outlined in the school's *Child Protection Policy & Procedures* and related materials.
WILL	When conducting any one-to-one activity with a student: • ensure that another adult is present or within sight at all times during one-to-one activity; • ensure that this adult is actively engaged and aware of the action of the school community member at all times during the one-to-one activity; and • if the active engagement or awareness of another adult is not possible or practicable, ensure that prior approval for the one-to-one activity has been obtained from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
WILL	Record and act on a complaint of abuse, ill-treatment or neglect of a student.
WILL	Behave in a caring, compassionate manner following the example left for us by Jesus Christ, as a person who takes an interest in the wellbeing of students and who sets appropriate boundaries in their interaction with students.
WILL	Respect the duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of students.
WILL	Complete and maintain a current Working With Children Check with the Office of the Children's Guardian.
WILL	Inform the school if they are charged or convicted of an offence relevant to working in child-related employment, or if they have had any reportable allegation made against them.
WILL	Report to the school any allegations or convictions of reportable conduct involving any school community member.
WILL	Report to the school any information or concerns about inappropriate behaviour by any school community member that involves a student.
WILL	Fulfil their legal obligation to report risk of significant harm, or to report possible criminal activity, in accordance with local procedures
WILL	Maintain the confidentiality of all parties concerned.

WILL NOT	In the absence of the prior approval from the School Community Member's immediate supervisor, or without the active participation of another adult, engage in one-to-one contact with a student such as: ▪ doing things of a personal nature that students can do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes; ▪ accompanying a student alone in a vehicle; or ▪ visiting a student's home in circumstances where the student is alone.
WILL NOT	Engage in grooming behaviour of a student or their close family or friends.
WILL NOT	Engage in inappropriate physical contact/force with a student including physical/corporal punishment of a student.
WILL NOT	Act in ways which may cause a student to reasonably fear that unjustified force will be used against them, even if this is not their intention.
WILL NOT	Behave in a manner which may cause psychological harm to a student.
WILL NOT	Correct or discipline a student in excess of what is reasonable or appropriate for the situation.
WILL NOT	Engage in crossing professional boundaries through behaviour that can reasonably be construed as involving an inappropriate and/or overly personal or intimate relationship with, conduct towards, or focus on a student or a group of students.

6. Further information

Further reference should be made to the school's *Child Protection Policy & Procedures*.

Further information about this Code can be sought from the school's Child Protection contact person.

APPENDIX 4: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBER

Wyong Christian Community School
Child Protection Code of Conduct (NSW)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBER

I, …… [insert full name],

being employed or engaged by the school in the following role ……..[insert position],

hereby ACKNOWLEDGE:

- That I have received the above *Child Protection Code of Conduct* and the school's *Child Protection Policy & Procedures*.
- That I have read the *Child Protection Code of Conduct* and *Child Protection Policy & Procedures* and am obliged to comply with the Code and Policy, including any amendments made by the school from time to time.
- That I am aware that a current copy of the *Child Protection Code of Conduct* and *Child Protection Policy & Procedures* is posted on Canvas.

…….. **Signature**	…… **Date**

NB - This signed and completed form must be returned within 7 days of commencement of employment or engagement with the school to the Principal. Failure to do so will not affect the applicability of this *Child Protection Code of Conduct* or any of its provisions to you.