

# ST JOSEPH'S PRESCHOOL & SCHOOL

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



St Joseph's School  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

### Definitions

The Preschool	St Joseph's Preschool
The School	St Joseph's School
SACCS	South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools
CEO	Catholic Education Office

### Philosophical Basis

**'Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me'. Mark 9:37**

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by Public or Private Welfare Institutions, Courts of Law, Administrative Authorities or Legislative Bodies, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration. The Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3 (1) Adopted by the general Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989.

The Child Protection Policy is framed within the VISION STATEMENT for South Australian Schools. The Catholic School is a community which educates young people in all dimensions of life by developing the whole person who:

- Witnesses to Gospel values
- Respects individual dignity
- Values cooperation
- Challenges its members to be critical and reflective in their search for truth.

(South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Vision Statement).

The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) acknowledges the complex societal factors which contribute to child abuse and requires that all its schools be places where children can be safe and feel safe. The requirement is met by providing a Child Protection Policy, which directs schools to develop and implement relevant practices, procedures and programs for all students.

### SACCS Policy Statement

The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools recognises the significant role of schools in the prevention of child abuse and takes responsibility for requiring its schools to implement child protection practices. The Commission is to ensure resource allocation for child protection education and programs. The Commission requires that all Catholic schools be places where children are safe and feel safe. The Commission has responsibility to ensure that schools meet these requirements through the provision of child protection policy, practices, procedures and programs. School staffs are to be educated in the area of child protection and



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mandatory notification. People in schools are legally mandated, therefore are obliged to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Schools are to provide protection and abuse prevention curriculum for students.

## Clarification Procedure

### Responsibilities of the St Joseph's School Leadership Team

At St Joseph's School and Preschool we nurture a culture of care, where all staff, parents and students are called to care for their fellow students, teachers and parents. We do this when we:

- Provide a safe environment which ensures that children and adults are protected.
- Ensure staff understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations, responsibilities and correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect.
- Support staff directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification.
- Ensure that policies and organisational procedures provide children with a safe school environment. This will be done in consultation with schools boards and the parent community.
- Promote models of behaviour between staff and children based on mutual respect and consideration.
- Ensure that student management practice respects the dignity of children.
- Provide training and development for staff in child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- Initiate and support the implementation of child protection and abuse prevention curriculum at the classroom level to ensure that all children have access to these programs throughout their Preschool and school years.
- Monitor and evaluate child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- Provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- Ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

### Responsibilities of our Staff

At St Joseph's School and Preschool all staff are called to contribute actively to ensuring a culture of care for students. They do this when they:

- Treat children with dignity and respect, act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children in their care.
- Notify the Child Abuse Report Team if, in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.



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- Provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.
- Participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification.
- Teach children skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety.
- Assist children to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours, which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.

### **Guidelines for Implementation of the SACCS Policy**

St Joseph's School and Preschool is committed to the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools' Child Protection Policy.

#### **Specifically, we do this when we:**

- develop education and care practices which:
- ensure a safe environment for children in Catholic schools
- support children to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths
- respect the diverse and special needs of children
- are sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour, which may be indicative of abuse.

#### **Provide training and development opportunities for education and care workers which:**

- ensure they understand their obligations and responsibilities as mandated notifiers and develop appropriate procedures at their work site
- provide skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for children and enable them to continually build on this
- assist them in their role as advocates, particularly on behalf of very young children.

#### **Develop partnerships between the school and Preschool, parents and the community which:**

- promote safe environments for children wherever they are
- are based on effective communication
- promote community understanding of personal safety programs
- acknowledge and provide for diversity eg. cultural, special needs

#### **Develop mandatory reporting systems which are clear and understood by all staff so that they:**

- are provided with clear written information relevant to their employment



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- establish support mechanisms at each site
- are able to participate in training and development

**Provide child protection programs which support children to:**

- develop knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and maintain personal safety participate in a range of developmentally appropriate experiences, which are responsive to their individual needs and interests
- gain appropriate support and advocacy from adults
- develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse

**Review policy practices and procedures so that:**

- mandated reporting training records are kept and regularly updated
- access to child protection curriculum training is provided
- support mechanisms for school personnel notifying are regularly communicated
- school personnel are informed of any changes to legislation, policy and procedures.

## **Procedures for Handling Critical Situations Relating to Child Protection**

Critical situations at St Joseph's School and Preschool are addressed within a culture of care that calls all staff members, students and parents to be sensitive to the needs of fellow students, parents and staff. The Leadership Team of St Joseph's School solves critical incidents with a team approach. In all situations, when the Principal is not available at the school site the Deputy Principal is called to address the situation with a collaborative approach.

- Custody and Restraining Orders
- Documentation in relation to custody or restraining orders is kept on Seqta.
- A copy of this documentation is kept in the student's file.
- Director, teachers and Education Support Officers of the students concerned are informed about such situations each year.

Should a parent or family member enter the site to take their child and there is an enforceable custody order or restraining order in relation to this person:



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### **At the School Office**

- The Office Team members will call the Principal immediately.
- The Principal will interview the person and will possibly instruct the Office Team to contact the Police to inform them of the situation.
- The Principal will inform the parent who has legal guardianship of the child or who has applied for the restraining order.
- The associated pastoral processes will be implemented to ensure the socio emotional welfare of the student, peers, staff and parents involved.

### **In the classroom and Preschool**

- The teacher will ask the person to report to the School Office to sign in, collect a visitor's badge and wait in the Office area for the child.
- The teacher will notify the School Office, using the intercom system.
- The Office Team will notify the Principal and the Police.
- The Principal will move immediately to the classroom / Preschool and meet the offending person.
- The Principal will interview the person in their office with another member of Leadership.
- The Principal will inform the parent who has legal guardianship of the child or who has applied for the restraining order.
- The associated pastoral processes will be implemented to ensure the socio emotional welfare of the student, peers, staff and parents involved.

### **On ovals or in the yard**

- The teacher on yard duty will ask the person to report to the School Office to sign in, collect a visitor's badge and wait in the Office area for the child.
- The teacher will move to the closest classroom and notify the School Office, using the intercom system.
- The Office Team will notify the Principal and the Police.
- The Principal will move immediately to the area and meet the offending person.
- The Principal will interview the person in their office.
- The Principal will inform the parent who has legal guardianship of the child or who has applied for the restraining order.
- The associated pastoral processes will be implemented to ensure the socio emotional welfare of the student, peers, staff and parents involved.

### **Intruders or trespassers on the school property**

Should an intruder or trespasser enter the school and give rise to concern for the safety of students:



- The staff member will move the students away from the potential danger to an area that can be secured.
- The staff member will notify the School Office, using the intercom system.
- The Office Team will notify the Principal and the Police.
- The Principal will move immediately to the area and assess the situation and ensure all students in the school are secure. This may necessitate a lock-in.
- The evacuation siren will sound once the threat has passed.
- The associated pastoral processes will be implemented to ensure the socio emotional welfare of the students, staff and parents involved.

#### **Unexplained disappearance of a student from the school or Preschool premises**

- The staff member who detects the student's absence notify the School Office.
- The Office Team will notify the Principal, who will assess the situation and contact the parents immediately.
- Should the Principal have concerns about the safety or welfare of the student involved, the Principal will immediately notify the Police.
- The Principal will immediately organise a search of the whole school site.
- The Principal will keep in close contact with the student's parents until the student is found.
- The associated pastoral processes will be implemented to ensure the socio-emotional welfare of the student, peers, staff and parents involved.

#### **Physical, sexual or emotional abuse of students**

- The staff member or volunteer who suspects that a student is being physically, sexually or emotionally abused by an adult is required to notify the Child Abuse Report Line at tel. 13 14 78 or make an online report.
- The staff member is encouraged to discuss this situation with the Principal, who will offer assistance as required.
- The Principal will inform other staff as deemed appropriate in the interests of the child involved.
- The associated pastoral processes will be implemented to ensure the socio-emotional welfare of the student, peers, staff and parents involved.



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This Policy complies with the following National requirements.

## NQS

QA2	2.2.3	Child protection - Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
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## National Regulations

Regs	84	Awareness of child protection law.
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