



SACRED  
HEART  
COLLEGE

Sacred Heart College Senior

Child Protection Policy  
and Procedures

**“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

# 1. CONTEXT

*Catholic schools educate young people in all dimensions of life by developing the whole person (South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools' Vision Statement)*

- 1.1 The Sacred Heart College Senior Child Protection Policy is based upon the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools' Child Protection Policy – 2000, which in turn is framed within the VISION STATEMENT for South Australian Catholic Schools. The Catholic School is a community which:
  - witnesses to Gospel values
  - respects individual dignity
  - values cooperation
  - challenges its members to be critical and reflective in their search for truth.
- 1.2 The policy is based on the Gospel values of freedom and justice for all people and an underlying belief in their dignity and uniqueness.
- 1.3 Safety, a basic human right, is a pre-requisite for Sacred Heart College Senior to be able to carry out its mission to educate.
- 1.4 Children are the most vulnerable people in society. They are vulnerable to exploitation and victimisation by those who are more powerful. Safety and protection from all forms of abuse are fundamental rights of all children.
- 1.5 The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools' (SACCS) Child Protection Policy 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. This policy is part of Sacred Heart College Senior's response to this directive.
- 1.6 Sacred Heart College Senior operates in a wider community context where legal requirements exist and where the school has an obligation to:
  - protect children
  - provide a secure, safe environment where children can be safe and feel safe
  - intervene on behalf of children
  - actively work towards empowering children
  - ensure the principles of care, protection and safety are implemented.

## 2. PRINCIPLES

*The safety and well being of the child must be the paramount consideration in every situation.*

- 2.1 The dignity of the human person is fundamental to Catholic teaching.
- 2.2 Children have the right to be safe and feel safe.
- 2.3 Children's development is dependent on the quality of care provided by the significant adults in their lives.
- 2.4 The family is recognised as being the unit primarily responsible for the care and protection of the child.
- 2.5 Where families are not providing the care consistent with their obligations or where a child's welfare is at risk, or suspected to be at risk, intervention on behalf of the child is obligatory.
- 2.6 Sacred Heart College Senior must be a place where children feel safe.
- 2.7 The prevention and treatment of child abuse requires a multi-disciplinary response which is sensitive to cultural diversity and special needs.
- 2.8 Cultural or other reasons, notwithstanding, Sacred Heart College Senior personnel must intervene on behalf of children.
- 2.9 Cooperation with Government Departments and human service organisations in the community is essential in child protection.
- 2.10 People who are involved in situations where abuse occurs or is suspected are treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

### 3. PROCEDURES

- 3.1 Sacred Heart College Senior recognises the significant role it has in the prevention of child abuse and takes responsibility for implementing child protection practices.
- 3.2 The school will ensure adequate time and resources are allocated for child protection education and programs.
- 3.3 Sacred Heart College Senior I will meet these requirements through the provision of child protection policy, practices, procedures and programs.
- 3.4 Sacred Heart College Senior staff will be educated in the area of child protection and mandatory notification.
- 3.5 Staff at Sacred Heart College Senior are legally mandated, and therefore are obliged to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- 3.6 The school will provide protection and abuse prevention curriculum for students.
- 3.7 The school will hold a central record of reports to the child abuse line

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

*The responsibility of all people involved in Sacred Heart College Senior is to ensure that there is a total community approach towards the protection of children from abuse.*

### 4.1 Responsibilities of Sacred Heart College Senior Executive Team:

- 4.1.1 To provide a safe school environment which ensures that children are protected.
- 4.1.2 To ensure that all school personnel 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.
- 4.1.3 To support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification.
- 4.1.4 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.
- 4.1.5 To ensure that policies and organisational procedures provide children with a safe school environment. This will be done in consultation with the parent community.
- 4.1.6 To promote models of behaviour between school personnel and children based on mutual respect and consideration.
- 4.1.7 To ensure that student management practice respects the dignity of children.
- 4.1.8 To provide training and development for school personnel in child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- 4.1.9 To 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 school years.
- 4.1.10 To monitor and evaluate child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- 4.1.11 To provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- 4.1.12 To ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

## **4.2 Responsibilities of Sacred Heart College Senior personnel**

- 4.2.1 To treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, to provide a duty of care and protect children in their care.
- 4.2.2 To notify the relevant authorities (Including Family and Youth Services: Child Abuse Report Line on 131478) if, in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.
- 4.2.3 To provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.
- 4.2.4 To participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification.
- 4.2.5 To teach children skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety.
- 4.2.6 To 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.

## 5. GLOSSARY

### **Sacred Heart College Senior**

Incorporating all school related activities, including retreats, excursions, sporting activities, etc.

### **Child abuse**

Any maltreatment that damages the child's physical, mental, emotional or psychological health or that places the child's physical, mental, emotional or psychological development in jeopardy.

*(Interagency Guidelines 1997, Page 3)*

### **Children**

Persons under 18 years old. Students older than 18 who are enrolled at Sacred Heart College Senior are not covered by the legal mandate, however the duty of care provision under which teachers operate would require that these students be afforded the same protection as children under 18 years of age.

### **Confidentiality**

Refers to the restriction of discussion of a child's circumstances to those agencies and school personnel directly involved with helping the child.

### **Cultural diversity**

Refers to the complex concept of culture and its many different manifestations within Australian society.

### **Empower children**

Teach and discuss the concept of rights particularly in relation to personal safety and teach problem solving skills.

### **Family**

Refers to units consisting of parents or care-givers and children. Parents may be biological, adoptive or foster and the units may consist of blended and extended families, single parent families, families with children in respite or foster care or relatives with the care of children. Children are defined as those who are under the age of 18 years.

### **Gospel values**

The teachings and ministry of Jesus as enunciated and described in the Gospel story.

### **Legally mandated**

Persons obliged by law to notify the designated reporting authority of suspicions of child abuse.

*(Section 11 (1) and (2) Children's Protection Act 1993)*

### **Protect children**

Refers to providing an environment where children are safe and feel safe.

### **Protection and abuse prevention curriculum**

All arrangements made by the school within its formal curriculum to teach students to accept their right and responsibility to protect themselves and others.

**Reasonable grounds**

Includes:

- when a child says he or she has been abused
- another person says a child has been abused
- the observations of a child's behaviour or injuries lead school personnel to suspect that abuse is occurring.

**Multi-disciplinary**

Government and non-government agencies involved in welfare, education, health and legal aspects of child abuse and protection.

**Safe environment**

A place where the adults take reasonable measures to ensure that:

- children are protected from harm
- where children know that adults will act on their behalf.

**School Personnel**

Persons working at Sacred Heart College Senior in paid or voluntary capacities (eg teachers, school assistants, ground staff, canteen workers, LAP volunteers etc.).

## 6. REFERENCES

*South Australian Commission For Catholic Schools*  
Child Protection Policy – 2000

*Child Protection Agency Guidelines* 1997 2nd edn,  
S A Government

*Integrity in Ministry* 1999, Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference & the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes

*Towards Healing* Dec 1996, Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference & the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes

**Approved on**            **March 2011**

**Review Date**            **March 2014**