WOLLEMI COLLEGE

Child Protection Policy

Wollemi College's Child Protection Policy implements and is to be read and understood in conjunction with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

This Child Protection Policy, which includes our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing, has been approved by the School's Board on March 2020. It is to be reviewed on an annual basis.

This Child Protection Policy is published on our School's public website and provided to new Staff, and to Direct Contact Volunteers at induction.

Purpose

Our Child Protection Policy, which includes our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing, was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the School to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

It is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of our approach to the School as a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the School's entire Child Protection Program.

The Child Protection Policy provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the School
- the creation of a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child safe culture

- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the School
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and safety in NSW.

Scope

The School's Child Protection Policy applies to all adults in the School community, including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and other family members. This Policy applies in all School environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g. camps and excursions).

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people who come to Wollemi College have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision they make.

Child Protection Standards

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, 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.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) expand on the National

Principles for Child Safe Organisations, 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.

The NCSS are:

- Standard 1: Committed leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 2: Children are safe, informed and participate
- Standard 3: Partnering with families, carers and communities
- Standard 4: Equity is promoted and diversity is respected
- Standard 5: Robust human resource management
- Standard 6: Effective complaints management
- Standard 7: Ongoing education and training
- Standard 8: Safe physical and online environments
- Standard 9: Continuous improvement
- Standard 10: Policies and procedures support child safety

Children and Young People's Rights to Safety, Information and Participation

Wollemi College is a child safe and child-centred organisation. Our 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, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.

We ensure 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 organisation and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the School

The School recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure families and relevant communities know about the School's operations and policies, including its Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.

We build cultural safety at the School through partnerships with relevant communities.

Valuing Diversity in the School Community

Our School 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/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome students with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- support students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensure all Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

Our Child Protection Program

Wollemi College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from abuse or other harm, and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the School. It includes:

- Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse or other harm
- clear procedures for reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm
- strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, Volunteers, Contractors,
- parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Leadership Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to DCJ, Reportable Conduct, and Reporting to Police
- 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/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability

- child protection training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Wollemi College's induction process, all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete induction in our child protection policies, practices and procedures. All Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers also receive refresher and ongoing child protection training.

Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are supported and supervised by the School's Child Protection Officers and Leadership Team to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child safety.

Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the School

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for Board members, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally at the School. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

Students at the School are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the School. These include informal and formal pathways.

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 School may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact the

Headmaster, or the School's Independent Safeguarding Officer Harriet Witchell, by phoning 0421114812 or emailing harriet.witchell@pared.edu.au. If the concern relates to the Headmaster, they can contact the CEO or the Independent Safeguarding Officer.

Students, parents/carers, family members and other community members can also raise child safety incidents or concerns through the School's Student and Parent/Guardian Grievance and Procedural Fairness Guidelines, available here.

Any person can also contact the Independent Safeguarding Officer, the Headmaster or the CEO if they have concerns regarding the School's leadership in relation to child safety. Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Responsibilities for Child Protection at the School

Child protection and safety is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students. Specific responsibilities include:

The School's Child Protection Officers

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Protection Officers. Our Child Protection Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Our Child Protection Officers are:

Jaime Ramos - Headmaster

Scott Williamson – Deputy

Wollemi College also works with Harriet Witchell as the School's Independent Safeguarding Officer. The Independent Safeguarding Officer is contactable by phone on 0421 114812 or by emailing Harriet.witchell@Pared.edu.au.

The Independent Safeguarding Officer has additional child protection responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal, the Leadership Team and the Board.

The Board

The Board is responsible for approving our Child Protection Program and ensuring that the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and our Child Protection Program.

The Headmaster

The Headmaster is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the School, and the Child Protection Program. The Headmaster is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection Policy and the School's Child Protection Program is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School.

The Leadership Team

Each member of the Leadership Team is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the School, and to support the Headmaster in the practical application of the School's child protection strategies, policies, procedures and work systems.

Staff

All Staff are required to comply with our Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Protection Program

and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and Working with Children Checks. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

Volunteers

All Volunteers at the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

All Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers are required to comply with our Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct and are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety concerns with one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

Contractors

All Contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

All Contractors engaged by the School are required to comply with our Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm. The School may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

Direct Contact and Regular Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and School cleaners. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their

families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School. The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in all School environments. All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to comply with our Child Protection Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct. Wollemi College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Protection Human Resources Management

Wollemi College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors. Our recruitment procedures ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. All Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

The School ensures that the Leadership Team, Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers undergo child protection induction, and ongoing education and training as part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from harm.

Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors are subject to regular supervision and performance monitoring whilst engaging with students.

The School ensures that professional development programs for Staff include child protection education and training programs.

Child Protection Risk Management

The School recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

The School has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all School environments.

Record Keeping

The School has a Child Protection Record Keeping policy and is committed to best practice record keeping. In accordance with our policy, and as required by our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the School are recorded using the Child Protection Reporting Form.

In maintaining records of child safety incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

Policy and Program Review

Wollemi College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

The School is committed to actively seeking, actioning, and incorporating into this Policy, feedback from students, families, the wider School community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, and will communicate any adjustments or amendments widely throughout the School community.

Non-Compliance with Our Child Protection Policy

Wollemi College enforces this Child Protection Policy and our Child Protection 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.