



The Scots College
Sydney Australia

Child Protection Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

All children and young people who come to The Scots College have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to providing an environment where children and young people are safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

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

The College 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 maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the College community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role 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.

The College's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety has been designed to reflect the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Purpose

This Policy demonstrates the College's strong commitment to child safety and provides an outline of the procedures and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe.

This Policy provides the framework for:

- implementing the [NSW Child Safe Standards](#)
- creating a safe and supportive environment for our students
- developing work systems, practices, policies and procedures to prevent and detect abuse and promote child safety and wellbeing within the College
- promoting open discussion of child safety issues within the College
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and safety in NSW.

This Policy is part of our Child Protection Program, which is the full collection of policies and procedures that assist the College to be a child safe organisation and meet the requirements of the NSW Child Safe Standards.



Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of child safety and includes this Policy, codes of conduct, screening and recruitment practices, information on the indicators of abuse, procedures for responding to child safety incidents, external and internal reporting procedures, pastoral care strategies, training for staff and students, and record keeping.

Scope

This Policy applies to all adults in the College community, including staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors. It applies in all College environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site College grounds (e.g. camps and excursions).

Child Safe Standards

This Policy is based on the NSW Child Safe Standards, which set out the overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and ensure a child safe environment.

The NSW Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations in a flexible and adaptive way. It is a benchmark against which the College can assess its child safe capability and set performance targets. The NSW Child Safe Standards are:



Office of the Children's Guardian, The Child Safe Standards.

Our Child Focused Approach

At The Scots College we seek to include students in decisions that affect them, such as decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

To prevent child abuse, students must be aware of their rights and supported to speak up if they feel unsafe. We recognise the importance of community to our students and the support they receive from peers, staff, volunteers and family members is instrumental in creating a safe environment.

We ensure that students' views are taken seriously and their voices heard. We aim to implement inclusive practices to respond to the diverse needs of students.

Our Community

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

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in our Child Protection Program, which includes informing them of the College's operations and policies.

Our People

Recruitment, Screening and Support

Creating a child safe culture starts with ensuring that we 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 all staff and relevant volunteers and contractors to maintain a valid Working with Children Check clearance
- using additional selection, background checking and screening processes that take into account child protection considerations, such as reference checks and targeted selection criteria.

The College's Child Protection Officers and Executive Leadership Team provide supervision and support to all staff, volunteers and contractors to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child protection. This may include appointing a supervising staff member to relevant volunteers and contractors and/or professional development programs for staff that include Child Protection education.

Our Staff

As a part of the College's induction process, we require all staff to complete our induction program, which includes information about our Child Protection Program. Our staff also receive refresher and ongoing child protection training at least annually.

All staff are required to comply with this Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct, and be familiar with our Child Protection Program. Staff must also comply with their legal obligations to report child abuse or risks of harm to children and young people, which include:

- mandatory reporting: all staff are mandatory reporters and are required to report to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) if, through the course of their work, they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child, or group of children, is at risk of significant harm
- reportable conduct: all staff must report to the College's Child Protection Officers if they become aware of an allegation or conviction of child abuse against a fellow staff member, volunteer or contractor
- NSW Police: staff must report to police if they have grounds to suspect that a child abuse offence has been committed.

To ensure these obligations are met, all staff must act in accordance with the Child Protection Codes of Conduct and the College's internal procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents.

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 a Child Protection Officer.

Our Volunteers and Contractors

Our community benefits from the work of our volunteers, who work for the College without payment or financial reward.

Contractors are engaged by the College to provide specific services and are not members of staff. They may include maintenance personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and other extracurricular instructors, and external education providers.

All of our volunteers and contractors are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students. To ensure these obligations are met:

- all volunteers and contractors must comply with this Policy and the Employee Code of Conduct
- some of our volunteers and contractors must also:
 - participate in child protection training provided by the College or provide evidence that they have engaged in other similar training with another institution.
 - comply with any legal obligations to report child abuse, including under the Mandatory Reporting or Reportable Conduct Schemes.

Breach of the Child Protection Program

In the event of non-compliance with this Policy or the Child Protection Program more broadly, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including:

- remedial education counselling;
- increased supervision;
- the restriction of duties;
- suspension;
- termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Response to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

The College fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the College community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety.

The College will take appropriate and prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, regardless of who reports them. This response will include:

- reporting matters externally where required by legislation, including:
 - reporting any risk of significant harm to a child, or group of children, to DCJ under the Mandatory Reporting Scheme
 - reporting any allegations of reportable conduct or reportable convictions against employees and volunteers with the Office of the Children's Guardian under the Reportable Conduct Scheme
 - reporting any information relating to a child abuse offence to the Police
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency, or conducting its own investigation where appropriate
- protecting and supporting students connected to the child safety incident or concern while the matter is ongoing and providing ongoing support where necessary
- 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 agencies as permitted or required under the law
- creating, retaining and securing comprehensive records of the child safety incident or concern and the College's response
- regularly undertaking reviews of the College's Child Protection Program to identify improvements.

Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the College

Immediate Danger

- Call the Police on 000

Contact the College

- Contact the College Head of Child Protection, Lisa Hales on +61 2 9391 7600 or l.hales@scots.college or in writing to 33 Victoria Road, Bellevue Hill NSW 2023

Child Protection Helpline

- Call 132 111 or 1800 212 936 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Students can self report

- To any staff member, volunteer or contractor at the College verbally, in writing, or indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way.)

Concerns involving the Principal

- Call Presbyterian Church Conduct Protocol Unit on +61 2 9690 9352.

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.

Any person, including all staff, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and students, can at any time contact the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person (aged under 18), or a class of children or young persons, is at risk of significant harm.

Voluntary reports to DCJ can be made by calling the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 or 1800 212 936 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Our Child Protection Program sets out the procedures that the College will follow for any child safety incident or concern involving a student, staff member, volunteer, contractor or visitor, or other person connected to the College or the College environment.

It also provides guidance for all staff, volunteers and contractors on their obligations to respond to and report, to relevant external authorities.

These procedures are summarised for students, parents/carers and community members in our public-facing Procedures for Managing Staff Misconduct and on Schoolbox.

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

Staff, volunteers and contractors must follow our procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns and report all child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Child Protection Officer or the Principal.

Where the child safety incident or concern involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the Presbyterian Church Conduct Protocol Unit by phoning +61 2 9690 9352.

We 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. Our Child Protection Program provides guidance on identifying additional vulnerabilities and barriers, and contains strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the College community and for enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the College.

Students, Parents/Carers and Community Members

All members of our community are encouraged to disclose child safety incidents or concerns relating to a child or young person associated with the College, verbally, by email or in writing to:

- the College's Head of Child Protection, Lisa Hales on +61 2 9391 7600 or l.hales@scots.college; or
- the Principal, on +61 2 9391 7600; or
- the Presbyterian Church NSW Conduct Protocol Unit on +61 2 9690 9352; or
- in writing to the Head of Child Protection at 33 Victoria Road, Bellevue Hill NSW 2023; or
- any other staff member, volunteer or contractor.

Students at the College who have child safety concerns about themselves or any other child, young person or student can disclose those concerns to any staff member, volunteer or contractor at the

College, and may do so verbally, in writing, or indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way.)

All communications relating to a child safety incident or concern will be treated seriously and with the utmost sensitivity.

Support Following a Child Safety Incident or Disclosure

Child safety incidents or concerns can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children, as well as on their families. In addition to reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, the College plays a central role in providing 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, our Child Protection Officers will work with the student and their family to develop a Student Support Plan.

Support strategies might include offering or organising referrals to internal or external support, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation that specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm.

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

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

Child Protection Risk Management

The Scots College recognises the importance of a risk management approach to child protection and to minimising the risk of harm to children and young people without compromising their rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

We identify, assess and manage child protection risks in all College environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, their physical and online environments and the characteristics of our students and boarding students, through our risk management policy and procedures. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. The College has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the minimisation of child safety risks.

Child Protection Privacy and Information Sharing

The College collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Commonwealth and NSW privacy legislation. The College may be permitted or required to disclose information about child protection to third parties, including but not limited to those in the circumstances identified above. For information about how the College collects, uses and discloses this information, refer to the College [Privacy Policy](#).

Child Protection Record Keeping

The College is committed to keeping accurate and up to date records about child protection, as well as child safety incidents and concerns.

The maintenance, protection and access of records in relation to child protection matters and safety incidents are subject to Commonwealth and NSW privacy legislation and the College [Privacy Policy](#).

Child Protection Program and Practice Review

The Scots College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program and our child protection practices. We review the Program 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.

Responsibilities for Child Protection at the College

Although child safety and child protection is everyone's responsibility, there are members of our community with specific responsibilities.

The College's Child Protection Officers

A number of Senior staff members are nominated as the College's Child Protection Officers. 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 College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Our Child Protection Officers are:

- the Principal and all Deputy Principals;
- the Head of Child Protection;
- the Directors of Boarding, Co-Curricular and Sport;
- the heads of our campuses, including the Brighton Preparatory School and Glengarry;
- the Heads of the Senior and Middle Schools;
- the Deputy Head of Glengarry and the Coordinator of Experiential Education at our Bannockburn campus.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the operational management of the Child Protection Program and for creating a strong and sustainable child safe culture within the College. The Principal is the College's 'Head of Entity' under the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The Executive Leadership Team

Each member of the College Executive Leadership Team will ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the College's Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented. The Leadership Team will also support the Principal in the practical application of the College's child protection strategies, policies, procedures and work systems. The Director of People and Culture is responsible for verifying and monitoring all Working With Children Check obligations for staff, volunteers and contractors.

The Head of Child Protection

The Head of Child Protection is responsible for the effective implementation of the Child Protection Program and creating a strong and sustainable child safe culture within the College.

The Head of Child Protection 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 College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal, the Executive Leadership Team and the College Council.

The Scots College Council

The Scots College Council is the College's governing body. It approves and reviews all of the College's child protection policies and procedures, and is responsible for compliance with legal and regulatory obligations.

The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust

The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust is the proprietor of the College and is responsible for implementing the governance arrangements set out for the College by The Scots College Council, including in relation to Child Protection.

The Conduct Protocol Unit of the Presbyterian Church in NSW provides additional support to the College in its response to child safety incidents and concerns, and oversees the College's child protection policies to ensure compliance with its legislative obligations.

Implementation

This Policy is published on our College's public website so that our community is aware of the College's commitment to child safety.

This Policy will be provided to all new staff, and to relevant volunteers and contractors, at induction or prior to them commencing their work at the College.

The College also provides all visitors to the College, including casual volunteers and casual contractors, with information about the Child Protection Policy (including in particular the Child Protection Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities).

We provide a child-friendly version of this Policy and our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety to all students.

Policy Review

The College Council conducts a review of this Child Protection Policy annually or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation.

Breaking The Silence

Breaking the Silence (BTS) is the Presbyterian Church's response to all forms of abuse. Under the BTS, The Scots College is an approved organisation and has established its own policies and procedures for dealing with and preventing abuse. The Conduct Protocol Unit of the Presbyterian Church (CPU) acts as a liaison point for the College to ensure that there is compliance with legislation and the ensure that all internal systems are adhered to.

Under BTS, the College is required to notify the CPU of certain circumstances occurring at the College, including incidents or concerns relating to child abuse, allegations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and concerns that a child or class of children may be at risk of significant harm.