



CHILD SAFE POLICY

Policy No. 54

Approved: April 2016

"Aims to provide a solid foundation for academic excellence and spiritual growth towards authentic Christian Living."

Introduction

Kerang Christian College is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at Kerang Christian College is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within Kerang Christian College.
- To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
- To prevent child abuse within Kerang Christian College.
- To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and / or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to staff / volunteers / contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the College.
- To provide a clear statement to staff /volunteers / contractors forbidding any such abuse.
- To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Policy

Kerang Christian College is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Kerang Christian College has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Kerang Christian College is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Kerang Christian College, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Kerang Christian College community.

Kerang Christian College will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

Kerang Christian College supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Kerang Christian College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Procedures and Responsibilities

Board

The Board of Kerang Christian College has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Safety Code of Conduct are in place. (See Appendix A)

Principal / CEO

The Principal / CEO of Kerang Christian College is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, College policies and procedures, and the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the Kerang Christian College community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

Heads of School

All Heads of School must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activity.

The Leadership Team should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All Staff / Volunteers / Contractors

All staff / volunteers / contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, Kerang Christian College's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state- based child protection service) and fulfill their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person at the College); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Definitions

Child

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- a) The child is in need of protection,
- b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury",
- c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and / or
- e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Employment of New Personnel

Kerang Christian College undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the Kerang Christian College;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share Kerang Christian College's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at Kerang Christian College if they pose a risk to children.

Kerang Christian College requires all workers / volunteers to pass through the College's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Kerang Christian College. Please refer to: Employment Policy (Policy No. 32), Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 45) and Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 35).

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with Kerang Christian College must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Kerang Christian College may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at Kerang Christian College and during their time with Kerang Christian College at regular intervals. Please refer to: Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 12).

Kerang Christian College will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure documented in the Employment Policy (Policy No. 32).

Once engaged, workers / volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our School culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the Child Safety Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).

Risk Management

Kerang Christian College will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. Kerang Christian College will have a Board sub-committee committed to identifying and managing risks at Kerang Christian College. Sub-committee members will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

Reporting

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their supervisor about their concern.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the Principal / CEO and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Mandatory / voluntary reporting requirements are documented in the Child Protection Policy (Policy No. 26).

Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this

report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the Principal / CEO will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Principal / CEO may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The Principal / CEO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the Principal / CEO shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and / or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached Kerang Christian College's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the College's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the College. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Kerang Christian College will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Legislative responsibilities

Our School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Please refer to the Child Protection Policy (Policy No. 26) for additional information.

Grievance Procedures

Policies and procedures are in place if staff, volunteers, children or their families have concerns about the College's leadership in regard to child safety. Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the school and community members assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment. Please see the Grievance Policy (Policy No. 31) for additional information.

Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle. Following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the College's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the College's care.

Related Documents

- Child Protection Policy (Policy No. 26)
- Supervision Policy (Policy No. 19)
- Staff Contact With Students Policy (Policy No. 48)
- Student Travel in Staff Cars Policy (Policy No. 52)
- Staff Tutoring Policy (Policy No. 47)
- Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 35)
- Employment Policy (Policy No. 32)
- Working with Children Policy (Policy No. 13)
- Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 12)
- School Visitors Policy (Policy No. 3)
- Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 45)
- Grievance Policy (Policy No. Policy No. 31)

Prescriptive legal and regulatory requirements include:

- Ministerial Order 870
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001

References

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website.

www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence.

Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website.

www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about how to make a report to child protection. www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first.

For an overview of the Child Safe Standards, please see An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc

Note:

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation. Throughout this paper we refer to 'Aboriginal peoples' rather than 'Aboriginal people' to reflect the plurality and diversity of Victorian Aboriginal communities.



APPENDIX A: CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Board, Leadership Team, staff, volunteers and contractors at Kerang Christian College are required to abide by this Code.

Under the Principal / CEO, the Leadership Team will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers;
and
3. Nominate a Child Protection Officer(s) to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Kerang Christian College will:

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the College;
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
3. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
4. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
5. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
6. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
7. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people;
8. Be professional in their actions;
9. Maintain strict impartiality;
10. Comply with specific College guidelines and policies on physical contact with children;
11. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers / carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
12. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
13. Operate within the policies and guidelines of Kerang Christian College; and
14. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;

8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the College's programs and activities;
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
13. Do anything in contravention of the College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct

Teaching staff at Kerang Christian College are also bound by the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct has been developed for and by the Victorian teaching profession. It identifies a set of principles, which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community.

What happens if you breach this Code of Conduct

If you breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with Kerang Christian College.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Kerang Christian College Child Safety Officer(s) or the Principal / CEO.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date: