

# Child Protection Policy

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## **KEY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Some matters can now be reported through an online child protection reporting system.  
[reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au](https://reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au)

For immediate life threatening situations continue to call **SAPOL 000**.

Mandated notifiers still need to call the Child Abuse Report Line when notifying serious concerns about the suspected abuse and neglect of children.

## **Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 13 14 78**

### **Introduction**

#### **Purpose**

In line with the Blakes Crossing Christian College values of Christ-centred caring, Christ-centred learning, Christ-centred community and Christ-centred serving, the College takes seriously the responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment for all children.

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and wellbeing of the children within our care. This policy is based on the following understandings:

- Children are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God and deserve protection
- Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society
- The safety of children is of paramount importance
- Children need to know and to believe that they have the right to feel, and to be safe at all times
- Children are entitled to basic human rights, regardless of special needs, cultural and religious background or socioeconomic status (1)
- Children are entitled to the support of a person to act as an advocate on their behalf
- Adults are the people in society who have the responsibility for child protection

All educators/staff within the College Community are legally mandated to report suspected cases of child abuse to the relevant Child Protection Agency.

Blakes Crossing Christian College aims to educate all parties about their roles in child protection and also about signs of abuse and ensure that all requirements of child protection are being met.

### **Policy**

- The College is committed to addressing the issue of child abuse and continuing to improve the way we deliver child protection and abuse prevention programs.
- The College has appointed a Student Wellbeing Officer (if no other appointment has been made, this person will be the Principal) to address many of the key issues of child protection and child abuse, as well as being available for student counselling.



- The Student Wellbeing Officer will ensure the College is current in its approach to child protection and coordinate the child protection and abuse prevention programs to all students in the College.
- Through the College curriculum, students will participate in programs designed to develop skills and strategies for personal safety.
- All education and care workers employed by the College will regard the interest of students as of paramount importance. They are required to:
  - Exercise a duty of care to protect the child and keep him/her safe
  - Be aware of the definition of abuse and neglect as defined in the Children's Protection Act 1993, Section 6 (1) and (2)
  - Report suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the relevant Child Protection Agency, as being required by the Protection Act 1993, Section 11 (1) and (2)
  - Provide children with child protection and abuse prevention programs

### **Procedure**

In order for staff to fulfil their responsibilities, the College will:

- Provide ongoing training in reporting child abuse and neglect
- Ensure that staff are aware of the 24 Hour Child Abuse Report Line (131 478) and updated reporting procedures including online reporting
- Provide release time for appropriate staff (ie Student Wellbeing Officer) to attend meeting, training and/or conferences that will enhance their knowledge of child protection or fulfil legal obligations
- Establish supportive procedures for staff when reporting on child abuse and neglect
- Provide child protection and abuse prevention programs as part of the curriculum
- Regularly review and update the child protection and abuse prevention programs offered by the College as part of a curriculum review process

### **<sup>(1)</sup>UN Rights of the Child**

- Ensure the Student Wellbeing Officer is debriefed on any child protection or Reporting of child abuse or neglect issues directly involving any student from Blakes Crossing Christian College (where deemed appropriate)

### **Code of Conduct**

Blakes Crossing Christian College upholds the following code of conduct in relation to employers, educators, volunteers, students, families and children:

#### **Blakes Crossing Christian College**

The College will ensure that all educators/staff:

- Are clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
- Are aware of their obligations to immediately report suspected abuse to the Child Protection Hotline.
- Are aware of the indicators when a child may be at risk of harm or significant harm.



- Are provided training and development for all educators/staff in the recognition and reporting of abuse and harm.
- Are provided reporting procedures and professional standards for care and protection work.
- Provide a Working with Children Check (DCSI)
- Report to the Ombudsman any reportable allegations and convictions made against an employee and ensure they are investigated by the Principal or delegate with appropriate actions being taken when the investigation is complete.
- Notify the relevant authorities of details of employees against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed and/or persons whose employment has been rejected because of a risk identified in employment screening processes.
- Enable educators to have access to relevant acts, regulations, standards and other resources in order for them to complete their obligations.

### **Educators/Staff Will:**

- Report any situation where they suspect a child is at risk of significant harm to the Child Protection Helpline.
- Promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of children at the College.
- Have an awareness of referral agencies for families where concerns of harm do not meet the significant harm threshold.
- Be aware of obligations as per Responding to Abuse and Neglect training.
- Assist in supporting children and families when liaising with relevant government agencies.

### **Educators/Staff Will Not:**

- Drink alcohol or use illicit substances while on the College's premises and will not come to the College while under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
- Smoke on Blakes Crossing Christian College premises or when involved in an activity of the College
- Show favouritism towards any child.
- Develop close personal relationships with children outside of the carer/child relationship, including on social media
- Use abusive, derogatory or offensive language.

### **Families and Volunteers:**

- Treat all children at the College equally and respectfully.
- Report any suspicions to the most senior person on duty when at the College.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion or cultural background.
- Respect the decision of educators/staff and teach children to do likewise.
- Focus on encouraging childrens' efforts and learning.



- Support all efforts to remove any form of abuse in the College and encourage a safe and supportive College environment.
- Will not drink alcohol or use illicit substances while on the College's premises and will not come to the College while under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
- Will not smoke on the College's premises.

## **Child development**

### **Children will be taught the following guidelines on a developmental scale:**

- Respect other children and adults at the College.
- Cooperate and follow rules.
- Listen to educator/staff instructions and follow them.
- Control their temper and talk to an Educator/staff member if upset.
- Have a say in what activities they are involved in, where applicable
- Speak to an Educator/staff member if worried or concerned about something.
- Be kind and caring towards others and remember that bullying is not allowed.
- Tell an Educator/staff member if they see a child bullying another child.

## **Recruitment**

Blakes Crossing Christian College will keep up-to-date policies on recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers.

The College is responsible for developing policies and procedures about recruitment, selection, management and training to ensure all persons working at the College are suitable.

When developing the recruitment strategy, the College will consider the following recruitment criteria with regard to child protection issues:

- Comprehensive position descriptions
- Clear advertising statements about the College and the role description
- Details of the selection process
- Understanding of the probationary period
- Outlines of training with regard to policies and child protection
- Induction procedures
- Exit interviews or questionnaires

## **Reporting**

Families SA has been working on making the process of notifications of suspected child abuse and neglect easier for mandated notifiers in South Australia. Some matters can now be reported through an online child protection reporting system.

[reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au](http://reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au)



For immediate life threatening situations continue to call SAPOL 000.

Mandated notifiers still need to call the Child Abuse Report Line when notifying serious concerns about the suspected abuse and neglect of children.

Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78

This can include:

- A child in imminent or immediate danger of serious harm
- Serious injuries
- Chronic neglect
- Infants (under 12 months)
- When a child is in the care of Families SA and you suspect they are being abused and neglected.

### **Definition of Abuse / Neglect**

"abuse or neglect", in relation to a child, means—

- (a) sexual abuse of the child; or
- (b) physical or emotional abuse of the child, or neglect of the child, to the extent that—
  - i. the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child's wellbeing; or
  - ii. the child's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy,

### **Suspicion and disclosure of harm**

#### **Suspicion of harm**

One can suspect harm if:

- There is concern with regard to significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries.

#### **Disclosure of harm**

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

- Think I saw...||
- Somebody told me that...||
- Just think you should know...||
- I'm not sure what I want you to do, but...||

The College works to minimise harm to children and young people by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- Making sure that children know that it is their right to feel safe at all times
- Teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general
- Letting them know who is and who is not an employee in the organisation



- Allowing them to be a part of decision-making processes
- Making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements
- Taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up their concerns
- Letting them know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust
- Teaching them about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding
- Teaching children and young people to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe
- Encouraging them to tell educators of any suspicious activities or people, and
- Listening to children and young people and letting them know that educators are available for them if they have any concerns.

### **Procedures for receiving a disclosure of harm**

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- Remain calm and find a private place to talk
- Don't promise that you'll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries, and
- Do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

### **Reporting guidelines for disclosures or suspicions of harm**

Following are the actions Blakes Crossing Christian College will take immediately following a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

### **Documenting a suspicion of harm**

If anyone has concerns about the safety of a child, record these concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. If a parent explains a noticeable mark on a child, record your own observations as well as accurate details of the conversation. If you see unsafe or harmful actions towards a child in your care, intervene immediately, provided it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe, call the police for assistance.

### **Documenting a disclosure of harm**

Complete an incident report form or record the details as soon as possible so that they are accurately captured. Include:

- Time, date and place of the disclosure
- 'Word for word' what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken, and
- Date of report and signature.



If you need to take notes as the person is telling you, explain that you are taking a record in case any later enquiry occurs.

### **Reporting the disclosure or suspicion of harm to authorities**

Blakes Crossing Christian College will not conduct its own enquiries in relation to the disclosure or suspicion of harm or try to come to an agreement between the parties involved. The person who receives a disclosure or suspects harm is to contact the relevant authority to ensure information provided is comprehensive and accurate.

Report the matter to:

<b>Child Abuse Report Line</b>	<b>131478</b>
<b>For Emergencies Call</b>	<b>000</b>
<b>For Non-Urgent Matters</b>	<b>131 444</b>

### **Actions following a disclosure of harm**

Support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved.

### **The person against whom the allegation has been made**

If the person responding to the allegation of harm is a staff member, volunteer or contractor their duties may need to be reviewed. If they continue to interact/work with children, ensure that they are appropriately supervised at all times. Legal advice should be sought as to the extent to which that person can carry out duties at the College.

### **When receiving a disclosure of harm:**

- Remain calm and find a private place to talk
- Don't promise that you'll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries, and
- Do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.





## Indicators

### General indicators of abuse and neglect

- Marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance
- History of injury
- The child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated
- The child tells you someone has hurt him/her
- The child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt
- Someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused

### Indicators of Neglect in children

- Poor standard of hygiene leading to social isolation
- Scavenging or stealing food
- Extreme longing for adult affection
- Lacking a sense of genuine interaction with others
- Acute separation anxiety
- Self-comforting behaviours, e.g. Rocking, sucking
- Delay in development milestones
- Untreated physical problems

### Indicators of neglect in parents and caregivers

- Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, hygiene or leaving the child inappropriately without supervision
- Inability to respond emotionally to the child
- Child abandonment
- Depriving or withholding physical contact
- Failure to provide psychological nurturing
- Treating one child differently to the others

### Indicators of physical abuse in children

- Facial, head and neck bruising
- Lacerations and welts
- Explanations are not consistent with injury
- Bruising or marks that may show the shape of an object
- Bite marks or scratches
- Multiple injuries or bruises
- Ingestion of poisonous substances, alcohol or drugs
- Sprains, twists, dislocations



- Bone fractures
- Burns and scalds

### **Indicators of physical abuse in parents and caregivers**

- Direct admissions from parents about fear of hurting their children
- Family history of violence
- History of their own maltreatment as a child
- Repeated visits for medical assistance

### **Indicators of emotional abuse in children**

- Feeling of worthlessness about them
- Inability to value others
- Lack of trust in people and expectations
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours
- Other behavioural disorders (disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying)

### **Indicators of emotional abuse in parents and caregivers**

- Constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or ignoring or withholding praise and affection
- Excessive or unreasonable demands
- Persistent hostility, severe verbal abuse, rejection and scape-goating
- Belief that a particular child is bad or “evil”
- Using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- Exposure to domestic violence

### **Indicators of sexual abuse in children**

- They describe sexual acts
- Direct or indirect disclosures
- Age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour
- Self-destructive behaviour
- Regression in development achievements
- Child being in contact with a suspected or known perpetrator of sexual assault
- Bleeding from the vagina or anus
- Injuries such as tears to the genitalia

### **Indicators of Sexual Abuse in parents, caregivers of anyone else associated with the child**

- Exposing the child to sexual behaviours of others
- Suspected of or charged with child sexual abuse
- Inappropriate jealousy regarding age appropriate development of independence from the family



- Coercing the child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children
- Verbal threats of sexual abuse
- Exposing the child to pornography

### **Indicators of Domestic Violence in children**

- Show aggressive behaviour
- Develop phobias & insomnia
- Experience anxiety
- Show systems of depression
- Have diminished self esteem
- Demonstrate poor academic performance and problem solving skills
- Have reduced social competence skills including low levels of empathy
- Show emotional distress
- Have physical complaints

This plan outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner.

### **Breaches**

#### **Definition**

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy.

This includes any breach in relation to:

- Statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
- Code of conduct for interacting with children and young people;
- Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- Policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register
- Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
- Strategies for communication and support.

All stakeholders are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

### **Processes to manage a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy**

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner.

The following will occur:

- All people concerned will be advised of the process
- All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events



- The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded
- Matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential, and
- An appropriate outcome will be decided.

**Suitable outcomes for breaches**

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- Emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
- Providing closer supervision
- Further education and training
- Mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- Disciplinary procedures if necessary, or
- Reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.
- In addition to work health and safety concerns, a child and youth risk management strategy should analyse the risk of ‘harm’ to children and young people.

**Inclusions for camp and excursion planning**

The following additional items will be considered when planning excursions, camps and incursions:

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Describe the activity Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end	Identify Risks Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person	Analyse the Risk (Likelihood/Consequences)	Evaluate the Risk The level of risk	Manage the Risk Assess the options	Review Nominate who will review after the event/activity

**Legislation**

**NQS**

QA2	2.3.4	Educators, co-ordinators and educators are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
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**National Regulations**

Regs	84 168	Awareness of child protection law Policies and procedures
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## **Who Is Affected By the Policy**

- Educators
- Families
- Children
- Management



## References

- Community and Disability Colleges Ministers' Conference (2005). Creating safe environments for children: Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from [http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/childsafe\\_framework.pdf](http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/childsafe_framework.pdf)
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- UNICEF (n.d.). Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from [http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)
- Children's Protection Act 1993
- Education and Care Colleges National Regulations 2011
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people. Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings (DECS 2011)
- Centre Support policy

The following policies may also apply:

- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Record Keeping and Retention Policy
- Physical Environments (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy
- Death of a Child Policy (Critical Incident policy)
- Open Doors Policy
- Family Law and Access Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Tobacco Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Social Media Policy



## Information for parents

# Blakes Crossing CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

## Information for parents and carers

### Blakes Crossing Christian College child and youth protection

Creating safe and supportive environments for children and young people is everyone's business. Blakes Crossing Christian College is committed to providing the highest standard of service to children and young people and ensuring they are kept safe from harm. In order to create a safe and supportive environment for children and young people, organisations must initiate and maintain ongoing planning and commitment.

In a safe and supportive environment, services and activities are provided so children and young people:

- feel safe and protected from harm
- help plan activities and make decisions
- are consulted and respected, and
- have their best interests considered and upheld.

Blakes Crossing Christian College is required to have a written policy which includes strategies to protect the children and young people at the College from harm. The strategies will help ensure the College is a safe and supportive environment for children and young people, by identifying and minimising risks. Screening employees and volunteers is part of the strategy.

The child and youth risk management policy addresses the following elements:

- a statement of commitment
- a code of conduct for interacting with children and young people
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- a plan for managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy
- policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the child and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register
- risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events, and
- strategies for communication and support.

As a parent/carer, it is important for you to understand the policies and procedures that form the child and youth risk management strategy.



## Teaching Protective Behaviour with Children

### We teach children:

- To recognise their feelings and express them verbally.
- To express their feelings both verbally and non-verbally.
- That they can choose to change the way they are feeling.
- That they have a right to feel safe at all times.
- To recognise the signs when they do not feel safe and when they need to be alert and think clearly.
- The difference between 'fun' scared (that is the feeling of adventure and appropriate risk taking) and 'dangerous' scared (that is not okay).
- To use their own skills to feel safe.

### Beliefs

Blakes Crossing Christian College believes -

- That children are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God and deserve protection
- That children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults.
- That children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults.
- That a response given to a child from an adult in a child's early stages of emotional development can be hugely positive or detrimental depending on the adult's reaction.
- That children need to understand their bodies' reactions to their emotions.
- That children who retain, enhance and better understand their body's response to an emotion are more able to foresee the outcome of a situation and avoid them or ask for help.

Date / /      Date / /      Date / /  
**Responsible Officer      Key Committee Member      College Board Chairperson**