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Policy Document: SCHOOL MISSION

"Geelong Lutheran College shares the mission of all Lutheran Schools in aiming to encourage and support students, informed and sustained by the word of God, to develop their God-given talents so that they may shape and enrich their world."

St John’s Lutheran School shares its vision with all Australian Lutheran Schools. It is a vision based on the inspired Word of God and endeavours to prepare our students to live a positive and rewarding life. It is a Child Safe organisation with a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in children’s best interests.

Through sensitivity to and an understanding of faith, students at St John’s Lutheran School:

- value themselves so that they are excited by their life journey and inquisitive about their world and its future;
- are alive to life’s possibilities, to the social and inner needs of others and to injustices in our society; and
- are valued as unique and exceptional individuals who make a unique contribution to the world around them.

“Love each other as brothers and sisters and honour others more than you do yourself. Never give up. Eagerly follow the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord. Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying. Take care of God’s needy people and welcome strangers into your home.” Romans 12:9-13

An education dedicated to:

Learn – Develop wisdom through knowledge and LEARNing grounded in Christian values.

Imagine – Empower students to IMAGINE a world full of possibilities and act with respect and responsibility to enrich the community.

Grow – Embrace each student’s unique talents and abilities to GROW their confidence and purpose in life.
Policy Document

PHILOSOPHY & AIMS

College Philosophy

St John’s Lutheran School shares its vision with all Australian Lutheran Schools. It is a vision based on God’s own self-revelation in the Bible, the inspired word of God and the trustworthy source of all Christian teaching. The school endeavours to set up and maintain a framework of Christian attitudes and relationships which will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, permeate and integrate its entire life and work and thereby help it to grow as a caring community.

Geelong Lutheran College is a Child Safe organisation with a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in children’s best interests.

The educational philosophy of the school is therefore based on the recognition that God is the giver of all truth and that the skills and attitudes of the students are being developed and used for the glory of God through service to one another. This encourages the development of a Christian worldview that equips students to live an authentic Christian life in the context of Australian society.

This word of God informs all that we do at St John’s Lutheran School. It leads us to embrace a holistic philosophy of education, summarised in the following six principles:

- **LEARNING CENTRED**: we are committed to creating an environment where students have a passion to explore, discover and analyse their world as part of an exciting life journey;

- **SPIRIT SENSITIVE**: we are committed to discerning the personal spirituality of students, listening to their inner search for meaning, and giving space for the work of the Holy Spirit;

- **PLANET CONSCIOUS**: we are committed to living on Earth as our fragile home, aware of a new global consciousness and inter-connectedness;

- **WITH A CONSCIENCE**: we are committed to being active in the school community and alive to the social needs and injustices of our society;

- **WITH A HEART**: we are committed to caring for the inner needs of students in their struggles with social, psychological and emotional challenges;

- **AND A DUAL HERITAGE**: we are committed to celebrating our indigenous people and our local Australian roots linking to our inclusive international Lutheran connections with passion and pride.
College Aims

St John’s Lutheran School supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian Democracy, including a commitment to: elected Government; the rule of law; equal rights for all before the law; freedom of religion; freedom of speech and association; the values of openness and tolerance.

As a Lutheran School, St John’s Lutheran School endeavours to achieve its Philosophy of Education through the following aims:

- we will celebrate God’s love and our Lutheran heritage;
- we believe each individual has God-given gifts and talents; students will be encouraged and supported in developing those gifts;
- in our curriculum we will endeavour to provide a broad and appropriate range of subjects and promote innovation and excellence in teaching, learning and pastoral care;
- we wish to operate in partnership with families and the community and prepare students to make a valuable contribution to their local and wider community;
- our college aims to provide a student-centred environment in which students feel safe and are encouraged to serve others in their community with confidence;
- in our holistic approach to students we value equity, diversity, individuality and multiculturalism;
- we recognise our role as environmental stewards and accept responsibility for promoting sustainable practices.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s five-year review cycle.

St John’s Lutheran School acknowledges the use of the following documents in the preparation of its Philosophy & Aims:

- Lifelong Qualities for Learners – A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools.
- Six Challenges: Six Mysteries (for LEA by Norm Habel)
Definitions

*College*: Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School and Kindergarten.

**Rationale**

- The College is committed to providing a place where all people are cared for and kept safe as far as is reasonably practicable. The appointment and training of people (both paid and voluntary) involved in the various programs of the College is integral to ensuring a safe place for all.
- It is the desire of the College that all students in our care are provided with a safe and secure learning environment.

**Aims**

- To ensure the safety of all children and employees at St John’s Lutheran School.
- To ensure that the College supports and works towards the Guiding Principles of the National Safe School Framework. (Appendix 1)
- To ensure the safety of all children at the College, by requiring staff and volunteers to produce the necessary evidence of their suitability to work with children.

**Implementation**

- The requirement for Police Checks or WWC Checks applies to all instances when working in proximity to children.
- With the assistance of the Principal, the Administration team is responsible for creating and maintaining a database of Police Checks, Working With Children Checks, Valuing Safe Communities Training and Occupational Health & Safety briefings for Parents, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

The following safeguards will be implemented at the college:

1. **Police Checks**
   - Police checks report ALL convictions or charges against an individual prior to, and up to the date of the check.
   - Any cost involved in obtaining the Police Check is the responsibility of the applicant.
   - Police Checks will be updated every three years.

2. **Working with Children (WWC) Check**
   - Any cost involved in obtaining the WWC Check is the responsibility of the applicant.
   - The WWC Check does not take the place of a Police Check, and in some circumstances both checks may be required.

**Source of Obligation**

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Victoria) (the Act) aims to protect children from harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them have their suitability to do so checked by a government body.

The Act aims to prevent those who pose a risk to children from working or volunteering with them.
Who Needs a WWC Check?

Subject to the exemptions referred to below, any worker who engages in child-related work that involves direct contact (being physical, face to face or physically being within eyeshot) with a child (being a person under 18 years of age) needs a Working with Children Check (WWC Check).

Additional to the requirements under the WWC Act, as part of the minimum child safe standards St John’s Lutheran School requires that all workers who engage in child-connected work (any authorised work performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present) must have a WWC check. St John’s Lutheran School do not allow some of the exemptions for obtaining a WWC Check that are allowed under the WWC Act.

A WWC Check will apply to any person who is engaged by St John’s Lutheran School, as an employee, a Council member, self-employed person, independent contractor, a volunteer, a supervisor of child employees, part of practical training through an educational or vocational course, unpaid community work under a court order, a minister of religion or performing duties of a religious vocation, an officer of a body corporate, a member of a committee of management of an unincorporated body or a member of a partnership.

What is Child Related Work?

Child-related work is paid or unpaid work involving regular direct and unsupervised contact with a child or caring for children in any of the occupational categories listed in the Act.

The following are considered to be child-related work:

- Mentoring and counselling services for children;
- Direct provision of child health services;
- Clubs, associations, movements, societies or other bodies (including bodies of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature);
- Educational and care services, child care centres, nanny services and other child care;
- Coaching and tuition services for children;
- Any religious organisation where children form part of the congregation;
- Boarding houses or other residential services for children and overnight camps for children;
- Transport services specifically for children, including college bus services and taxi services for children with a disability and supervision of college road crossings;
- Commercial photography services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities;
- Commercial talent competitions for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities; and
- Commercial entertainment or party services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities.

What is Not Considered to be Child Related Work

The following types of work are not considered to be child-related:

- Work as a referee, umpire, linesperson, other sporting official or grounds person is not child-related work, if the work does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods without other adults being present; and
- Providing food or equipment at or for a sporting, cultural or other entertainment venue.

Key Exemptions

People engaged in the following types of work are not required to have a WWC Check:

- Teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).
- Parents or close relatives volunteering in an activity in which their child participates or normally participates. THIS EXEMPTION IS NOT RECOGNISED BY St John’s Lutheran School UNDER THE MINIMUM CHILD SAFE STANDARDS.

- Students, aged 18 or 19, undertaking volunteer work organised or held at College. THIS EXEMPTION IS NOT RECOGNISED BY St John’s Lutheran School UNDER THE MINIMUM CHILD SAFE STANDARDS.

- Victorian or Australian Federal Police officers.

- Workers, who usually live in another state or territory, visiting Victoria to engage in child-related work. THIS EXEMPTION IS NOT RECOGNISED BY St John’s Lutheran School UNDER THE MINIMUM CHILD SAFE STANDARDS.

- Workers engaged in child-related work that requires driver accreditation under the Transport (Compliance And Miscellaneous) Act 1983 (Victoria) who have been granted a children check exemption notice by the Victorian Taxi Services Commission.

- All children under the age of 18.

**How to Apply for a WWC Check?**

A worker is responsible for applying for his or her own WWC Check. An employer cannot apply on behalf of a worker.

To apply:

- Fill out an online application form at [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au);

- Upon completion of the application, you will be provided with an online receipt.

- Take application summary and printed receipt, a passport-sized photo and proof of identity to a participating Australia Post retail outlet.

- If the WWC Check is for paid work, a fee is payable for a five-year clearance. [OPTIONAL: St John’s Lutheran School will reimburse this fee for staff on presentation of a valid receipt.]

- If applying outside Victoria, the following must be posted to the Victorian Department of Justice:
  - An application summary and receipt or the completed paper form signed in front of a certifying officer.
  - A signed statement by a certifying officer confirming they have witnessed your signature.
  - Certified true copies of your identification documents.
  - 2 passport-sized photos, one certified on the back by the certifying officer and the other attached to the application summary or paper form.
  - A bank cheque or money order for the fee if you are a paid worker.

Mail to: Working With Children Check Unit, Department of Justice, GPO Box 1915, Melbourne VIC 3001

**What is Checked?**

The WWC Check obtains applicants' national criminal histories including:

- Convictions (spent or unspent);
- Acquittals because of mental impairment;
- Guilty pleas;
- Juvenile records from when you were under 18 years of age;
- Findings of courts, Corrections Victoria, the Department of Human Services and information from employers or any other source considered relevant;
- Formal findings of guilt; and
- Pending charges.
The criminal offences relevant to a WWC Check are:
- Serious sexual offences;
- Serious violent offences;
- Serious drug-related offences;
- Offences against the Working with Children Act 2005 (Victoria); and
- Offences linked to the safety of children.

**Outcome of the WWC Check**

There are only two results for a WWC Check - a clearance to work with children or a Negative Notice barring an applicant from working with children.

**Clearance**

Where the outcome is a clearance, the applicant will receive a text message on their mobile phone confirming they have passed the Check and will then receive a WWC Check Card in the mail. An Employee WWC Check Card allows workers to engage in any paid or voluntary child-related work. A Volunteer WWC Check Card can only be used for voluntary child-related work. The card, which is valid for five years, has the worker's name, signature, photograph, card number and expiry date.

Cleared applicants will be subjected to ongoing monitoring for relevant new records which could lead to the card being suspended or revoked before the five year expiry date.

**Negative Notice**

Where an applicant has failed the Check, they will be issued with a Negative Notice. The Notice will bar an applicant from engaging in child-related work, even if they are directly supervised, from the date of notice. A copy of the Notice will be sent to all the organisations listed in the application but they will not be notified of the reasons for the Notice.

Once issued with a Negative Notice, an applicant cannot reapply for a WWC Check for five years, unless their circumstances have changed, which can include: a pending charge being withdrawn or dismissed by a court; being found not guilty of a pending charge; being no longer required to report under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Victoria); being no longer subject to an extended supervision or detention order under the Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005 (Victoria) or Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 (Victoria).

Applicants can appeal a Negative Notice by making an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal within 28 days of the decision.

**Worker Obligations**

Upon receiving clearance, it is compulsory that the worker show their WWC Check Card to St John’s Lutheran School and provide their Card and Application Receipt numbers. The worker must notify the Victorian Department of Justice within 21 days of any changes to their name, residential address, birth date or phone numbers provided in the application. The worker must notify the Department of the details of a new organisation they are starting child-related work with within 21 days. The worker must stop working with children immediately if their WWC Check Card has been suspended during a reassessment. The worker must not let another person use their WWC Check Card for child-related work and must lodge a renewal form before the Card expires.

**St John’s Lutheran School’s Obligations**

St John’s Lutheran School must:
- Not engage anyone in child-related work who does not have a WWC Check Card;
Not allow anyone who has a Negative Notice to undertake child-related work, even if they are directly supervised or exempt;
- Set up a process to ensure new staff and volunteers notify the Department within 21 days of commencing child-related work with St John’s Lutheran School; and
- Ensure workers engaged in paid work have an Employee WWC Check Card and not a Volunteer Card.

**Penalties**

It is an offence to work with children without a valid WWC Check Card or Application receipt while your Check is being processed. It is an offence for anyone to apply for or engage in child-related work if they have been issued a Negative Notice. The maximum penalty is two years imprisonment, a fine or both.

The College must take reasonable steps to ensure they do not engage or continue to engage a person in child-related work who does not hold a valid WWC Check Card. The penalty for organisations is a significant fine.

**Record Keeping Obligations**

For the College’s record keeping obligation relating to WWC Checks, refer to Record Keeping.

### COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>WWC Employee NCHR</th>
<th>WWC Volunteer</th>
<th>Police Check NCHR</th>
<th>VIT Registration</th>
<th>VSC</th>
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<tr>
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<td>X (VIT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relieving Teachers</td>
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<td>X (VIT)</td>
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<td>College Councillors</td>
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<td>X (If Possible)</td>
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<td>College Pastors</td>
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<td>Kindergarten Staff</td>
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<td>Ancillary Staff (eg Pastoral Care)</td>
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<td>Administration/Finance Staff</td>
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<td>Contractors (Regular)</td>
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<td>Contractors (Irregular)</td>
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<td>Pre-Service Teachers</td>
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<td>College Excursion Volunteers</td>
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<td>Kindergarten Volunteers</td>
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<td>Visiting performers</td>
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#### 3. LEA VALUING SAFE COMMUNITIES:
- Staff members are required to undertake the LEA Valuing Safe Communities Training as directed by Lutheran Education Australia as a condition of their employment. LEA Valuing Safe Communities Training will be undertaken by new staff members prior to, or as close as practicable to, the commencement date of their employment with the College.

#### 4. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
- The College is committed to providing a service of health and safety to all employees, and recognise it to be the responsibility of management in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and subsequent amendments.
• In fulfilling this responsibility the College recognises its duty to provide and maintain, so far as is practicable, a working environment that minimises risk to health and safety.
  • In so doing the College will:
    ▪ Continually work towards providing and maintaining a safe workplace and systems of work;
    ▪ Continually work towards ensuring that the handling, sorting and transporting of any goods is performed safely;
    ▪ Continually work towards maintaining the workplace in a condition that minimises risk to health and safety;
    ▪ Provide appropriate facilities to protect the welfare of all employees and provide information, instruction, training and supervision in safe work practices;
    ▪ Develop and implement further specific policies relating to Government Regulations and Codes of Practice as required.
• The College expects that employees will take all reasonable care for their own and their colleagues’ health and safety when at work.

5. MAINTAINING BEST SAFE PLACE PRACTICE:
• Undertaking a WWC Check, a Police Check, Valuing Safe Communities Training and Occupational Health and Safety Training is not an end in itself. It is important that all people involved in College programs maintain safe practices and work together for physical, emotional and relational safety.
• Procedures and routines for all College programs and ministries are to provide protection for staff and volunteers and those with whom they work.

6. STAFF AT SCHOOL OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS:
• See Policy Document 5.04 Working Alone Procedure

7. BULLYING & DISCRIMINATION:
• See Policy Document 4.10 Bullying.

Evaluation
• This policy will be reviewed as part of the College’s five-year review cycle.
APPENDIX 1

NATIONAL SAFE SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfill the school’s child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach
Definitions

**College:** Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School and Kindergarten.

**Definition of Abuse**

- Children can be harmed both physically and emotionally. The immediate and long-term effects can be disastrous for the individual child, their family and the community. Early intervention can have a dramatic effect on lessening the harm, and promoting recovery of the child and the family.

- Abuse, neglect and maltreatment are generic terms used to describe situations where a child may need protection.

- From a Child Protection (CP) perspective, using the term ‘harm’ instead of ‘abuse’ helps to focus on the effects on the child rather than the actions of the adult. This distinction becomes important when undertaking an assessment of the child’s ongoing safety and wellbeing, as well as the parents’ capacity to protect the child.

The Department of Human Service’s publication *Responding To Child Abuse* (January 2002) defines child abuse as an act or omission by an adult that endangers or impairs a child’s physical or emotional health and development. Child abuse is not usually a single incident, but can take place over a period of time.

- In Victorian Law, a child or young person is a person under 17 years of age or, if subject to a Children’s Court Order, under 18.

- Types of harm:
  - **Physical Harm** refers to a situation in which a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by the child’s parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment, or physically aggressive treatment of a child. Physical injury and significant harm to a child may also result from neglect by a parent or caregiver. The failure of a parent or caregiver to adequately ensure the safety of a child may expose the child to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations that result in physical injury and significant harm to the child.

  - **Sexual Harm** refers to a situation in which a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity, and the child’s parent or caregiver has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child’s genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

  - **Emotional Harm** refers to a situation in which a child’s parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put-downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child’s physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

  - **Neglect** refers to a situation in which a child’s parent or caregiver fails to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child’s health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.
Rationale

- The College has a duty of care to all the children. Staff must be aware of their roles and responsibilities in reporting and responding to child abuse by immediately notifying Child Protection (CP) if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child is at risk of sexual abuse or physical injury resulting from abuse or neglect.

Aims

- To ensure that children’s rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- To ensure that the staff takes appropriate action in reporting and responding to child abuse.

Implementation

Responsibilities Under Mandatory Reporting Legislation

- In all schools the following professionals have been mandated:
  - primary and secondary teachers and principals
  - school nurses
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2005 requires members of the above professional groups to report cases where they believe, based on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents or caregivers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from such harm.
- Teachers in Victoria are encouraged to share information about vulnerable children who need help by making a referral or a report to ChildFIRST or Child Protection (CP).
- Mandated Notifiers must report this belief and the reasonable grounds for forming it as soon as practicable
  (a) after forming the belief, and
  (b) after each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.
- The person lodging the report does not have to prove that abuse has taken place. The legislative requirement is to report your belief that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer abuse.
- There are prescribed penalties in the Act for non-compliance. The Act is not designed to be punitive however, in blatant cases of neglect or failure to report, proceedings may be brought on an individual by the Police.
- Physical injury resulting from abuse or neglect and sexual abuse must be reported. Where there are concerns that a child is at risk of significant harm from emotional abuse or neglect, these cases should also be discussed with CP.
- Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHS Child Protection.
- The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.
PROCEDURE
See 4.11.1 ‘Mandatory Reporting Flowchart’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Protective Concerns:</strong></th>
<th>You are concerned about a child because you have:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• observed indicators of abuse or neglect</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• been made aware of possible harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At All Times Remember to:
• record your observations
• follow appropriate protocols
• consult notes and records
• consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
• consult with other support agencies if necessary

SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD

- When a child discloses that they have been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry and powerless. You, in turn, may feel anger, shock, revulsion, disbelief, fear, sadness and protectiveness. However it is important to remain calm and in control of your feelings in order to reassure the child that something will be done to keep him or her safe.

- You can show your care and concern by:
  • Listening carefully to what they are saying.
  • Telling the child you believe them.
  • Telling them it is not their fault and they are not responsible for the abuse.
  • Letting the child know that you will make a report to the appropriate authorities so they can stop the abuse.
  • Telling the child you are pleased they told you.
  • If you suspect abuse, but the child has not told anyone, be aware of the emotional distress that the child may be experiencing. Approach the child in a caring and sensitive manner and assure them that you are willing to listen and to help if there is a problem.

- You will not be helping the child if you:
  • Make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone. If you are a mandated professional you are required by law to notify child physical abuse.
  • Push the child into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child wants to tell you and not to conduct an investigation.
  • Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child with others not directly involved in helping the child.

SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHER/REPORTER

- The focus of any meeting that may follow a CP report is on the welfare of the child, not on justifying the actions of the staff member/s involved.

- If a staff member makes a notification in good faith they cannot be held legally liable regardless of the outcome of the notification.

- The college will provide ongoing support for reporting staff as necessary.

- Updates on reporting progress will be shared with the reporting staff member to ensure they are aware of progress.

Resources and information to assist you are found at on the school’s network at Q:\Staff\Mandatory Reporting Resource

HOW TO REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION, VICTORIA

- The booklet, "Providing support to Vulnerable Children and Families" published by Department of Human Services in Feb 2007, outlines the process to follow when making a report or a referral.
[StJ Staff – see Q:\Staff\Mandatory Reporting Resource; GLC Staff – See K:\Mandatory Reporting Resource]

- Contact numbers for:
  - DHS (CP) is 1800 075 599 or 131 278.
  - ChildFIRST – 1300 551 948

- The following information is requested when making a report:
  - the child's name, age and address;
  - the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse;
  - an assessment of immediate danger to the child or children (information may be requested about the whereabouts of the alleged abuser/s);
  - a description of the injury or behaviour observed;
  - the current whereabouts of the child;
  - any other information about the family;
  - your relationship to the child.

- Mandated Notifiers must still notify CP of concerns even if all of the above information is not available. Failure to do this when reasonable grounds on which to form a belief are held is an offence and can incur a penalty.

  All notes to be kept by the Principal/Head of School

**Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the College’s five-year review cycle.
Definition

- **College:** Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School and Kindergarten.
- **Visitor:** A visitor is any person who attends the College during school hours; to make a delivery, visit a class or complete work at the school. Parents arriving before school and after school are not classed as visitors and neither are College staff and College Pastors.

Rationale

- The College seeks to provide an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages visitors. At the same time we recognise our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff, and our responsibility to protect and preserve our resources against theft, vandalism and misuse.
- St John’s Lutheran School is committed to being a Child Safe organisation. St John’s Lutheran School has a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in children’s best interests and in keeping them safe from harm. St John’s Lutheran School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment for our students, staff and resources. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.
- To establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors, whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of the College.

Implementation

- Visitors do not have the freedom of the College buildings and/or grounds and should not assume the liberty of entering classrooms or areas on the College sites without invitation.
- Access to the College will be limited to the Aberdeen Street gate during school hours. (St John’s only)
- Access to the College will be limited to Gate 2 during school hours. (GLC only)
- Clear signage shall be visible at all entrances to the College indicating the ‘Visitor Procedures’.
- When visiting the College, all Visitors must follow the College procedures governing entry and behaviour on College grounds, including any restrictions that may be imposed.
  a. All visitors and volunteers must report on arrival to the College Administration Office to sign-in and obtain a visitor’s badge
  b. After the visit visitors and volunteers must sign-out at the Administration office and return the visitor badge
  c. College functions involving large numbers of visitors, such as Presentation Days, Grandparents Day, Open Days, Fetes, and the like are excluded from signing in procedures
- ‘Visitor’ badges are to be visibly displayed whilst on the College premises.
- Guided tours for visitors should be made by appointment.
• Visitors are required to make appointments in advance rather than expecting to obtain an interview immediately.

• Visitors need to consult with the appropriate staff member before any student is engaged in formal discussion. We encourage students to be courteous and helpful to visitors, but not engage in any other matters without staff approval.

• Visitors are expected to:
  • Be outstanding role models for all students
  • Work under the professional direction of staff, following College policies
  • Speak in a kind and friendly manner to all students and staff
  • Maintain confidentiality
  • Report any issues of concern to teachers, but must not directly intervene
  • Keep a safe and professional distance from all students.

*Related Documents*

• This Policy is subject to:
  • 4.30 Child Protection & Safety Policy
  • 4.30.1 Child Protection Procedures
  • 4.30.2 Child Safety Code of Conduct

*Evaluation*

• This policy will be reviewed as part of the College’s five-year review cycle.

*Acknowledgements:*  Victory Lutheran College, Wodonga
Rydalmere East Public School, Rydalmere NSW
Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child’s exposure to family violence. The College is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

At the College we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children’s best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Definitions

**College:** Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School and Kindergarten

**What is child abuse?** Child abuse is an act by parents or caregivers which endangers a child or young person’s physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time.

In Victoria, under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 a child or young person is a person under eighteen years of age.

**Physical abuse:** Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child’s parent or carer. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

**Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity and the child’s parent or carer has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child’s genitals, masturabation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

**Emotional abuse:** Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or carer repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent or carer, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

**Neglect:** Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

**Family violence:** When dealing with children it is important to remember that ‘family violence’ extends to behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of ‘family violence’.
As family violence can result in one or more forms of child abuse (being sexual offences, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect) the physical and behavioural indicators of these types of abuse may also be indicative of a family violence situation.

Rationale

- The College is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Everyone working at the College is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Child Safe Principles

The School’s commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

- All children have the right to be safe.
- The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
- The views of the child and a child’s privacy must be respected.
- Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct (Procedure 4.30.2) and Staff and 5.22 Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
- The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
- Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community.
- Procedures are in place to screen all staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers, as all are involved in child-connected work.
- Child safety and protection is everyone’s responsibility.
- Child protection training is mandatory for all School Council members, staff and volunteers.
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
- All children, especially those who are vulnerable for whatever reason, have a right to care and support.
- Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

Aims

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the School;
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the School; and
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

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1 There may be some specific circumstances were a third party contractor may not be screened by the school. If this occurs specific processes will be put in place to ensure that the un-screened contractor will not be left unsupervised in the school grounds at any time.
Implementation – Child Protection Program

The 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 protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening School Council members staff and volunteers
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities
- a child protection training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- a system for continuous improvement and review

As a part of the College’s induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.

All staff, volunteers and School Council members are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the School’s Child Safety Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the School’s approach to child protection.

Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone’s responsibility. At the College all members of the School Council and staff, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

School Council

The School Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School’s Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal and management team accountable for effective implementation.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the School’s Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the School.
The School’s Child Safety Officers
A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School’s Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Staff Members
All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual’s responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School’s Child Safety Officers.

Volunteers
All Volunteers (people who voluntarily engage in curriculum related work without remuneration or reward), are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual’s responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School’s Child Safety Officers.

Third Party Contractors
All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the service provider.

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 children in the School environment.

All external education providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

The College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

Reporting Concerns
Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for members of the School Council, staff and volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School’s nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School’s Child Safety Officers.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a “need to know basis”.

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

Related Policies and Procedures
- Risk Management Program
• Compliance Program
• Human Resources Program
• Student Care Program
• Occupational Health & Safety Program
• Child Protection Staff Training
• Recruitment & Selection Procedures
• Induction Procedures

**Evaluation – Policy & Program Review**

The 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.

• This policy will be reviewed as part of the College’s five-year review cycle.
Procedural Document

Responding & Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

Child abuse can take many forms. The abuser may be a parent, carer, staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. Unfortunately the nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Even our legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse can vary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

The College will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all allegations or disclosures of abuse, neglect, inappropriate behaviour or concerns about child safety by reporting all matters to the Victorian Child Protection Service or the Police, depending on the allegation or disclosure made.

St John’s Lutheran School has established simple and accessible procedures for anyone to report a child abuse concern internally to one of the College’s Child Safety Officers.

St John’s Lutheran School has developed and implemented procedures for Council members, staff and volunteers for responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse, or suspected child abuse, including procedures for support following a disclosure by a student.

Reporting procedures for third party contractors, external education providers, parents/carers and other community members are also included in our Child Protection and Safety Policy which is available on our public website.

Age appropriate reporting procedures for students are developed through our pastoral care program.

This section describes our work systems, practices, policies and procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse both internally and externally. These include:

- Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Protection Incident
- Reporting a Child Abuse Concern Internally
- General Legal Obligation to “Act to Protect” and to Report Child Sexual Abuse
- Mandatory Reporting
- Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT)
- Record Keeping
- Confidentiality & Privacy

All of the College’s procedures for reporting and responding to allegation of child abuse are designed and implemented taking into account the diverse characteristics of the College community.

A summary of these procedures are made publicly available on the College’s website through our Child Protection and Safety Policy and are accessible to all children, school staff and the wider community.

The College will respond to all allegations of child abuse in an appropriate manner including:
• informing the appropriate authorities and fully cooperating with any resulting investigation;
• protecting any child connected to the allegation until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected;
• taking particular measures in response to an allegation that concerns a culturally diverse child or a child with a disability; and
• securing and retaining records of the allegation and the College’s response to it.

Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Protection Incident

The following sections outline the four ways that you may become aware that a child may be experiencing abuse and strategies for managing each situation, and information on supporting and assisting children involved in the disclosure or report.

Observation of Risk Indicators

The different types of child abuse and their key risk indicators are set out in detail in the earlier section of this program Child Abuse – Definition and Key Risk Indicators.

The process of identifying child abuse purely through observation of risk indicators can be complex and may occur over time. The complexity is magnified by the fact that many of the key risk indicators described may also occur as a result of other factors, not related to child abuse.

If you form a concern that a child may be being abused you should make written notes of your observations recording both dates and times. You should also report the matter internally to a College Child Safety Officer.

Private Disclosure by a Child

If a student discloses a situation of abuse or neglect to you privately, you should stay calm and not display expressions of panic or shock

You should reassure and support the child. You can do this by:

• stating clearly that the abuse is not the child’s fault;
• reassuring the child that you believe them; and
• telling the child that disclosing the matter is the right thing to do.

You should be patient, and allow the child to talk at their own pace. When responding you should use the child’s language and vocabulary.

Sometimes a student may try to elicit a promise from you that you will not tell anyone about the allegation. You must not make this promise, as you are responsible for reporting the matter.

Finally remember that your role is not to investigate the allegation. You should not interrogate the child and pressure them to tell you more than they want to.

Once a disclosure is made you must report the matter internally to a College Child Safety Officer as soon as possible. You should also make written notes of the circumstances of the disclosure recording both dates and times.

Following a disclosure of abuse or neglect by a student, staff should follow the steps set out in the College’s Support Following Disclosure policy.
Public Disclosure by a Child

Public disclosure occurs where you observe a child disclosing abuse to another child, or group of children.

In this circumstance you should use a strategy of “protective interrupting”.

The aim of “protective interrupting” is to prevent a child from disclosing details of abuse in front of other children, whilst at the same time providing the child with the opportunity to disclose later, in a safe and confidential manner.

You can do this by:
- asking the child if you can talk privately; and
- moving the child away from the other students to a quiet space,

and then following the guidelines with respect to managing a private disclosure.

Following a disclosure of abuse or neglect by a student, staff should follow the steps set out in the College’s Support Following Disclosure policy.

Third Party Disclosure

A third party such as a friend of the child, a relative or another parent may provide you with information relating to child abuse.

In this situation you should:
- listen to the person’s concerns seeking clarification where required;
- thank the person for raising their concern;
- advise the person that we have procedures for dealing with situations like this; and
- advise the person that you will discuss their concerns with the relevant authorities.

As with Private Disclosure you should reassure and support the person providing the information.

Sometimes a person may try to elicit a promise from you that you will not tell anyone about the allegation. You must not make this promise, as you are responsible for reporting the matter.

Finally remember that your role is not to investigate the allegation. You should not interrogate the third party and pressure them to tell you more than they want to.

Once a third party disclosure is made you must report the matter internally to a College Child Safety Officer as soon as possible. You should also make written notes of the circumstances of the disclosure recording both dates and times.

Support Following Disclosure

You should take the following steps to support and assist a child after a disclosure of child abuse or neglect is made.

The range of measures employed will depend on:
- the degree of severity of the situation;
- the risk of harm to the child; and
- the capability and willingness of the parent to protect the child from harm.

After a disclosure is made:
- do not promise the child that you will not tell anyone about the allegation;
• reassure the child that it was the right thing to do to tell an adult;
• tell the child what you plan to do next;
• do not confront the person believed to be the perpetrator;
• report the matter to one of the College's Child Safety Officers who will be able to assist you in developing additional support strategies; and
• whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Reporting a Child Abuse Concern Internally

Child abuse situations can be very complex, not only from the perspective of ascertaining whether abuse has occurred but also in understanding what steps to take to protect a child.

It is important to remember at all times that the safety and welfare of the child are paramount.

Therefore, if you have a concern that a child may be experiencing abuse, whether or not you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the abuse has occurred, you should immediately raise your concerns with one of the College's Child Safety Officers. The College's Child Safety Officers will be able to assist you in clarifying your concerns and managing the next steps.

Please note that reporting the matter internally does not release you from other legal and regulatory reporting obligations you may have, namely:

• The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence
• The Obligation to Act to Protect; and
• The Obligation to Make a Mandatory Report.

General Legal Obligations to Report Child Sexual Abuse and “Act to Protect”

In Victoria there are specific criminal offences which impose general obligations on persons:

• aged 18 years or over to report any belief that a sexual offence has been committed, against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person over the age of 18 years (Crimes Act (Vic) s327); and
• in a position of authority within a school to act to remove or reduce a substantial risk that a sexual offence will be committed against a child (Crimes Act (Vic) s49C).

The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence

Source of Obligation

Under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (s 327), anyone aged 18 years or over must make a report to the Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years, by a person aged 18 years or over. Failure to make a report without reasonable excuse is an offence and carries a prison term.

If a report is made to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in accordance with mandatory reporting requirements, an additional report to the Police will not usually be required unless further information is obtained.

This obligation applies to anyone aged 18 years or over, including all non-teaching staff, volunteers, and students aged 18 and over. The legislation also applies to teaching staff if not already covered by the mandatory reporting obligation.
**What Must Be Reported?**

Any person aged 18 or over who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult (a person aged 18 years or over) against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to the Police.

**What is a Sexual Offence?**

The Crimes Act sets out what constitutes a "sexual offence". This includes:

- rape;
- indecent assault;
- incest;
- sexual penetration; and
- grooming a child for sexual conduct.

A "sexual offence" includes an attempted sexual offence.

**What is a Reasonable Belief?**

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

A ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused;
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- someone who knows the child states that the child has been sexually abused; and
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

**Exceptions - Failure to Disclose**

If you fail to disclose a sexual offence against a child to the Police, you will not be held liable where your reason for not reporting is that:

- you fear on reasonable grounds for the safety of any person (other than the offender), and a failure to report is reasonable;
- the victim told you about the sexual offence (directly or indirectly), the victim was over 16 years old when he or she told you about the sexual offence, and the victim requested that the information not be disclosed (unless the victim has an intellectual disability and does not have the capacity to make an informed decision about this);
- you believe on reasonable grounds that the information has already been disclosed to the Police by another person (such as to the DHHS as part of mandatory reporting) and you have no further information.

Unacceptable reasons for not reporting include if you are concerned with the interests (including the reputation, legal liability or financial status) of:

- the person involved in the sexual offence; or
- any organisation (such as the College).
A report made under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) mandatory reporting obligations may constitute a 'reasonable excuse' if you believe that you have no further information to provide to the Police.

The Obligation to Act to Protect

Source of obligation

Where a person in a position of authority at the College becomes aware that a staff member, volunteer, contractor, or other person associated with the College poses a substantial risk of committing a sexual offence against a student or students, the person has a duty to take immediate action to ensure that the student or students are protected from that risk.

The College has a duty of care which entails protecting all students from foreseeable risks while at school or engaging in College activities.

In addition, under section 49C of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (Crimes Act) a person who:

a) by reason of the position they occupy at the College, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child (under the age of 16) will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of or over the age of 18 years who is associated with the College; and

b) knows that there is a substantial risk that the person will commit a sexual offence against a relevant child,

must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk.

Who is responsible for acting to protect the student/s?

The person responsible for taking steps to remove or reduce the risk to the student will depend upon the source of the risk. In a normal school context usually a member of the school leadership team would have the necessary degree of supervision, power and authority to remove or reduce the risk. On tours, excursions, or camps a teacher or a volunteer coach could have the requisite power and responsibility.

Examples of people in a position of authority include:

- College Council members
- the Principal
- members of the College leadership team
- teachers
- volunteers where they are in a position of supervision

When should action be taken?

A person in a position of authority at St John’s Lutheran School is required to act if they know that there is a substantial risk that a student or students may become the victim of a sexual offence, and the risk is caused by a person associated with the College.

Knowledge is more than holding a tentative belief or mere suspicion.

If a person in authority has a suspicion or belief that students are at risk of harm they must take steps to follow up on that suspicion or belief by investigating further and should raise the issue with a College Child Safety Officer.

The duty to act extends to situations where the students at risk or the person in authority is outside of Victoria.
What is a substantial risk?

A risk will be a substantial risk if a reasonable person would have judged the risk of a sexual offence being committed against the student as being substantial.

It is not necessary to prove that a sexual offence was committed in order for the substantial risk to exist i.e. a person in a position of authority should not wait for a student to be harmed before acting.

A number of factors will contribute to determining if a risk is a substantial risk, including:

- the likelihood or probability that a child will become the victim of a sexual offence;
- the nature of the relationship between a child and the adult who may pose a risk to the child;
- the background of the adult who may pose a risk to the child, including any past or alleged misconduct;
- any vulnerabilities particular to a child which may increase the likelihood that they may become the victim of a sexual offence; and
- any other relevant fact which may indicate a substantial risk of a sexual offence being committed against a child.

What is a sexual offence?

Action must be taken where there is a substantial risk of sexual offences occurring, including:

- rape;
- indecent assault;
- incest;
- sexual penetration;
- grooming a child for sexual conduct; and
- an attempted sexual offence or an assault with intent to commit a sexual offence.

Who is “a person associated with the school”?

A person associated with the College is an adult and can be a:

- College Council members
- Principal
- teacher
- boarding house supervisor
- employee
- volunteer (including parents)
- contractor

A person will not be considered to be associated with the College purely because they receive services from the College.

Procedure to reduce or remove a substantial risk

Where any staff member, volunteer, or other person in a position of authority at the time, becomes aware of a risk of a sexual offence against a student or students under their care, they should immediately:
- take reasonable steps which would remove or reduce the risk to the student or students, which may include immediately removing the person from contact with the student or students;
- report the matter to a College Child Safety Officer, and the Principal, as soon as practicable so that an investigation can be conducted; and
- make the appropriate report.

Appropriate action to be taken may include, for example:
- a current employee who is known to pose a risk to a student or students should be immediately removed from contact with students and reported to authorities and investigated.
- a parent who is known to pose a risk of sexual abuse to children in a school should not be allowed to attend overnight school camps as a parent helper.

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

**Mandatory Reporting**

See Policy 4.11 Mandatory Reporting.

**Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching**

**Reportable Conduct**

The College has a duty of care to investigate and act on allegations of employee misconduct or conviction which relate to their ability to perform their functions.

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Victoria), the College must notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) once the College has taken action against a registered teacher. The VIT then has powers to investigate and take further action.

**Reportable Conduct & Mandatory Reporting**

The Reportable Conduct obligation covered in this policy is separate and distinct from the Mandatory Reporting obligation under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Victoria) (refer to [Mandatory Reporting](#)).

**Internal Reporting of Allegations of Staff Misconduct**

Any allegation of staff misconduct must be immediately reported to the Principal, or the Chair of the College Council should the allegation involve the Principal.

**Internal Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct**

Once an allegation of misconduct has been made (which does not require reporting to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection under the Mandatory Reporting obligations) an internal investigation, lead by the Principal, or the Chair of the Council if the allegation relates to the Principal, will be conducted in such a manner as the particular circumstances demand.

It is important to note that an internal investigation must not be conducted in relation to an allegation that is the subject of Mandatory Reporting until clearance is given by the relevant authorities (Police or DHHS Child Protection).
Reporting Obligation to the VIT

The College must notify the VIT if the College has taken action against a registered teacher in response to:

- allegations of serious misconduct;
- serious incompetence;
- fitness to teach (which relates to character, reputation and conduct, and whether the teacher is physically and mentally able to teach); or
- a registered teacher’s ability to practice as a teacher is seriously detrimentally affected or likely to be seriously affected because of an impairment.

The College must also notify the VIT if the College becomes aware that a teacher:

- has been charged with or committed for trial for a sexual offence, (including grooming and child pornography offences);
- has been convicted or found guilty of an indictable offence (offences detailed in the Crimes Act and the Wrongs Act, including offences which carry prison sentences of 5 years or more or penalties over a threshold level).

The College should also notify the VIT if a teacher takes action against them in another forum such as the Fair Work Commission.

What “Action” Must Be Reported

"Actions" which will be reported by the College to the VIT include (but are not limited to):

- disciplinary action taken by the College; or
- where a teacher resigns after being advised by the College that it is inquiring into allegations.

When to Notify the VIT

The VIT should be notified of the action taken against a teacher once the process initiated by the College has been initiated.

VIT Response

On receiving the notification, the VIT has the power to:

- ensure that it has obtained all relevant information from the College, and may request further information;
- decide whether the matter does not reach the threshold required for it to proceed;
- conduct an investigation, an informal hearing, or a formal hearing; or
- summarily suspend the teacher on an interim basis pending an investigation, if the VIT forms a reasonable belief that the teacher poses an unacceptable risk of harm to children and believes that suspension is necessary to protect children.

A formal hearing may result in findings which can result in cautions, reprimands, conditions imposed including counselling and further education, suspension, cancellation of registration and/or a period of disqualification.

Impact on Working With Children Check

Where an employee, volunteer, or contractor has been charged with or found guilty of a serious sexual, violent or drug-related offence (including grooming and child pornography offences) (Category 1 or
Category 2 offence in the Working with Children Act 2005) their Working with Children card will be revoked and they will not be able to work, or volunteer to work with children.

Confidentiality & Privacy

Confidentiality of Information Relating to Child Protection Matters
Anyone who has access to information regarding a case of suspected child abuse must keep such information confidential and secure and must only disclose or discuss this information with those involved in managing the situation.

You must not provide undertakings that are inconsistent with their reporting obligations in the College’s Child Protection Program. In particular, you must not promise a student that you will not tell anyone about the student’s disclosure.

Students and any other parties who become involved in the investigation (this may include other students) should be informed of the reporting process and be required to maintain confidentiality.

Inappropriate disclosure will be subject to disciplinary action.

Protection of Reporter’s Identity
Reports or referrals made to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST are confidential and the reporter’s identity is generally protected by law. Exceptions include if:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child or family of the report;
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed;
- a court or tribunal decides it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child; or
- a court or tribunal decides the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence.

The identity of the person who makes a report to the Police, including reports under s 327 of the Crimes Act (Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence), will remain confidential unless:

- the person themself discloses their identity or they consent in writing to their identity being disclosed; or
- a court or tribunal decides that it is necessary in the interests of justice for the person’s identity to be disclosed.

Reporter Liability
A person who makes a mandatory report in accordance with the Children, Youth and Families Act will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation.

If a report is made in good faith it does not constitute a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter and the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

Protection of Staff’s WWCC Status
The College will only be informed of whether an individual passes or fails the Check. None of the information gathered for the Check, such as criminal or professional records, will be passed on to St John’s Lutheran School.

Protection of Personal Information
How St John’s Lutheran School handles the information we collect about individuals (referred to in the Privacy Act as personal information) is very important, as the people we deal with expect us to handle their
personal information properly and we have a legal obligation to do so. Personal information is information, or an opinion, about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- whether the information, or opinion, is true or not; and
- whether the information, or opinion, is recorded in a material form or not.

The Privacy Act only applies to personal information that is captured in a record.

**Record Keeping**

**Documenting a suspicion or belief of abuse**

Where a staff member, Council member or volunteer forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a student is in need of protection, written and dated notes of their observations and concerns should be recorded to assist in a referral/report of child abuse.

All verbal and written communications regarding child protection matters (including notes of observations, student disclosures, meetings and telephone calls) must be properly documented. The documented records should include dates and times and enough detail to record key conversations, especially those relating to the student’s disclosure.

The records of child protection must be stored securely.

**Working with Children Check Documentation**

It is the responsibility of *Insert Name and Position* to verify the status of all School staff and volunteers’ Working with Children Checks (WWC Checks).

St John’s Lutheran School maintains records (electronic or hard copy format) of child-related workers including:

- Full name;
- WWC Check Application Receipt Number;
- WWC Check Card Number;
- Date and outcome of WWC Check clearance;
- Notices sent by the Department of Justice; and
- Expiry date.

Records must be readily available if required for audit and monitoring purposes.

**Disciplinary Procedures**

Where a staff member breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Program, St John’s Lutheran School may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

Where any other member of the College community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Program, St John’s Lutheran School may take appropriate action.

**Continuous Improvement and Review**

St John’s Lutheran School is committed to continuous improvement in all its operations including this Child Protection Program.
It is the responsibility of the Principal to regularly review our Child Protection Program to ensure that it is working in practice and that the College is meeting its legal and regulatory obligations relating to child protection.
Procedural Document

Child Safety Code of Conduct

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, St John’s Lutheran School may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal. The College revises the Code annually.

St John’s Lutheran School has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students within our College community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Council members, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers and parents/carers.

Management, staff, volunteers and contractors at the College are required to abide by this Code.

**DO:**

- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for students.
- Comply with guidelines published by the College with respect to child protection.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.
- Use positive and affirming language toward students.
- Encourage students to ‘have a say’ and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect all differences, especially (but not limited to) cultural, religious and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the College’s Child Safety Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student’s safety.
• Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

**DO NOT**

• Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
• Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students.
• Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
• Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
• Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
• Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
• Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
• Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
• Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
• Develop ‘special’ relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
• Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
• Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
• Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
• Post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
• Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

**Volunteers**

In a school situation, the principal and the teachers have been given the responsibility of duty of care of the students enrolled in the college. Having this duty of care, the principal and the teachers are responsible for the physical safety of the students and their emotional wellbeing while they are in attendance at the College.

Throughout the school year volunteers and parent aides are encouraged to assist in college programs and activities in various ways. Because of the nature of a school, these volunteers/parent aides usually are involved with students in some way. This Code of Practice is to provide guidance for persons serving as volunteers/parent aides.

• The principal and teachers, having the duty of care of the students, are always in charge.
• It is strongly recommended that volunteers arrange for toddlers and other students to be supervised privately so they can devote their full attention to the task at hand.
• The volunteer/Parent Aide should refer all disciplinary procedures to the Principal/Head of School/teacher in charge.

• The volunteer/parent aide will work under the direction of the Principal/Head of School and/or teacher in charge of any students that may be involved.

• The volunteer/parent aide will at all times reinforce the directions and teachings of the Principal/Head of School/teacher.

• The volunteer/parent aide will respect confidentiality of information they may be aware of.

• Volunteers must act in accordance with the norms and expectations of the school, as provided in the orientation, and uphold the Lutheran/Christian ethos of the College.

• The College reserves the right to determine the best way for volunteers to be utilised within the school.

• Volunteers must always be under direct teacher supervision whilst volunteering in the school.

• All volunteers are required to complete Lutheran Education’s Valuing Safe Communities training prior to commencement of volunteer duties.

Our Child Protection Program includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy that provides detailed guidance for all staff and volunteers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at St John’s Lutheran School.

**Professional Boundaries**

St John’s Lutheran School is committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment where all of our students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner where the risk of child abuse is minimised and a safe and supportive child safe environment is maintained.

This policy applies to all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Council members, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers (together, known as “staff” for the purposes of this section only).

It is our policy that:

• staff exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with students at all times;

• staff identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student;

• staff interaction with students is professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours;

• conflict of interest issues must be reported to the Principal as soon as practicable;

• equal learning opportunities are given to each student without discrimination;

• appropriate consequences will be applied to staff who breach professional boundaries.

**What happens if you breach this Code of Conduct**

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

**Report any concerns**

• The Program also includes information for members of the College Council, staff and volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College’s nominated Child Safety Officers.

• It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.
• Third party contractors, external education providers, students, parents or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College’s Child Safety Officers.

• Communications will be treated confidentially on a ‘need to know basis’.

**Reviewing**

• Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation’s child protection policies, procedures or Code of Conduct require modification to better protect the children under the organisation’s care.

**YES**  **N/A** Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Contractors.

☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Volunteer’s Policy.

☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Visitor’s Policy.

☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

**Related Documents**

• Risk Management Policy
• Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy
• Volunteer’s policy
• Visitor’s Policy
• The College’s Child Protection Policy & Procedures;

Signed  ________________________________  Dated  ________________________________
Risk Management Strategies

St John’s Lutheran School has implemented the following risk mitigation strategies to ensure that the College maintains a proactive approach to our duty of care in protecting children from harm and comply with our legal and regulatory obligations:

- this Child Protection Program, including our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- a comprehensive Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy, implemented through training and communicated publicly
- induction and ongoing training provided to staff, Council members and volunteers, at least annually, about identifying risks of child abuse in the College environment, their obligations and responsibilities for managing these risks, how to report and respond to child protection incidents, and the College’s current child safety standards
- the appointment of the College’s Child Safety Officers who are “Child Protection Champions” at the College and receive specialised, additional training to ensure that any concerns about child safety and protection in the College environment held by students, staff, volunteers and parents may be discussed in a safe and supportive environment
- extensive policies and procedures relating to excursions and camps ensuring that child protection risks specific to excursions and overnight stays are identified and controls are put in place
- ongoing, periodic reviews of all physical College environments to eliminate physical isolation risks, such as solid classroom doors or rooms with no windows, or implement procedural controls where elimination is not possible
- specific procedures for verifying the Working with Children Check status of all external providers and third party contractors, who may have direct unsupervised contact with students, to ensure that students remain safe in all College environments both internal and external to the College grounds
- a system of assurance through which risks of child abuse, and actions taken to reduce or remove these risks (risk controls), are recorded. The system is also used to monitor risk controls and to evaluate their overall effectiveness on a regular basis.

St John’s Lutheran School’s Assurance System

The College has developed and implemented an online Assurance system as one strategy to manage the risk of child abuse in College environments.

Our Assurance system is an online risk and compliance workflow management tool that integrates with our Child Protection Program to provide a system of risk management, compliance and continuous improvement based on international standards.

Through this system key compliance obligations are captured and converted into plain English questions that are assigned via email to responsible individuals for action. Each individual is provided with a calendar...
view of their compliance performance via an online browser. Unactioned tasks are escalated and reported to allow the College to monitor its compliance performance in real time.
Participation and Empowerment of Children

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable, or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. St John’s Lutheran School recognises that in order to achieve a child safe environment at the College which meets students’ intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral needs, students need to be involved in the creation and maintenance of such an environment.

It is our policy that we have simple and accessible processes in place to assist children (including those from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with a disability) to develop appropriate knowledge and skills to identify and communicate when they do not feel safe.

This is done through various work systems, practices, policies and procedures. These include:

- Pastoral Care – Child Protection
- Students with a Disability
- Cultural Diversity

**Pastoral Care - Child Protection**

Pastoral care is the support given to students for their development as a person. It relates to the total care of students and involves tending to both the academic and non-academic needs of students including spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing. St John’s Lutheran School’s complete Pastoral Care Policy can be found [here](#).

St John’s Lutheran School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and social environment where students feel nurtured as they learn.

To this end, we have developed, and continue to develop, a comprehensive range of pastoral care policies and procedures that are designed to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of our students, and to deliver age appropriate education to all students about:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- child abuse awareness and a child’s right to be safe
- a child’s right to make decisions about their body and their privacy
- how they can raise concerns about abuse
- resilience and coping with adversity
- the fact that any concerns they do raise will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately
- our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
- standards of behaviour for students

We are committed to ensuring that child abuse reporting procedures are age appropriate, simple, and accessible for all children including children from culturally diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

Information about these topics, as well as other child safety and wellbeing topics, is made available to all students through various age appropriate pastoral care initiatives. Child safety and wellbeing topics are also incorporated into the College’s curriculum.
**Students with a Disability**

The College has an obligation to students with a disability to ensure that they are afforded the same level of educational and pastoral care as any other student at the College and considers how each policy and procedure the College establishes and implements may affect students with a disability.

St John’s Lutheran School is committed to ensuring that we fulfil our legal obligations including those related to discrimination and disability standards (refer to our [Disability Discrimination Policy](#)).

The College recognises that students with a disability will not only require additional assistance to participate and engage in College activities in a safe and supportive manner, but also that there are specific child protection risks that arise in relation to students with a disability. This may include for example, stricter screening procedures and training for staff who assist students who require help with personal activities such as toileting or dressing.

**Cultural Diversity**

Children from culturally diverse backgrounds are children who identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents’ identification on a similar basis. They include children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent that identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

St John’s Lutheran School values and respects the racial and cultural diversity of our students and is committed to ensuring that the backgrounds of all students are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued so that racial and cultural differences do not compromise a student’s safety and wellbeing.

It is our policy that:

- we identify children from culturally diverse backgrounds when they are enrolled in the College
- we employ appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of these children as required
- we encourage participation and empowerment of these children in the development of these strategies
- we consider these children when developing and implementing policies and procedures related to child protection at the College
- we educate our staff about these cultural differences and the strategies and procedures we have employed.
St John’s Lutheran School has adopted a number of key strategies as controls for identifying and removing child protection risks and to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Child Safety Related Human Resources Practices

In addition to ensuring Working With Children Checks are completed in accordance with our legal obligations, St John’s Lutheran School is committed to ensuring that newly recruited and existing staff, Council members and volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of all relevant policies and procedures, and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.

This is done through various human resources work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to protect children from abuse and create a child safe culture. These include:

- Child Safe Recruitment Practices
- Working with Children Checks
- Child Protection Training
- Cultural Awareness of Child Protection Issues
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

Child Safe Recruitment Practices
See Policy 5.21 Staff Recruitment

Working with Children Checks
See Policy 4.09 Safe School

Child Protection Training
St John’s Lutheran School recognises that without training and education of our staff, Council members and volunteers, our policies and procedures will not operate to effectively keep our students safe and protect them from abuse.

St John’s Lutheran School staff, Council members and volunteers receive child protection training when they first commence their role at the College and are required to complete ongoing training on child protection issues at least annually.

All staff, Geelong Lutheran Schools’ members and volunteers are required to undertake role-appropriate training through our Child Protection Training course which consists of the following modules:

Module 1 - An Overview of Our Child Protection Program
Module 2 - The Meaning of Child Abuse and its Key Risk Indicators
Module 3 - The Legal and Regulatory Framework for Child Protection in Victoria
Module 4 - Victorian Child Safe Standards
Module 5 - Our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
Module 6 - How to Respond to a Child Protection Incident
Module 7 - Child Protection Reporting
Module 8 - Working with Children Checks
Module 9 - Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

The College's Child Safety Officers, and other selected staff, undertake additional training as considered appropriate to their roles.

Cultural Awareness

At St John’s Lutheran School we believe that the safety of children is dependent on the existence of a child safe culture within our College community. We have developed the following work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to create a child safe culture including:

- a holistic approach to child protection through this Child Protection Program
- the appointment of the College's Child Safety Officers
- establishing key child protection principles in our Child Protection and Safety Policy
- establishing clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with students through our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- educating our staff and Direct Contact Volunteers through our Child Protection Training
- clear procedures for reporting alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse
- recognition that children from culturally diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- recognition that children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support
- clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in protecting children.

Staff and Student professional Boundaries

See policy 5.22 Staff and Student Professional Boundaries.
STAFF INDUCTION PROGRAM

Definition

- **College**: Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School and Kindergarten.

Rationale

- Formal induction programs for new and returning teachers provide them with support, direction, contacts, feedback and essential information while building both confidence and performance.

- St John’s Lutheran School is committed to being a Child Safe organisation. St John’s Lutheran School has a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in children’s best interests and in keeping them safe from harm. St John’s Lutheran School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Aims

- To provide new and returning staff with the support, direction and information that will allow them to be fully effective and comfortable in their new role.

- To establish productive and harmonious working relationships with colleagues.

Implementation

- At St John’s Lutheran School we are committed to ensuring that our staff provide a safe environment for our students. To this end we have established policies and procedures for inducting employees, Council members and Volunteers and for continually preparing and reviewing their suitability to work with children.

- The College Principal is responsible for ensuring each newly appointed staff member, or staff returning from extended leave, undertakes a supportive and effective induction program.

- Skilled and experienced staff members with strong communication and interpersonal skills will be used as mentors for each beginning or returning staff member.

- The induction program consists of three phases. The program for experienced staff members will focus mainly on Stages 1 and 2, whilst graduate appointments will need the three stages of induction. Staff members returning from extended leave will need a modified induction program according to their individual needs.

1. **The Preliminary Stage** – (On receiving appointment)
   A formal orientation visit and meeting of key staff

2. **The Initial Stage** – (Introduction to the school)
   Formal welcome from staff, introduction to mentor, administrative tasks completed, handbook provided to staff member, functional requirements (timetables, class lists, photocopier details, yard duty etc) and explanation of the induction program.

3. **Introduction to Role** – (Active support for the new staff as required)
   Assistance may be given with regard to practical aspects of the role.
Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed by the leadership team in light of feedback received at the conclusion of each induction program.

Sources and Related Policies

- 5.10 Professional Development Policy
Definitions

College: Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School and Kindergarten

Aims

- The aim of this Code of Conduct is to support College staff and to demonstrate their professional status. In all our dealings we must behave in a manner that reflects Christian Principles of compassion, sensitivity, honesty and grace.
- Specific responsibilities in relation to students will vary but the underlying principles of care and respect apply to all staff.
- To promote and protect the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Implementation

- The College utilises Lutheran Education’s Code of Ethics (5.15.1) and should be read prior to signing this document.
- Teachers also are expected to comply with the Victorian Institute of Teaching’s, Victorian Teaching Profession’s Code of Conduct (5.15.2) and should be read prior to signing this document.

**DO:**

- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for students.
- Comply with guidelines published by the College with respect to child protection.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.
- Use positive and affirming language toward students.
- Encourage students to ‘have a say’ and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect all differences, especially (but not limited to) cultural, religious and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the College’s Child Safety Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met.
Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.

Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student’s safety.

Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

**DO NOT**

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop ‘special’ relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

**Responsibilities to Students**

**Teaching Staff**

I must make my foremost responsibility the education and welfare of all students in my care. As a member of the collective body of teachers I am responsible for the intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development of the students in my care.

This means that as a member of the teaching staff I will:

- Regard the lifelong learning of students as the main goal of my teaching.
- Strive for “Best Practice” in terms of classroom methodology and delivery.
- Recognise, respect and promote an understanding of diversity.

**All Staff**

As a member of the (College) Staff I will:
• Create and maintain appropriate professional relationships with students.
• Respect the uniqueness and dignity of each student.
• Protect students’ rights to privacy and confidentiality.

Responsibilities to Parents/Caregivers and Families
I must build appropriate relationships with student families in order to develop a partnership approach to each student’s welfare and education.

This means that I:
• Foster relationships with parents based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication.
• Treat student and family information with an appropriate level of confidentiality.
• Respect parent/caregiver rights in terms of information sharing and mutual consultation in regards to their students.

Commitment to Colleagues
I must actively foster trust and mutual respect, and provide support for my colleagues.

This means that I:
• Behave and communicate in a respectful and professional manner
• Build an atmosphere of openness, trust and collegial support.
• Actively engage in regular Professional Development.
• Work towards continuous improvement and Best Practice in my work environment.
• Act within the College and wider community in such a way that enhances the status of my profession.
• Support and encourage student teachers and new members of staff.
• Engage in educational dialogue and contribute to decision making within both my work area and the broader School community.

Professional Boundaries
St John’s Lutheran School is committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment where all of our students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner where the risk of child abuse is minimised and a safe and supportive child safe environment is maintained.

It is our policy that:
• staff exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with students at all times
• staff identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student
• staff interaction with students is professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours
• conflict of interest issues must be reported to the Principal as soon as practicable
• equal learning opportunities are given to each student without discrimination
• appropriate consequences will be applied to staff who breach professional boundaries

YES N/A Please tick the appropriate box.

☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Code of Conduct for (College) Staff.
☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read Lutheran Education Australia’s Code of Ethics (5.15.1) for safe and professional relationships. (Teachers Only)
☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read the VIT’s Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct (5.15.2). (Teachers Only)
☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy.
☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
☐ ☐ I acknowledge that I have read the Staff and Students Professional Boundaries Policy.

Signed

Dated

Adopted: 27 July 2016  Date for Review: 2021  Accessed: 29/07/2016 4:00 PM
Definitions

**College:** Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School

**Rationale**

- Employment practices at the College are developed in accordance with the requirements of Lutheran Education Australia, Child Safe and the law.
- St John’s Lutheran School is committed to being a Child Safe organisation. St John’s Lutheran School has a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in children’s best interests and in keeping them safe from harm. St John’s Lutheran School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.
- Suitably qualified and competent people who share and support the mission and values are sought and appointed. The appointment of staff who hold both personal and professional qualities appropriate to their role is crucial for the development of an educational environment where Christ is central, excellence is pursued and relationships are valued.
- The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a transparent and consistent statement of recruitment and selection philosophy and procedure, which forms the basis of all employment at the College.

**Aims**

- To provide an effective process for targeted and successful recruitment.
- To recruit and select the best possible employees.
- To provide a framework and structure for College staff engaged in the recruitment and selection process.

**Implementation**

**Scope**

- These guidelines apply to all members of the College community, as well as members of the public who are applying for vacancies at the College.
- These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with other College policies, guidelines, codes and procedures which address wellbeing and conduct.

**Principles**

At St John’s Lutheran School we are committed to ensuring that our recruitment practices create a safe environment for our students. To this end we have established policies and procedures for recruiting employees, Council members and Volunteers and for assessing their suitability to work with children.

Our recruitment processes are designed to select appropriate staff, Council members and Volunteers and discourage inappropriate people from working within the College.

Each job description for staff involved in child-connected work has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child protection for those in that role and the occupant’s essential qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child protection.
All applicants for child-connected work at the College are informed about these requirements and the College's child protection practices prior to commencing work at the College.

It is our policy that all new staff and members of the College Council undergo screening including:
- a Working with Children Check clearance status;
- personal identity verification and background checking;
- verification of professional or other qualifications relevant to the job;
- an examination of their history of child-connected work; and
- reference checking that addresses the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.

Volunteers: Without exception, all of the College's volunteers undergo the following screening prior to their engagement by the College:
- personal identity verification and background checking;
- verification of professional and other qualifications if relevant to their role;
- an examination of their history of child-connected work; and
- reference checking that addresses the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.

All College Council members, employees and volunteers are also subject to rigorous interview procedures.

Probationary periods apply to all new staff members and Volunteers to monitor their compliance with the College’s child protection policies and procedures.

Performance and development reviews are undertaken regularly for all staff and include consideration of performance against the College’s Child Safety Code of Conduct and the requirements of the Child Protection Program. For example, ensuring that a staff member has not breached any of the College’s reporting procedures or the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The College is a Lutheran school and, as such, reserves the right to make decisions regarding employment based on suitability in supporting the ethos and values of the College, College expectations and policies.

- Successful candidates will be selected based on the principles of merit, suitability for the position and suitability for the College.
- The best interest of students is paramount in employment consideration. We have zero tolerance for child abuse. Refer to Policy 4.30 Child Protection and Safety.
- The College is an equal opportunity employer, and as such, gender equality and equal opportunity is included in employment consideration.
- Full and frank disclosure is expected of all applicants.
- A mutual commitment to privacy and confidentiality is expected during all recruitment processes, in accordance with the Privacy Policy.

Processes

Identifying a Need for a Position

- A position may require advertising and replacement following a resignation, retirement, promotion, taking of leave or any other departure. A position may also arise as a result of an increase in the workload/student numbers of particular department or faculty.
- A review of current staffing arrangements could result in a restructure of other positions, providing new career opportunities and a more effective use of resources. This process should be in consultation with the stakeholders from the affected department, in accordance with process outlined in the relevant Enterprise Agreement.
Advertisement Process

- When a vacancy has been determined, St John’s Lutheran School will advertise the position internally using SIMON on our College intranet, via internal email to both GLC and St John’s, and externally on Seek.com and teachers.on.net (via LEA website). Newspapers, such as The Age, may also be used to advertise positions of responsibility, or in the case of multiple positions being advertised. In some instances, the position may also be advertised in the St Johnb’s Lutheran School newsletter. The avenues used may vary at the discretion of the Principal/Head of School.

- Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School are committed to encouraging mobility across the schools through identifying and providing employment opportunities for staff.

- Some positions will require responses to Selection Criteria, which will be specified in the advertisement. Candidates interested in the vacant position must be qualified in their relevant field, be VIT registered for teaching positions, and have the right to work in Australia, with the legal documentation to confirm these requirements.

- A closing date will be provided for all positions to ensure a fair process. Unless in extenuating circumstances, the period of advertising should be no less than 14 days.

Application Process

Applications should be submitted electronically to employment@glc.vic.edu.au and will be acknowledged by way of a reply email. Applications should not be delivered personally to the College, unless an electronic copy has already been submitted. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of application within two business days of submission, please contact the Office Manager directly on (03) 5264 1038.

Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted, unless exceptional circumstances have been discussed with the Principal or the Human Resources Coordinator prior to the closing date.

Application Requirements:

- Covering letter, indicating what attracted you to the position.
- Your full name, residential address and contact telephone numbers.
- A current Curriculum Vitae indicating current employment details, relevant experience and qualifications.
- A brief document addressing the specified Selection Criteria in the position description (only where the requirement is indicated on the advertisement).
- If you are not an Australia Citizen, you must provide details of your Working Visa in your application.
- Copy of academic transcripts and professional qualifications (where appropriate, this may be required during the interview stage or on offer of appointment).
- Current Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration (for all teaching roles).
- Current Working With Children Check documentation or confirmation that you are eligible to apply for and receive a positive WWCC (for all non-teaching roles).
- The names and contact details of three professional referees who may be approached in confidence. Two of the referees must be your direct Supervisors.
- Applications must be submitted electronically via email.
- If applications are submitted in hard copy (in addition to electronically), plain white A4 paper, with a single staple in the top left hand corner is the required presentation.

Applications should be addressed to:

Employment
St John’s Lutheran School
Selection and Interview Process

- Prior to the closing date, an Interview Panel Chair and two other staff members (usually the position's line manager and another senior staff member) will be appointed. A gender balance will be required for all interview panels.
- Only in special circumstances will a peer be on the interview panel. Any conflicts of interests must be raised by the interview panel members prior to shortlisting. The Principal or the Head of School will determine if the Panel Member is appropriate to continue to be a member of the Panel.
- On the day after the closing date, the shortlisting process will commence. Shortlisting will be completed by the Panel Chair with the support of other Panel Members.
- Those shortlisted will receive a phone call and an interview arranged by the Office Manager. The shortlisted candidates will receive an interview confirmation email with the full names and positions of the interview panel members.
- Candidates not shortlisted for interview will be advised by email. Feedback may be provided where possible, however when a large number of applications are received, this may not be possible.
- During the interview, candidates will have the opportunity to confirm whether the College is able to contact their referees. Should a candidate require time to notify their current employer/referee that they have been shortlisted, one business day will be provided.
- Interviews and referee checks will explore a candidate’s suitability against child protection principles.

Appointment of a Successful Candidate

- Once interviews have concluded, an offer will be made to the successful candidate upon the completion of positive reference checks, and the authentication of relevant qualifications.
- The full recruitment process for a position can take up to four weeks to finalise from start to finish – depending on the amount of applications received.
- Applicants can make contact with the Office Manager on (03) 5264 1038 or employment@glc.vic.edu.au to query the status of their application and the recruitment process.

Internal Positions

- For internal positions, including short-term leave coverage, the College may choose to invite existing staff members to express interest via an internal advertisement in “The Grapevine”. In some circumstances, the College may ask an appropriate member of staff to act in a position whilst the incumbent takes leave, or as a temporary measure until the College is in a position to commence the advertisement and recruitment process.
- The appointment of successful candidates for internal positions will be subject to the operational requirements of the College being met.

Destruction of Applications

- In accordance with the the College’s Privacy Policy, the Employment Application Collection Notice provides detailed information on the destruction of applications.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the College’s five-year review cycle.

Acknowledgement:

University of Sydney
Luther College
Employment Application Collection Notice

St John’s Lutheran School is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth Privacy (Private Sector) Act 1988 and Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012. In relation to health records, the College is also bound by the Health Privacy Principles contained in the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).

The College is committed to managing personal information in an open and transparent way. This statement specifically itemises the reasons for collecting information about applicants, and the way in which information will be used by the College. For further information, please refer to the GLC Privacy Policy.

1. In applying for a vacant position, you will be providing GLC with personal information. For example, your name and address or information contained on your cover letter and curriculum vitae. The College will collect the information in order to assess your application for employment.

2. The College will keep your cover letter and curriculum vitae on file. If your application is unsuccessful your cover letter and curriculum vitae will be kept for a period of two years, in the event that another position becomes available. All other information will be destroyed. Should you wish for your application to be destroyed earlier, please notify the College’s Office Manager.

3. In order to satisfy the College’s legal obligations (e.g. Workplace Gender Equality Act), the personal information data which is collected for job vacancies will be kept for the purposes of statistical reporting. This information will be de-identified by deleting any reference to names.

4. Unsolicited job applications will receive an acknowledgment email indicating their application will be stored for a period of two years, and then destroyed accordingly.

5. The St John’s Lutheran School Privacy Policy contains details of how you may complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles or how you may seek access to personal information collected about you. However, there may be occasions when access is denied. Such occasions would include where access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of others.

6. The College will not disclose this information to a third party without your consent. The College may, from time to time, pass on your job application or contact details to St John’s Lutheran School, after receiving your consent to do so. Should you be successful in gaining employment, please be aware that the College discloses personal and sensitive information of employees to Lutheran Education Australia for administrative purposes.

7. The College may from time to time store personal information in the 'cloud' which may mean that it resides on servers which are situated outside Australia.

8. If you provide the College with the personal information of others, such as referees, we encourage you to inform them that such information has been disclosed to the College; why the information has been disclosed; and that they are able to access that information. However, the College does not usually disclose any information to third parties without appropriate consent.
STAFF & STUDENT PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Definition

College: Geelong Lutheran College and St John’s Lutheran School.

Staff: This policy applies to all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Council members, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers (together, known as "staff" for the purposes of this policy only).

Rationale

- The Child Safe program in place at St John’s Lutheran School defines power as the capacity to set and care for boundaries. Boundaries are the structures which support human development within community; boundaries may be personal, communal, spiritual, psychological or physical. In Christ, there is an empowerment by the gospel to recognise boundaries and prevent their destructive crossing and to care for those who have been violated. Our responsibility of leadership is to care for professional boundaries through the establishment of structures that protect them. Structures provide for support, examination, and action to ensure that school leaders, staff and students act according to boundaries that help, protect and uphold the dignity, worth and safety of each individual.

- St John’s Lutheran School staff hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to students at the College. As such, it is their duty, at all times, to maintain professional boundaries with students.

Aims

- To ensure that students of St John’s Lutheran School are safe at all times.
- To raise awareness of situations where professional boundary violations may occur and provide some strategies to minimise the risk of boundary violations.
- To maintain professional boundaries with students at all times.

Implementation

St John’s Lutheran School is committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment where all of our students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner, and where the risk of child abuse is minimised and a safe and supportive child safe environment is maintained.

It is our policy that:

- staff exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with students at all times
- staff identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student
- staff interaction with students is professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours
- conflict of interest issues must be reported to the Principal as soon as practicable
- equal learning opportunities are given to each student without discrimination
- appropriate consequences will be applied to staff who breach professional boundaries
What are Professional Boundaries?

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person (a student) entrusts their welfare and safety to another person (a staff member), in circumstances where a power imbalance exists.

The fact that College staff are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students means that there is always an inherent power imbalance that exists between them. It also means that professional boundaries must be established, maintained and respected at all times.

In most cases this power imbalance is clear, however sometimes it may be more difficult to recognise especially for younger staff members who may only be a few years older than their students.

The following guidelines are not exhaustive, and given that sometimes “grey areas” may occur, it is expected that all staff (no matter their age or experience) use their own good judgment, think very carefully of the implications and potential consequences of engaging in certain behaviours with students, and always err on the side of caution.

When unsure about whether professional boundaries are being, or have been, breached, ask yourself:

- Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?
- How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting?
- Am I sharing information for the student’s benefit, or for my benefit?
- Am I dealing with this student differently from others in similar circumstances?
- Is my language or demeanor different from normal when dealing with this particular student?

Intimate Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be interpreted as having a romantic or sexual, rather than professional basis. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents/carers.

Such relationships have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of students and colleagues, and may carry a serious reputational risk for the staff member and, in turn, the College.

The professional relationship of staff and students may be breached by:

- flirtatious behaviour or dating
- development of an intimate personal relationship
- sexual relations
- the use of sexual innuendo, inappropriate language and/or material with students
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- unwarranted and inappropriate filming or photography
- deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others (e.g. pornography)
- having intimate contact without a valid context via written or electronic means (e.g. email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms)
- going out, whether alone or in company, to social events such as the movies or dinner
- exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship.

Staff should also be aware that developing or encouraging romantic or sexual relationships with recent former students (over 18 years of age) may violate professional boundaries and are strongly discouraged from doing so. The imbalance of power and authority that exists in the staff/student relationship does not suddenly disappear after the student finishes their schooling. Staff should not assume that they will be protected from disciplinary action by claiming that a relationship began only after the student left the College as there may be a reasonable belief that the emotional intimacy of the relationship developed while the staff/student relationship existed.
Personal Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be perceived or misinterpreted as having a personal rather than professional element. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents or carers.

It is the student’s ‘perception’ of staff behaviour and not the intention of the staff member that is important.

An established and expected professional relationship between staff and students may be compromised by staff:

- attending parties or socialising with students outside of organised College events (without parental/carer permission)
- sharing personal details about their private lives with students
- meeting with students outside of school hours without permission from the College

Staff must recognise at all times that their role is not to be a “friend” or “parent” to a student.

Fair Learning Opportunities

The main focus of teaching is effective student learning and as such, teachers are expected to support their students with their professional expertise so as to offer them the best education in their individual circumstances. The quality of teaching and learning between teachers and students characterises their relationship.

Teachers should demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect
- recognising and developing each student’s abilities, skills and talents by catering to their individual abilities and respecting their individual differences
- encouraging students to develop and reflect on their own values
- interacting with students without bias
- not engaging in preferential treatment
- not discriminating against any student on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, disability or religious or political conviction
- always making decisions in students’ best interests

Electronic Communications between Staff & Students

It is expected that all staff at the College will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all use of technology should be for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular activities
- all email communication between staff and students should be via the College email system and reflect a professional staff/student relationship
- staff should not communicate with students via text message where it is not in a professional context
- staff should not give out their personal telephone numbers or social media contact details
- staff are not to accept or request students as ‘friends’ on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate in any way that is not condoned or approved by the College
- staff should not exchange personal pictures with a student
- teachers are not expected or encouraged to respond to concerns of parents/carers or students on holidays, weekends or in the evening
- any student personal contact numbers or other personal contact details made available to the College should only be used for College communications
Physical Contact with Students

All staff should be aware that situations may arise that can be perceived in a manner that was not intended. For this reason, all staff at the College should adhere to the following guidelines for contact with students both in and outside of College grounds:

- staff should avoid unnecessary physical contact with students
- minimal, non-lingering, non-gratuitous physical contact in the context of the situation is acceptable (e.g. congratulatory pat on the back or handshake)
- contact for sport, drama and dance instruction is acceptable in a class situation but not in a 1:1 situation. If physical contact is required for specific technical instructions, it must be brief and only with the consent of the student. Note that a student may withdraw consent for this contact either verbally or gesturally and staff must remain vigilant whilst engaging in necessary contact situations. Once consent has been withdrawn no further contact can be or should be made.

Off-Campus Excursions and Camps

During off-campus excursions or camps, the same physical contact guidelines apply as well as the following:

- checking of sleeping arrangements, or supervising of students changing should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students’ privacy and personal space
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory
- ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict staff/student relationship is upheld and that inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student’s bed, is not undertaken.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Where personal relationships with students such as family relationships and close friendship networks exist, questions of conflicts of interest may arise.

This may be more prevalent in close or rural communities where professional boundaries may be tested due to the nature and size of the community. In these circumstances, staff need to be far more diligent in developing and maintaining these boundaries.

Where a staff member feels that a conflict of interest may exist, they should notify the Principal, or the Chair of the Council if the conflict involves the Principal, and arrangements should be implemented to avoid the conflict situation if possible. For example, teaching of students by a staff member with a conflict should be avoided.

Any significant decisions relating to these students in the College (such as the appointment of classes or selection in sports teams) should be referred to another staff member and endorsed by a supervisor.

Disclosure of Staff/Student Interactions

It is St John’s Lutheran School’s policy that all staff are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours. These interactions may include instances where the staff member is:

- related to the student
- friends with the student’s parents or family
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours and has notified the College

St John’s Lutheran School maintains records of all declarations made by staff members related to their interactions with students, or relationships with students, that exist outside of school hours or College premises.

These records are kept for a period of seven years.
Staff Responsibilities

All staff are to:

- follow the guidelines as set out in this policy;
- immediately report any conflicts of interest; and
- remove themselves from decision making where a conflict has been identified.

Where a staff member breaches this policy St John’s Lutheran School may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

Application

These guidelines are implemented through a combination of:

- staff training and development in professional conduct
- student and parent/carer education and information
- effective management of teachers engaging in inappropriate relationships with students
- effective management of conflicts of interest
- effective communication and incident notification procedures
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s five-year review cycle.