



## St Bernard's College Child Safety Committee Terms of Reference

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*St Bernard's College is committed to a culture of "zero tolerance" for child abuse. We promote a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all young people and continue to respond positively and proactively to Ministerial Order 1359 in relation to related policies, procedures, strategies, risk mitigation and our responsiveness to emerging issues.*

*St Bernard's College is committed to the establishment of a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are respected and valued.*

### Introduction

These Terms of Reference (TOR) set out the scope, functions, membership, reporting and administrative arrangements for the St Bernard's College Child Safety Committee (CSC) and the roles and responsibilities of the Child Protection Officers and Chief Child Protection Officer.

### Scope

St Bernard's College is committed to Child Safety Reform to reflect most progressive organisational, government and community needs and expectations.

To this end, the Principal has established the Child Safety Committee (CSC) with the primary objective of providing advice and direction to the Principal on the initiatives, policies and practices that will enable St Bernard's College to lead the way in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.

A particular focus of the CSC's work is to provide direction and leadership on the promotion and implementation of the Victorian minimum Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 870 and other relevant VRQA/legislative obligations emanating from recommendations associated with the:

- Royal Commission into *Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*; and
- Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the '*Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Organisations*' which culminated in the report titled 'Betrayal of Trust'.

The CSC will support cultural change across the College. It will build on the existing policies and procedures already in place to improve capacity and increase consistency across the College. With a focus on moving beyond legislative obligations, the implementation of the Child Safe Standards will be delivered within a broader Child Safety Reform Framework encompassing the following four tiers:

- I. **Leadership and culture:** increased staff capacity and whole school practice where protecting children from harm and meeting child safety needs is a shared responsibility embedded in daily thinking and practice.

- II. **Curriculum and pedagogy:** enhanced and consistent child safety teaching and learning approaches and resources to empower children and young people to identify risks and seek appropriate support.
- III. **Policy, procedures, and resources:** improved knowledge and implementation of child safe policy and procedures amongst staff, students, and the community.
- IV. **Partnerships:** improved understanding of the importance of child safety to child and adolescent development and wellbeing and increased capacity of school staff, parents, and students to achieve better health, safety and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people.

## Membership

The Child Safe Committee is comprised of the following roles:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Assistant Principal – Student Wellbeing
- Dean of Students
- Risk and Compliance Officer

## Terms of Reference

The Child Safe Committee works to the following Terms of Reference:

- monitoring child safety including using student surveys and consultation with the Student Leadership Council
- appoint and induct Child Protection Officers as needed
- receive reports and any recommendations from the Assistant Principal – Student Wellbeing (Chief Child Protection Officer)
- overseeing the induction of staff, volunteers, contractors, and School Advisory Council members with consideration of itinerant staff (e.g., coaches, instrumental music tutors)
- providing updates to School Advisory Council, staff and to parents including through College publications (e.g. College newsletter, Staff newsletter, Facebook, etc)
- identifying professional learning on child safety for the annual professional learning plan
- providing standing child safety agenda items for staff meetings
- reviewing annually, or as required, the Child Safety Risk Register
- ensuring that risk management plans are developed and implemented for community events and excursions/camps
- annually reviewing child safety policies and procedure to ensure currency and effective implementation, specifically the College’s procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse
- ensuring that the College’s Child Safety and Protection Program (CSPP) is being effectively implemented in the College community
- ensure child safe practices are communicated to and consistent across the College

- consideration and escalation of issues to other groups for advice/response (i.e. Senior Leadership Team)
- ensuring a budget and time allocation is made for the College to enact its child safe obligations

The Child Safe Committee meets at least once per Term, or otherwise as necessary to meet as needed.

## **College Child Protection Officers**

St Bernard's College has appointed the following staff as the College's Child Protection Officers. Each Child Protection Officer is available to answer any questions that staff, parents or students may have with respect to our Child Safety and Protection Program (CSPP).

Michael Davies – Principal

Therese Wilson – Deputy Principal

Clive Haese – Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing) – Chief Child Protection Officer

Stuart Proud – Dean of Students (7-9)

Anthony Coyne – Dean of Students (10 – 12)

Caroline Neil - Dean of Child Safeguarding

James Kelly - Head of Santa Monica Campus

John Samanna – Student Counsellor

Marian Kolta – Psychologist

Jacqueline Novacek – Psychologist

## **Child Protection Officer Responsibilities**

Child Protection Officers are selected based on several considerations, namely:

- their personal attitudes, experiences and beliefs, for example, a person who is nonjudgmental, calm, resilient and demonstrates a high degree of integrity and respect for confidentiality;
- their role within the College, for example, a person who has seniority and
- experience working with complex student and family issues at the College and
- someone who is readily accessible and available to all members of the College community; and
- their personal profile within the College, for example, a person who is approachable, who students and staff trust and who is willing and able to respond to issues personally and sensitively.

Key responsibilities for the College's Child Protection Officers include:

- having a good working knowledge of the College's child safety and protection policies and procedures
- being a point of contact for staff, parents or students raising child protection concerns within the College
- understand how to respond and when to make a referral either internally or to an external agency
- inducting and managing the training of new staff and volunteers in the College's

child protection policies and procedures, specifically our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

- ensuring that there are clear procedures to allow people to report reportable conduct matters within the College
- providing all staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors with a copy of the College’s Child Protection and Safety Policy and key contact numbers for reporting child protection concerns
- promoting child protection issues within the College community and responding to general queries with respect to the College’s Child Protection Program
- acting as “Child Protection Champions” and ensuring a strong and sustainable child protection culture is embedded within the College; and
- offering assistance and support when a member of the College community receives or makes a disclosure of harm or abuse.

### **Chief Child Protection Officer**

The College Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing) is the College Chief Child Protection Officer. The Chief Child Protection Officer has an important role in the implementation and operation of our Child Safety and Protection Program (CSPP).

Key responsibilities of the Chief Child Protection Officer include:

- being a first point of contact for all child protection concerns or queries for the wider community
- ensuring that other Child Protection Officers understand and comply with their key responsibilities
- ensuring that the College's child protection policies and procedures are effectively implemented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders including students, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and contractors
- where authority is delegated from the Principal, promptly managing the College's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously
- ensuring that all Child Protection Officers undergo appropriate annual training in the College's child safety and protection policies and procedures, their legal responsibilities, and how to appropriately respond to child protection concerns and incidents
- ensuring that all staff, College Advisory Council members, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors undertake child protection training so that they are able to identify signs of abuse, neglect and grooming; and
- coordinating the College's response to child protection incidents in consultation with the Principal and the EREA Regional Director.

### **Policy Review**

<b>First Approved:</b>	September 2021
<b>Last Amended:</b>	June 2022
<b>Principal and Ratification Date:</b>	Michael Davies, June 2022
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	June 2024