

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



1. RATIONALE

The responsibility of all people involved in Catholic Education is to ensure that there is a total community approach towards the protection of children from abuse.

The safety and wellbeing of the child must be the paramount consideration in every situation.

1.1. The Child Protection Policy is framed within the VISION STATEMENT for South Australian Catholic Schools. Gleeson College is a community which:

- Witnesses to Gospel values
- Respects individual dignity
- Values cooperation
- Challenges its members to be critical and reflective in their search for truth.

1.2. The policy is based on the Gospel values of freedom and justice for all people and an underlying belief in their dignity and uniqueness.

1.3. Safety is a pre-requisite for Gleeson College to be able to carry out its mission to educate. As outlined in *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*:

The Parliament of South Australia recognises and acknowledges that—

- (a) children and young people are valued citizens of the State; and
- (b) the future of the State is inextricably bound to the wellbeing of all its children and young people; and
- (c) it is of vital importance to the State, and all of its citizens, that all children and young people are given the opportunity to thrive (Chapter 2, Part 1 (4.1), 2017)

1.4. Children are vulnerable to exploitation and victimisation by those who are more powerful. Safety and protection from all forms of abuse are fundamental rights of all children (*Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*).

1.5. The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) acknowledges the complex societal factors which contribute to child abuse and requires that Gleeson College be a place where children can be safe and feel safe. The requirement is met by providing this Child Protection Policy which directs the College community to develop and implement relevant practices, procedures and programs for all students, in line with those contained in the overarching system policy, CDPP Child Safeguarding Policy.

1.6. Gleeson College operates in a wider community context where legal requirements exist and where there is an obligation to:

- Protect children
- Provide a secure, safe environment where children can be safe and feel safe
- Intervene on behalf of children
- Actively work towards empowering children
- Ensure the principles of care, protection and safety are implemented.

2. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The dignity of the human person is fundamental to Catholic teaching.

- 2.1. Children have the right to be safe and feel safe.
- 2.2. Children's development is dependent on the quality of care provided by the significant adults in their lives.
- 2.3. The family is recognised as being the unit primarily responsible for the care and protection of the child.
- 2.4. Where families are not providing the care consistent with their obligations or where a child's welfare is at risk, or suspected to be at risk, intervention on behalf of the child is obligatory.
- 2.5. Schools must be places where children feel safe.
- 2.6. The prevention and treatment of child abuse requires a multi-disciplinary response which is sensitive to cultural diversity and special needs.
- 2.7. Cultural or other reasons notwithstanding, school personnel must intervene on behalf of children.
- 2.8. Cooperation with Government Departments and human service organisations in the community is essential in child protection.
- 2.9. People who are involved in situations where abuse occurs or is suspected are treated with confidentiality, sensitivity, dignity and respect.

3. BROAD POLICY

- 3.1. The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools recognises the significant role of Gleeson College in the prevention of child abuse and takes responsibility for requiring the College to implement child protection practices.
- 3.2. The Commission is to ensure resource allocation for child protection education and programs.
- 3.3. The Commission requires that Gleeson College be a place where children are safe and feel safe.
- 3.4. The Commission has responsibility to ensure that Gleeson College meets these requirements through the provision of child protection policy, practices, procedures and programs.
- 3.5. The College staff is to be educated in the area of child protection and mandatory notification, and to be made familiar with CESA policies and practices in regard to Duty of Care and Reporting Child Abuse & Neglect.
- 3.6. All personnel at Gleeson College are legally mandated, therefore are obliged to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.
- 3.7. Gleeson College is to provide protection and abuse prevention curriculum for students.

N/A	Policy Number	Implemented	2012
LT	Evaluation Group	Evaluated	2023
1 year	Evaluation Frequency	Next Evaluation	2024

4. GUIDELINES

4.1 Responsibilities of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools

- 4.1.1 To develop, monitor and review the policy in accordance with legal requirements and the Church's teachings.
- 4.1.2 To ensure that resources are available to provide ongoing training and support for mandated notifiers.
- 4.1.3 To provide representation on the appropriate child protection committees.

4.2 Responsibilities of Catholic Education South Australia

- 4.2.1 To allocate training resources for personnel to assist in the delivery of professional development programs for mandated notifiers.
- 4.2.2 To provide advice and support for school personnel dealing with issues of child abuse.
- 4.2.3 To encourage school personnel to review on a regular basis their legal obligations under the Act.
- 4.2.4 To ensure that an inter-agency approach to the management of child protection is fostered and supported.
- 4.2.5 To provide current information on child protection issues.

4.3 Responsibilities of College Leaders

- 4.3.1 To provide a safe College environment which ensures that children are protected.
- 4.3.2 To ensure College personnel understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations, responsibilities and correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect.
- 4.3.3 To support College personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification.
- 4.3.4 To ensure that policies and organisational procedures provide children with a safe College environment. This will be done in consultation with College Board and the parent community.
- 4.3.5 To promote models of behaviour between College personnel and children based on mutual respect and consideration.
- 4.3.6 To ensure that student management practice respects the dignity of children.
- 4.3.7 To provide training and development for College personnel in child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.
- 4.3.8 To initiate and support the implementation of child protection and abuse prevention curriculum at the classroom level to ensure that all children have access to these programs throughout their school years.
- 4.3.9 To monitor and evaluate child protection and abuse prevention curriculum.

N/A	Policy Number	Implemented	2012
LT	Evaluation Group	Evaluated	2023
1 year	Evaluation Frequency	Next Evaluation	2024

4.3.10 To provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the protection and abuse prevention curriculum.

4.3.11 To ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

4.4 Responsibilities of College Personnel

4.4.1 To treat children with confidentiality, dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children in their care.

4.4.2 To notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL - 131 478 / my.families.sa.gov.au) if, in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

4.4.3 To provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.

4.4.4 To participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification, including but not limited to, Responding to Risks of Harm Abuse & Neglect Training (RRHAN-EC).

4.4.5 To teach children skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety.

4.4.6 To assist children to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.

4.4.7 They familiarise themselves with all CESA policies and practices, in particular Child Protective Practices, in relation to Duty of Care.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

In line with requirements of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Child Protection Policy, Gleeson College will:

5.1 Develop education and care practices which:

- Ensure a safe environment for children at Gleeson College.
- Support children to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths.
- Respect the diverse and special needs of children.
- Are sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour which may be indicative of abuse.

5.2 Provide training and development opportunities for education and care workers which:

- Ensure they understand their obligations and responsibilities as mandated notifiers and develop appropriate procedures at Gleeson College.
- Provide the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for children and enable them to continually build on this.
- Assist them in their role as advocates, particularly on behalf of very young children.

N/A	Policy Number	Implemented	2012
LT	Evaluation Group	Evaluated	2023
1 year	Evaluation Frequency	Next Evaluation	2024

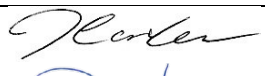

- 5.3 Develop partnerships between Gleeson College parents and the wider community which:
- Promote safe environments for children wherever they are.
 - Are based on effective communication.
 - Promote community understanding of personal safety programs.
 - Acknowledge and provide for diversity e.g. cultural, special needs.
- 5.4 Develop mandatory reporting systems which are clear and understood by all College personnel so that they:
- Are provided with clear written information relevant to their employment.
 - Establish support mechanisms at each site.
 - Are able to participate in training and development.
- 5.5 Provide child protection programs which support children to:
- Develop knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and maintain personal safety.
 - Participate in a range of developmentally appropriate experiences, which are responsive to their individual needs and interests.
 - Gain appropriate support and advocacy from adults.
 - Develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.
- 5.6 Review policy practices and procedures so that:
- Mandated reporting training records are kept and regularly updated.
 - Access to child protection curriculum training is provided.
 - Support mechanisms for College personnel notifying are regularly communicated.

College personnel are informed of any changes to legislation, policy and procedures.

6. EVALUATION

The Learning and Student Well-Being Team of Catholic Education South Australia supports Gleeson College in the implementation of this policy. A review of the Child Protection Policy should be undertaken annually.

The Leadership Team is responsible for the evaluation of this policy. The policy should be considered by members of the Leadership Team as the key team within the College for Planning, Policy and Review. They may wish to seek opinions from other staff, parents and students as to the effectiveness of the policy.

Signed		Principal or delegate	Dated:	22/06 /2023
Signed		Chairperson of Board or delegate	Dated:	1/8/23

This Policy now replaces all previous versions and evaluations of this Policy originally implemented in 2012 and subsequently updated.

GLOSSARY

Catholic School / College: All School / College related activities, including retreats, excursions, sporting activities etc.

Child abuse: Any maltreatment that damages the child's physical, mental, emotional or psychological health or that places the child's physical, mental, emotional or psychological development in jeopardy (*Interagency Guidelines 1997, Page 3*).

Children: Persons under 18 years old. Students older than 18 who are enrolled in Catholic schools are not covered by the legal mandate, however the duty of care provision under which teachers operate would require that these students be afforded the same protection as children under 18 years of age.

College Leader: Persons in a Position of Responsibility including Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Learning Area and House Coordinators, Managers.

College personnel: Persons working in a Catholic school in paid or voluntary capacities (e.g. teachers, school assistants, ground staff, canteen workers, LAP volunteers etc).

Confidentiality: Refers to the restriction of discussion of a child's circumstances to those agencies and school personnel directly involved with helping the child.

Cultural diversity: Refers to the complex concept of culture and its many different manifestations within Australian society.

Empower children: Teach and discuss the concept of rights particularly in relation to personal safety and teach problem solving skills.

Family: Refers to units consisting of parents or caregivers and children. Parents may be biological, adoptive or foster and the units may consist of blended and extended families, single parent families, families with children in respite or foster care or relatives with the care of children. Children are defined as those who are under the age of 18 years.

Gospel values: The teachings and ministry of Jesus as enunciated and described in the Gospel story.

Legally mandated: Persons obliged by law to notify the Child, Youth and Family Service (CYFS) of suspicions of child abuse via the CARL Report Line (PH: 131 478) (*Section 11 (1) and (2) Children's Protection Act 1993*).

Protect children: Refers to providing an environment where children are safe and feel safe.

Protection and abuse prevention curriculum: All arrangements made by the school within its formal curriculum to teach students to accept their right and responsibility to protect themselves and others.

Reasonable grounds: Includes:

- When a child says they have been abused
- Another person says a child has been abused
- The observations of a child's behaviour or injuries lead school personnel to suspect that abuse is occurring.

Multi-disciplinary: Government and non-government agencies involved in welfare, education, health and legal aspects of child abuse and protection.

Safe environment: A place where the adults take reasonable measures to ensure that:

- Children are protected from harm
- Where children know that adults will act on their behalf.

N/A	Policy Number	Implemented	2012
LT	Evaluation Group	Evaluated	2023
1 year	Evaluation Frequency	Next Evaluation	2024

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION/LINKS:

- [Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- [Privacy](#)
- [Bullying/Harassment](#)
- [Critical Incident](#)
- [Recruitment \(Screening\)](#)

N/A	Policy Number	Implemented	2012
LT	Evaluation Group	Evaluated	2023
1 year	Evaluation Frequency	Next Evaluation	2024