

*Child Safe
Employment Policy*



ST ANDREWS
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

INSPIRED BY
FAITH

DISTINGUISHED BY
CHARACTER

LEADERS BY
INFLUENCE

Child Safe Employment Policy

PREAMBLE

All policy, protocols and procedures flow from the St Andrews Christian College Mission Statement:

“To educate our students so that they are well skilled, understand life on the basis of biblical truth, and are motivated to walk with God and serve Him in their lives, so that they will be a positive Christian influence in the world.”

POLICY DOCUMENT INFORMATION

TITLE:	Child Safe Employment Policy
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:	<u>State of Victoria</u> : <i>An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards - Child Safe Standards Toolkit</i> – Department of Human Services <i>Child Protection Toolkit</i> (January 2016) Flinders Christian Community College
PURPOSE:	To provide policy and direction for all the College Community.
RELATED DOCUMENTS:	Employment of a Christian Teacher Child Safety Policy including Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting Staff code of Conduct; Staff Code of Practice Teacher Application Form; Non-Teaching Application Form Working With Children Check Policy

KEY DATES

ISSUE DATE:	August 2020
REVIEW DATE:	2023



1. RATIONALE

It is an inherent requirement that any person employed at St Andrews Christian College must model and demonstrate the reality of the Gospel by the way they undertake their employment responsibilities and by the way they live. Every activity undertaken by the College must be characterised by love, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, humility and justice, all elements demonstrated by Christ's death, which is the core of the Gospel.

This policy has been established so that St Andrews Christian College attracts, recruits and maintains the best /most appropriate staff and volunteers for all positions. This includes quality screening, recruitment, induction /training and monitoring for all prospective and existing staff and volunteers.

This policy also serves as a deterrent against inappropriate or unsafe applicants.

St Andrews Christian College has a commitment to child safety, and has zero tolerance for child abuse.

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

2. DEFINITIONS

New employees refers to both recruits to the College (including contractors, casuals and temporary staff), and staff transfers / promotions.

References refers to material obtained or provided, in confidence or otherwise, to prospective employers to be used to assess a candidate's suitability for a position.

Staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- Directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person who is an intermediary); or
- A minister of religion.

3. SCREENING

St Andrews Christian College undertakes a comprehensive screening and recruitment process for all workers and volunteers. Screening is a process that begins at advertising for a position (in the job description), and continues all the way through to recruitment. This process acts as a filter and aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the College;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share the College's biblical values, ethos and passion for Christian Education; and
- Deter and prevent a person from working at the College if they pose a risk to children.

St Andrews Christian College requires all workers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes satisfactorily before a formal offer of employment can be made / prior to commencing their engagement with the College.

4. RECRUITMENT

All recruitment and selection procedures and decisions will reflect the College's commitment to providing equal opportunity by assessing all potential candidates according to their skills, knowledge, qualifications and capabilities.

St Andrews Christian College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that applicants may be safely entrusted with the duties of their position, including those relating to child safety.

5. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

5.1 Induction

New employees and contractors will be inducted into the organisation, in order to ensure that they have a smooth integration into their role and become operationally competent.

Induction programs enable new employees to learn about the College, its culture and the requirements of their role.

5.2 Existing Staff and Volunteers (including contractors and Board members)

Staff and volunteers are trained, educated and supported in ways such as:

- Meetings (Section, Staff, Board Meetings etc);
- Professional development (internal and external) - See Professional Development Policy;
- See also:
 - *Child safety Policy including Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting (5.1 Empowerment; 5.2 Employment; 6.1 Training Requirement for Mandatory Reporting);*
 - *Code of Conduct;*
 - *Staff Code of Practice.*

Staff and volunteers are alerted about child safety and the importance of cultural safety through policies and training. Further information, training and education regarding child safety is provided on a needs basis.

6. REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Expectations for All Staff

Every person working within the St Andrews Christian College Community is responsible for the care and protection of students and for reporting any information about suspected child abuse. St Andrews Christian College requires all staff and volunteers to go above and beyond their duty of care in this matter and to be aware of their job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety.

All persons employed at St Andrews Christian College must:

- Be able to demonstrate a personal commitment to Christ and a desire to be Christ-like in all aspects of life and have a doctrinal understanding compatible with Scripture;
- Comply with Scripture;
- Be able to communicate the principles of Scripture;

- Be regular in Church attendance;
- Present a Christian role model to students in carrying out their employment responsibilities;
- Live exemplary lives that reflect the biblical values of the College
- Be willing to participate in corporate worship, prayer and lead devotions as required during the school year.
- **Declare an agreement with the St Andrews Christian College:**
 - Vision, Mission, Values and Philosophy of Teaching and Learning;
 - Statement of Belief;
 - Staff Code of Practice;
 - Child-safe Code of Conduct;
- Comply with all College policies, including reporting any concerns for a child's safety, or allegations of child abuse immediately to leadership and authorities as appropriate.

Requirements, Duties and Responsibilities Regarding Child Safety

In fostering a culture and environment of child safety, staff are required to annually familiarise themselves with College policies and Government requirements regarding child safety.

Staff are required to be aware of the location and content of such policies, and comply with them at all times.

NB: Every person working in the St Andrews Christian College community is responsible for the care and protection of children

6.2 Additional Expectations of the Executive Leadership Team

In relation to child safety, the ELT are required to not only comply with all policy and procedures, but be a knowledgeable, emotional and spiritual support to staff / volunteers / students under their supervision.

The ELT are responsible for managing situations that arise. See *Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and procedures (including reporting)*.

The ELT must be proactive in ensuring staff in their section are aware of the issues surrounding particular vulnerabilities and how to deal with these effectively.

6.3 Additional Expectations for Teaching Staff

The Christian teacher must provide sound and competent teaching in accordance with the St Andrews Christian College Philosophy of Teaching and Learning, taking up the challenge to identify the non-Christian assumptions of secular education and to find creative ways of teaching from a biblical perspective.

Teachers need to structure the classroom so that every activity is characterised by love, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, humility and justice, and all elements demonstrated by Christ's death, which is the core of the Gospel. Teachers must persevere in modelling, teaching and speaking the Gospel, remembering that Christ never compelled people to follow Him. There was always a freedom of response which Christian teachers must allow with their students.

Teaching staff at St Andrews Christian College must:

- **Have appropriate educational qualifications for the required position;**
- Be prepared to take up the challenge to teach their discipline from a biblical perspective;
- Be prepared and able to work as a member of a team within a community to glorify Christ;
- Be willing to work under the direction of the Executive Leadership Team;
- Be currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and comply with its Code of Conduct.

In relation to child safety, it is the responsibility of teachers to know the students in their class individually. This gives opportunity for them to notice any signs of abuse, as outlined in the *Child Safety Policy including Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting*, such as changes in behaviour.

6.4 Additional Expectations for Non-Teaching Staff

Non-teaching staff at St Andrews Christian College must:

- Have appropriate qualifications and / or experience for the required position;
- Be prepared to take up the challenge to undertake their role from a biblical perspective;
- Be prepared and able to work in a team under the direction of the Executive Leadership Team;
- Possess a current WWCC and be willing to undergo a police check.

7. SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Staff are supported by, and are also accountable to, their supervisor/Head of Section as well as their peers.

The supervisor/Head of Section is responsible for ongoing performance management, monitoring and assessing the job occupant's suitability for child-connected work.

Additional support is available through the College Chaplain/counsellor.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

The following requirements must be satisfied prior to the applicant's engagement at the College.

8.1 Application Process

New applicants are required to complete a comprehensive Application Form which articulates the College's 'zero tolerance' to child abuse.

The Application Form includes:

- An outline of their Christian background;
- A summary of suitable qualifications and employment history;
- Questions relating to their Christian faith;
- Professional and personal references, including those that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children;

- A declaration of prior conduct, including any disciplinary action taken against the applicant by an employer, any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct by the applicant by any court or tribunal of any kind, and/or any investigations **the applicant has been subject to by an employer, law enforcement agency, any integrity body, or similar in Australia or in another country;**
- Agreement with the College's *Statement of Belief*.

Applicants are required to provide the following information with their application and / or interview:

- Proof of personal identification which must be original documentation, such as a birth certificate, marriage certificate or passport;
- Professional or other qualifications (verified transcripts);
- Their history of work involving children;
- Current WWCC / VIT registration for relevant positions;
- The College may require applicants to provide a police check (including criminal history and personal identification checks) in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at St Andrews Christian College and during their time with the College at regular intervals.

8.2 Implementation for Recruitment

Executive staff will:

- Shortlist the applicants according to suitability;
- Query gaps in employment history and reluctance to undergo or provide relevant checks;
- Run a Google/internet check on applicants who are shortlisted;
- Follow up all references (verbally) and seek to make other enquiries about the applicant, as deemed suitable;
- Make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the abovementioned information for all persons whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work.

The College is not required to comply with the abovementioned requirements if it has already made reasonable efforts in the past 12 months to gather, verify and record such information.

Interviews

Interviews are conducted to include questions designed to elicit information about the candidate's suitability, behaviours, values, attitudes, aptitudes and work history. Each interview should include:

- Discussion of the candidate's motivation for working with children;
- Exploration of the candidate's work history, including prior positions held, their responsibilities and their reasons for leaving (especially where previous roles involved working with children).

8.3 Implementation for Induction

Induction of new school staff to the College's policies, codes, practices and procedures includes:

- Those governing mandatory reporting, child safety and child-connected work;
- Occupational Health and Safety;
- College expectations.

8.4 Implementation for Support and Supervision

All Executive staff have varying roles to support, mentor and supervise staff. Administration staff check WWCC and VIT status for all staff and volunteer parents.

The College requires staff to annually complete a Staff Intentions Form, which confirms the employee's ongoing suitability for child-connected work and their ability to perform appropriately in relation to their position and their on-going agreement with the College's Statement of Belief and all policies

Teaching staff participate in a professional growth process outlined in the St Andrews Christian College Teachers' Professional Growth and Development Program.

9. UNSUITABILITY

If the College believes or has concerns at any point through the employment process, that a person is unsuitable for the position, the College has the right to suspend, or discontinue the application. The same applies for after employment. The College reserves the right to use probation periods in such instances.