

Student Safety Definitions



ST ANDREWS
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

INSPIRED BY
FAITH

DISTINGUISHED BY
CHARACTER

LEADERS BY
INFLUENCE



STUDENT SAFETY DEFINITIONS

Last Review: July 2022	Constructed / Reviewed by: St Andrews Christian College on advice from Russell Kennedy Lawyers
Next Review: July 2024 (at least every two years thereafter or more frequently after a significant student safety incident)	Approval Required: Board Motion
Board Sign Off Date: 22 July 2022 Implementation Date: 22 July 2022	

1 STATEMENT OF CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 St Andrews Christian College (the **College**) is committed to protecting its students from all aspects of harm, and has established strategies, practices, policies and procedures to uphold this commitment.
- 1.2 The College's aim is to create an environment where students can receive a Christian education in a calm and Christ focused environment characterised by ethical behaviour and defined professional boundaries, and where they feel safe and supported by the College.
- 1.3 All policies, 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.*
- 1.4 In accordance with its ethos, the College recognises that all students are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and are, therefore, valued by God. Thus, they should be valued highly and safeguarded by staff, their peers, visitors to the College, and family members. The care and protection of children is also a key principle in the teachings of Jesus Christ, who reserved His most severe condemnation for those who 'cause a child to stumble' or hinder them. The policies and procedural strategies we implement are the practical expression of our faith in Christ and desire to be faithful to His teachings.
- 1.5 The College takes a zero tolerance approach to any behaviours that jeopardise student safety and wellbeing (including all forms child abuse and reportable conduct). The College regards its student safety and wellbeing responsibilities with the utmost importance as it delivers a Christian educational program that promotes the College's Motto, Statement of Belief, Mission and Purpose.
- 1.6 This document sets out the key definitions used in the College's student safety and wellbeing policies.

2 APPLICATION

- 2.1 This document applies to all Board members, employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on the College's premises, or at College-organised activities and events.



3 RELATED POLICIES

- 3.1 Student Safety and Protection Policy
- 3.2 Student Safety Staff Code of Conduct
- 3.3 Student Safety Responsibilities
- 3.4 Responding to Student Safety Concerns Policy
- 3.5 Student Safety Recruitment and Employment Policy

4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **Behaviour** that causes **emotional or psychological harm to a child** includes sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence and significant neglect. However, other types of behaviours can also cause emotional or psychological harm including, for example, severe or sustained instances of verbal abuse; coercive or manipulative behaviour; hostility towards, or rejection of, a child; and humiliation, belittling or scapegoating.
- 4.2 **CCYP** means Commission for Children and Young People.
- 4.3 **Child** means a child under the age of 18 years, except in the case of certain mandatory reporting obligations which may define a child to be under a different age.
- 4.4 **Child abuse** means all forms of child abuse defined in the ETR Act and includes:
 - (a) Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming.
 - (b) The infliction on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm.
 - (c) Serious neglect of a child.
- 4.5 **College** means St Andrews Christian College.
- 4.6 **College community** means all those who are directly and indirectly involved with the College, including students, parents, carers and alumni, as well as businesses, charitable organisations and locals that are affiliated with the College.
- 4.7 **CWS Act** means the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), as amended from time to time.
- 4.8 **CYF Act** means the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), as amended from time to time.
- 4.9 **DFFH** means the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.
- 4.10 **ETR Act** means the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), as amended from time to time.
- 4.11 **Executive Leadership Team** refers to the Principal, Deputy Principals, Head of Primary School, Head of Secondary School and the Business Manager.
- 4.12 **Grooming** is defined in the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and refers to communication, by words or conduct, between an adult and a child with the intention of facilitating the commission of a sexual offence involving the child. Grooming may be identified by attempts being made at establishing an intimate relationship with, befriending or influencing a child (or, in some circumstances, members of the



child's family). In this respect, grooming involves psychological manipulation that is usually very subtle, drawn out, calculated, controlling and premeditated (Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry 2013).

- 4.13 **Mandatory reporter** has the meaning given to it by section 182 of the CYF Act. It includes but is not limited to registered teachers (including early childhood teachers), staff with post-secondary qualifications employed in the care, education or minding of children, College principals, registered nurses, students in training to become teachers (who have been granted permission to teach under relevant legislation), registered psychologists, out of home care workers, early childhood workers and any other person referred to in section 182 of the CYF Act.
- 4.14 **Neglect** refers to an individual's failure to meet their obligations and responsibilities to keep a child safe and well, and can include:
- (a) Supervisory neglect, which is the absence or inattention of a staff member which places the child at risk of physical harm or injury, sexual abuse or allows other criminal behaviour to occur.
 - (b) Physical neglect, which is the failure to provide basic physical necessities for a child, such as adequate food, clothing, housing or medical attention.
- 4.15 **Parent** includes a guardian or carer, and 'parents' has a corresponding meaning.
- 4.16 **Physical violence** includes an act that causes physical injury or pain. Examples of physical violence can include:
- (a) Hitting, kicking and punching.
 - (b) Pushing, shoving, grabbing, throwing and shaking.
 - (c) Using an object to hit or strike.
 - (d) Using inappropriate restraint/excessive force.

Physical violence does not include lawful behaviour. For example:

- (a) Reasonable steps taken to protect a child from immediate harm, such as taking their arm to stop them from going into oncoming traffic.
- (b) Medical treatment given in good faith by an appropriately qualified staff member, such as a senior first aid officer administering first aid.

Threats of physical violence that do not cause physical injury or pain may still amount to behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm.

- 4.17 **Reasonable belief** means a belief that would lead a reasonable person in the same position as you, and with the same information as you to form a belief that child abuse (including sexual abuse) or reportable conduct is occurring or may occur. There must be some objective basis for the belief. However, it is not necessary to have proof to form a reasonable belief, nor do you need to make a judgement about the truth of an allegation. However, a reasonable belief is more than suspicion, mere rumour or speculation.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' about a sexual offence might be formed when:

- (c) A student states that they have been sexually abused.



- (d) A student states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (because sometimes the student may be talking about themselves).
- (e) Someone who knows a student states that the student has been sexually abused.
- (f) Professional observations of the student's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the student has been sexually abused.
- (g) Signs of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the student has been sexually abused.

It is permissible to ask a person raising a concern with you, sufficient questions to establish a reasonable belief. However, care should be taken not to ask the person any suggestive or leading questions.

Staff who are not sure whether they have a reasonable belief must consult with a SSO or a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

4.18 **Reasonable excuse** means for the purposes of the failure to disclose offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), that a person may not have to make a report to Victoria Police if they:

- (a) Have a reasonable fear that reporting their reasonable belief to Victoria Police may pose a risk to their own or another person's health and safety (including the relevant child or young person, but not including the alleged perpetrator of sexual offence).
- (b) Were told about the sexual offence by the alleged victim, who was 16 or older at the time they disclosed the abuse, and the alleged victim has asked that person not to report the abuse.
- (c) Believe on reasonable grounds that the information they hold has already been disclosed to Victoria Police by another person (such as a Child Protection authority) and they have no further information.

4.19 **Reportable allegation** means any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed reportable conduct, or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct or misconduct that is alleged to have occurred was within the course of the person's employment or engagement with the College.

In the above definition, 'employee' has the meaning given in the CWS Act.

4.20 **Reportable conduct** means:

- (a) A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- (b) Sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence, of a child.
- (c) Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- (d) Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- (e) Significant neglect of a child.

In the above definition, 'child' has the meaning given in the CWS Act.

4.21 **Sexual misconduct** includes behaviour, physical contact or speech or other communication of a sexual nature (including inappropriate touching, grooming behaviour and voyeurism).



Other examples of sexual misconduct include:

- (a) Developing an intimate relationship with a student, for example, through regular contact with the student without the knowledge or approval of the College;
- (b) Inappropriately discussing sex and sexuality with a student; or
- (c) Other overtly sexual acts that could lead to the College taking disciplinary or other action.

4.22 **Sexual offence** means a sexual offence set out in clause 1 of Schedule 1 to the *Sentencing Act 1991* (Vic), and includes sexual assault (including rape and attempted rape), indecent acts, possession of child abuse material, exposure to pornography, and grooming.

Any sexual activity between a child and an adult can be a sexual offence. In certain circumstances, sexual activity between children can also be a sexual offence, and also between two adults (particularly when one is a student).

4.23 **Significant**, in relation to harm or neglect, means that the harm is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as serious and need not have a lasting permanent effect.

4.24 **SOCIT** means the Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team.

4.25 **SSO** means Student Safety Officer.

4.26 **SSC** means Student Safety Champion.

4.27 **Staff** and **staff members** include Board members, the Principal, employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on the College's premises, or at College-organised activities and events.

4.28 **Student** means a child under 18 years of age, and any student at the College over 18 years of age, and 'students' has a corresponding meaning.

4.29 **Student-connected work** means work authorised by the College and performed by an adult in a College environment while children or young people are present or reasonably expected to be present.

4.30 **Victimisation** means treating a person unfairly or unreasonably because they, or someone associated with them, has made, or intends to raise a concern about student safety or student wellbeing, or who is otherwise involved or participates in the College's, or an external body's investigation of the concern.

4.31 **VIT** means the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

4.32 **VRQA** means the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority.

4.33 **WSA Act** means *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic), as amended from time to time.

4.34 **WWCC** means Working with Children Check.

5 COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 This document is made publicly available on the College's website.

5.2 This document is available to staff as part of the College's and the Board's internal policies and procedures. Aspects of (and updates to) the College's student safety and wellbeing framework,



including this document will be addressed in the College's professional development updates, training programs, bulletins and newsletters.

5.3 To properly implement this document:

- (a) The Board will review this policy and the College's student safe practices at least every two years (or more frequently after a significant student safety incident) and implement improvements where applicable.
- (b) Families and the College community will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the review and development of the College's student safe policies and practises (including this document).
- (c) Periodic training and refresher sessions on this document are provided to all staff.
- (d) All staff must ensure that they abide by this document and assist the College in implementing this document.