

INTRODUCTION

Horizon Christian School is committed to the safety of children and young people in line with the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)* and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.

Horizon Christian School strives to provide a transforming Christ-centred education for all. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment based on the Biblical values of freedom and justice.

The school has a responsibility to implement measures to ensure that children and young people are valued, respected and encouraged to participate, and that the safety and protection of children and young people is always the first priority.

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to direct both staff and volunteers in their work with students at the school.

It provides an outline of the processes and procedures relating to appropriate conduct in accordance with legislation applicable in South Australia.

This policy also includes guidelines for preventative and proactive protective practices.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

At Horizon Christian School, employees and volunteers are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

They are required to abide by the following:

- Ensuring that children and young people are valued, respected, and encouraged to participate and that the safety and protection of children and young people is always the first priority.
- Ensuring that our school complies with the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act (SA) 2017*, *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.
- Ensuring that Horizon Christian School complies in full with the *Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021 (SA)* taking a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues where the safety and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration.
- Upholding equity and supporting children and young people regardless of their abilities, sex, social, economic, or cultural background.
- Ensuring that bullying and harassment are not tolerated.
- Ensuring all staff and the Principal to report to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL), any suspicion on reasonable grounds that a student has been or is being harmed or at risk of harm.
- Ensuring *Protective Practices* and professional boundaries are respected and applied at all times.

Horizon Christian School acknowledges that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing, development, and effective learning. The safety and wellbeing of our children and young people are a paramount consideration in all that we do.

We acknowledge the vulnerability of children and young people in our care and take a proactive, preventative, and participatory approach to protecting them through:

- The on-going development of a positive, child safe culture.
- The development, implementation and monitoring of rigorous policies and procedures.
- Seeking to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities, vigilant and, if required, prepared to respond in an appropriate and timely manner.

We are committed to:

- Supporting the rights of the child as set out in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
- Acting without hesitation to seek to ensure a child-safe and child-focused environment is maintained at all times.
- Abiding by all legislative and regulatory obligations and striving for our practices to be regarded as best practice and 'beyond compliance'.
- Empowering children and young people with the skills and knowledge to keep themselves and others safe.
- Taking whatever necessary action is required to protect children and young people from neglect, and/or physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological harm or risk of harm.

DEFINITIONS

A child or young person is a person under 18 years of age.

A student is any person regardless of age who is enrolled at the school.

A member of staff is anyone employed on a casual or permanent basis to provide the services of Horizon Christian School - including teachers, administration and non-teaching staff, grounds, and maintenance staff.

Complainant is a person who makes a complaint.

Harm - Section 17 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

National Police Check is a summary of an individual's offender history in Australia and a record of their criminal history relating to convictions, finding of guilt, or pending court proceedings. They are available from South Australia Police (SAPOL) or organisations accredited by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

Working with Children Check - People working or volunteering with children in South Australia must, by law, have a valid, (not prohibited) Working with Children Check. A Working with Children Check is an assessment of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children. As part of the process, the Screening Unit will look at criminal history, child protection information and other information.

At Risk: The Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) states that a child or young person is considered to be at risk if they:

- Have suffered harm.
- Are likely to suffer harm; or
- Are likely to be removed from the state for illegal purposes (such as marriage or female cultural practices).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, parents/carers, children and young people and other individuals involved with the school, whether on a regular or occasional basis. It applies:

- On the school premises.
- At functions, excursions, activities, or camps organised by the school.
- When members of the school community are representing the school.

Copies of the school's Child Protection policies and procedures are readily available to all members of the community on request and form part of the induction process for employees.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Identification and Analysis of Risk of Harm

Horizon Christian School has developed and implements a risk management strategy that identifies, assesses, and takes steps to minimize the risks of harm to children and young people.

a. Risk Management Processes

- Identifying risks.
- Assessing risks.
- Minimising the risk of harm.

b. Potential Risks - including but not limited to;

- A code of conduct that is not role related, targeted to the school, or that is not circulated to or understood by staff and volunteers.
- An environment where children and young people do not feel included.
- A school climate where children and young people and their families are not supported to report concerns, complaints, and feedback.
- Unsafe or inappropriate behaviour of staff or volunteers to correct technique (such as; in music, dance, gymnastics, or sport tuition).
- Access to an unsafe online environment.
- Harm caused by staff or volunteers in their interactions with children or young people.
- Third party contractors delivering services for the organisation.
- Lack of support for children and young people when harm occurs.
- Recruitment of a 'prohibited person' within the organisation or contracting with a third party that does not have a Working with Children Check (WWCC) or a Child Safe compliance statement.
- Allowing a person to work with children or young people while the WWCC is being processed.
- A lack of organisational understanding regarding obligations to report harm and risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line and SA Police.
- The inappropriate use of power to hurt, intimidate or control.
- During transportation.
- Lack of appropriate supervision.

- The organisation holds overnight and/or off-site activities with children or young people where an appropriately approved Child Safe compliance statement is not lodged with the Department of Human Services.
 - Taking images of children and young people.
 - Online communications between staff or volunteers and children and young people.
 - Failure to protect privacy and confidentiality.
 - Failure to implement protection measures when dealing with a staff member or volunteer who is being investigated for, or is charged with, a serious criminal offence.
- c. Regular Review of Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- The Executive Team conducts a regular reviews of policies.
 - A full review with community consultation is undertaken every three years. All changes are to be approved by the School Board.
- d. Documentation and Record-keeping
- Accurate, up to date and confidential records are kept of the following:
 - Staff and volunteer training.
 - Working with Children Checks and Responding to Neglect and Harm training.
 - Reports of any harm or risk of harm and associated documentation.
 - Individual student case notes as required.

2. Suitable appointment of Employees and Volunteers

The school is committed to ensuring that all reasonable actions are taken so that only suitable and appropriate people are selected to work or volunteer with our students. This involves a combination of Working with Children Checks, referee and background checks, face to face interviews and vigilance in observing their behaviour, attitudes and relationships with students.

a. Working with Children Checks

- All persons (staff and volunteers) who are in regular contact with children and young people or who work near children and young people on a regular basis, or who supervise such persons, or who have access to children and young people's records are required to present to the school a current 'not prohibited' Working with Children Check before commencing their duties.
- All teachers are required to have current registration with the Teachers Registration Board of SA. A Working with Children Check is a compulsory component of the teacher registration, and it is the teacher's responsibility to maintain the currency of their teacher registration (every 5 years) and provide the school with a copy of their certificate prior to the expiration date.

b. Background and Referee Checks

- As a key part of the recruitment, as well as Working with Children Checks, referees are contacted and other necessary background checks undertaken to ensure the suitability of all persons who are in regular contact with children and young people or who work near children and young people on a regular basis, or who supervise such persons, or who have access to children and young people's records.

c. Face to face interviews

- Whenever possible a face-to-face interview with the Principal or member of the Executive Team will be conducted prior to the appointment of any staff member. All appointments will be approved by the Board (*See Employment Policy*).

3. Expectations, Supervision, Codes of Conduct and Professional Boundaries for Staff and Volunteers

The School values all staff and volunteers. They are treated fairly and respectfully and are required to contribute to our students' safety and wellbeing in the following ways (*see Code of Conduct*):

a. Provision of a safe, respectful and engaging environment where our students observe and are taught positive life skills and values. This helps our students to:

- Develop and expect positive relationships with others.
- Feel connected to the school community and beyond.
- Be resilient and resourceful in dealing with stress and adversity.
- Achieve their potential as learners and members of our community.

b. Be aware, vigilant, and able to recognise when children and young people's wellbeing or safety is being compromised. Staff and volunteers should be prepared to act and follow up on their concerns. This helps ensure:

- Timely and relevant information is gathered and shared with other relevant persons.
- Unsuitable individuals are not present at or involved with the school.
- Students and their families are directed to support when they first show signs of needing it.
- Harm or risk of harm to children and young people is prevented or minimised.
- The needs of children and young people who have been harmed or at risk of harm stay connected to school, and that the school provides positive coping strategies.

c. Supervision of students

Students are actively supervised by staff at the appropriate ratio for the age of the students, purpose, type and location of the activity. Supervision requirements for practical lessons, counselling, yard duty, camps, excursions, travel, etc. are documented in the relevant policies and procedures of which all staff are made aware and required to follow.

d. Working one to one with students

At times it may be necessary for staff to work one to one alone with a student.

Requirements for these situations are outlined in the *Protective Practices* guidelines.

Four essential rules are:

- Make it public (open and visible space).
- Make it authorised (ensure you have your school leader's approval).
- Make it purposeful (observe professional standards in relation to designated roles).
- Make it timely (consider the appropriateness of the time of day and length of time).

4. Support, Training and Supervision

All volunteers and employees who work with children and young people or their records have ongoing supervision, support, and training such that their performance is developed

Child Protection Policy

Endorsed by the Board: December 2022

and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

- a. *Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC Certificate) Training*
 - All school staff must complete the full-day RRHAN-EC training and then the regular (every three years) update training (online). A current certificate must be provided to the Business Office prior to the commencement of duties or the expiration date.
 - All teachers are required to undertake the full-day RRHAN-EC training to obtain their registration with the Teachers' Registration Board of SA and undertake the update training to renew registration. A Working with Children Check is a compulsory component of the Teacher Registration process. It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain the currency of their teacher registration and provide the Operations Manager with a copy of their certificate prior to the expiration date.
 - Volunteers are required to complete the online Education and Care Induction for Volunteers Module (20 minutes) and print their certificate upon completion. Volunteers must undertake the training before commencing their role.
 - Regular training and updates are provided to employees and volunteers regarding school policies, practices, Codes of Conduct, Protective Practices for staff and volunteers, legal obligations and mandatory notification.
 - b. Staff Induction - all new staff undergo an induction process.
The School's Child Protection principles, policies and procedures, as well as their role and responsibilities, form an integral component of the induction. It is essential that new staff not only develop a thorough understanding of the legislative, administrative, social, and educational requirements to protect children and young people but that they also engage with our proactive and positive child-safe ethos, culture and practices.
5. Report and Respond Appropriately to Suspected Harm or Risk of Harm
- a. Reporting Procedure
 - All staff and volunteers are regularly reminded of their obligation to make timely and accurate reports of suspected harm or risk of harm. It is an expectation of the school that any person who, in the course of their work or volunteering, suspects on reasonable grounds that a child is being or has been harmed or at risk of harm must report their concern to the Child Abuse Report Line: CARL 131478, or submit an online report. This includes people who are not mandated to report suspected child harm or risk of harm under the legislation. If a child is at immediate risk, report to SA Police on 000.
 - All staff and volunteers must email the Principal the report number of any mandatory notification, to ensure that the Principal can take any appropriate action to support the child. If the notification concerns the Principal, then the Chair of the School Board would be informed.
 - b. Responding to Reports of Suspected Harm or Risk of Harm
 - The school will act promptly and responsibly in dealing with any reports and allegations of harm or risk of harm.
 - All reports will be reported to the Principal.
 - The care, safety and welfare of the student is the paramount consideration.

- Where appropriate other external authorities will be notified incl. SAPOL, Teachers Registration Board, AISSA.
 - The Guidelines provided in the SA cross-sector document *Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct in SA Education and Care Settings (2013)* will be followed when required.
- c. Responding to problem sexual behaviour involving children and young people
- The school will work in line with the Guidelines provided in the *SA Cross-sector document: Responding to problem sexual behaviour involving children and young people: guideline for staff in education and care settings (2019)* in all circumstances where a child or young person is alleged to have engaged in problem sexual behaviour.
 - These Guidelines outline the responsibilities that staff members have in these circumstances and recognise that procedures are significantly different from those involving allegations of sexual misconduct by adults. They reflect the different rights and needs of children and young people and the different legislation within which staff must operate.
- d. Record Keeping and Documentation
- Documentation of any incident and follow up actions, e.g., reports, records of interviews and meetings must be stored in a secure, confidential file.
6. Empower and Promote the Participation of Children and Young People in Developing and Maintaining Child-safe Environments
- a. The school-wide implementation of the Keeping-Safe Child Protection Curriculum (KS: CPC) enables a cohesive, consistent, and clear approach to developing 4 key aspects:
- The right to be safe.
 - Relationships.
 - Recognising and reporting harm or risk of harm.
 - Protective strategies.

The *Keeping-Safe Child Protection Curriculum* is embedded in our teaching, learning and pastoral care across all year levels. It is a school expectation that all teaching staff undertake the full day KS: CPC training and then maintain currency through completing the online course every three years.

- b. Pastoral Care
- Our Pastoral Care program is fully integrated throughout the teaching and learning and structural organisation to effectively meet the personal, social, wellbeing and academic needs of students. A greater understanding of themselves and others is nurtured; they develop resilience and gain confidence to manage and cope with the opportunities and challenges of real life. A focus on positive psychology and wellbeing empowers students to keep themselves and others safe.
- c. Student Voice
- We believe our students have unique perspectives on learning, teaching, and schooling, and we encourage them to actively shape their own education. Student voice allows students to engage, participate, lead and learn. We foster in our students a sense of

social justice and develop their self-confidence and the skills to stand up for what they believe is just and fair.

Relevant Legislation

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)
Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021 (SA)
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) Education Act 2013 (Cth)
Teacher Registration and Standards Act 2004 (SA) and Amendment Bill 2020
Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011(SA)

Relevant Conventions

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
The United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child

Relevant Standards and Frameworks

Australian Student Wellbeing Framework
National Quality Framework
Safe & Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 - 2031
Child Safe Organisations National Principles
Disability Standards for Education 2005
Homestay Standards

Relevant Cross Sector Guidelines

Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people
Managing allegations of sexual misconduct in SA education and care settings
Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people
Suicide Post Intervention Guidelines

APPENDIX 1

INTRODUCTION

Horizon Christian School strives to be a God-honouring community, committed to developing young people to believe, belong and become all that God has created them to be.

In providing a Christ-centred learning environment for the students in their care, staff have a responsibility to support the Christian ethos of the school, undertaking their responsibilities in line with the Vision and Mission of the School and working within clearly defined employment protocols and professional boundaries.

Horizon Christian School is committed to the safety of children and young people in line with the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)*, *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)* and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.

The school implements measures to ensure that children and young people are valued, respected and encouraged to participate, and that the safety and protection of children and young people is always the first priority.

CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

All Horizon Christian School employees and volunteers are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and are required to abide with the following Child Safe Code of Conduct as part of their involvement in the school community.

All HCS employees and volunteers must:

- Adhere to the *Horizon Christian School Child Protection Policy* at all times and take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people at all times.
- Treat staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents equally and with respect and honesty, regardless of their abilities, sex, or social, economic or cultural background.
- Be a positive role model to children and young people in their conduct with them.
- Set clear boundaries in their relationships with children and young people, ensuring their safety and wellbeing is valued and respected.
- Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people.
- Be alert to bullying behaviours and respond promptly and appropriately.
- Ensure another adult is always present or in sight when conducting one to one coaching, instruction or other activity.
- Be alert to children and young people who are, or may be at risk of harm, and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78).
- Respond quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian.
- Encourage children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them.
- Ensure protective practices and professional boundaries are respected and applied at all times.

Employees and volunteers must not:

- Engage in rough physical games.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.

Breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct

Since school staff and volunteers hold special positions of trust, especially regarding children and young people, they must be accountable for their actions at all times.

Potential breaches of this Code will be addressed in line with the schools established *Grievance Policy*.

Any disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness and in a manner that promotes the Godly values and principles of the school.

Violation of this Code of Conduct by a staff member is grounds for disciplinary action including possible termination of employment.

I agree to abide by this Child Safe Code of Conduct

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____