

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### AUSTIN COVE BAPTIST COLLEGE Policy Management

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**Adopted by:**

Principal Primary  
Principal Secondary

**Review date:**

April 2020

*Reviewed Annually*

### Revision History

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#### Endorsed by Austin Cove Baptist College Board: August 2019

28 April 2019	Principal Secondary
13 March 2019	Principal Primary
21 March 2017	Principal Secondary
3 March 2015	Principal Primary
31 August 2014	Principal Secondary
15 October 2013	Principal Secondary
15 April 2013	Principal Secondary
2012	Principal

## **Policy**

Austin Cove Baptist College promotes a safe, caring and positive community in which all students are welcomed and cared for. The College maintains that all students have a right to be protected from harm on school property and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

It is the responsibility of staff to care for students and this responsibility may extend to responses regarding the identification of possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. (Department of Education: *Child Protection Policy* Updated 2012)

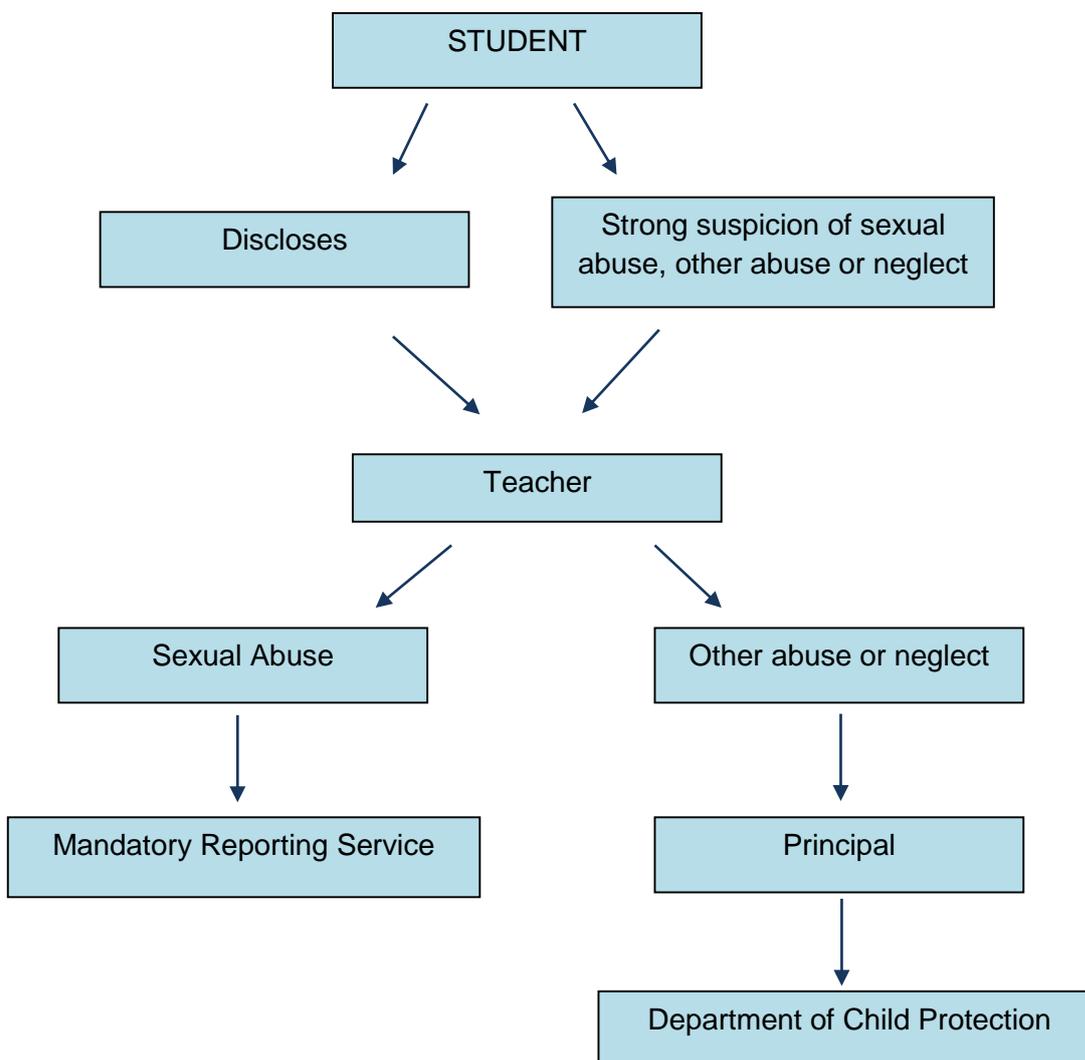
## **Child Safe Standards**

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the Standards found within the Royal Commission's *Creating Child Safe Institutions* (2016) which guide the development and regular review of our strategies, policies and procedures, systems and processes to protect children from abuse.

These Standards are as follows:

1. Child Safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused.
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

**Notification Steps (Child abuse and Mandatory Reporting):**



**Procedures and Guidelines**

**Child Abuse (Non-Sexual Abuse)**

For concerns, suspicions or a belief based on reasonable grounds that Sexual Abuse is occurring or has occurred, please refer to the **Mandatory Reporting Policy**.

The following procedures apply to child protection concerns involving physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, family and domestic violence and neglect.

<p><b>Teachers</b></p>	<p>Teachers who have child protection concerns that non-sexual child abuse are occurring based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observations or</li> <li>• student disclosure or</li> <li>• indicators or other information</li> </ul> <p>should document and refer their concerns to the Principal, in the first instance, or the Board Chair, if it is not appropriate to discuss it with the Principal.</p> <p>It is not the role of the teacher to investigate child abuse. The teacher must report concerns to the Principal.</p> <p>The Principal may wish to consult with the College’s allocated AISWA child protection consultant and/or contact psychologist.</p> <p>Once the teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse is or has been occurring, he/she is required to report to the Principal.</p> <p>If a student makes a direct disclosure, the teacher is required to report to the Principal.</p> <p>Teachers must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform parents/guardians that a referral has been made;</li> <li>• interview the child or children involved;</li> <li>• investigate the concern; or</li> <li>• collect photographic evidence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concerns for student enrolled at another school</b></p> <p>If a teacher holds a child protection concern involving a child or children enrolled at another school, teachers may report their concern to the CPFS District Office as a private citizen.</p>
<p><b>Non-Teaching Staff</b></p>	<p>All non-teaching staff who have concerns or receive a disclosure regarding possible non-sexual child abuse should notify the Principal directly.</p> <p>If a student makes a direct disclosure, the staff member is required to report to the Principal.</p>
<p><b>Principal</b></p>	<p>Upon receiving a report the Principal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refer all child protection concerns received which relate to physical abuse, emotional abuse, family and domestic violence, or neglect to the local CPFS District Office using the CPFS Child Protection Concern Referral Form;</li> <li>• refer child protection concerns where there is a concern for the immediate physical safety of the child to WA Police on 13 14 44 prior to making a CPFS referral;</li> <li>• conduct all consultations in a confidential manner and document concerns in a confidential file separate from the student’s school records;</li> <li>• submit a critical incident form to the Director General of the Department of Education once a referral to CPFS is made.</li> </ul> <p>Refer to <b><u>Reporting a Child Protection Concern</u></b> for more information.</p> <p>To avoid interfering with any investigative process initiated by CPFS or the Police, the Principal must seek advice from CPFS or the Police prior to informing the parent/guardian of a concern of child abuse. Refer to <b><u>Informing Parents/Guardians</u></b> for more information.</p> <p>If following a report, a family approaches the College to receive support for their child, an interview will be conducted with the Principal. At least two school members will be present. The focus of the meeting will be the welfare and support of the child.</p>

	<p>The Principal will ensure ongoing support is provided for the staff member, the student and anyone else affected.</p> <p><b>Concerns for student enrolled at another school</b>          If the Principal holds a child protection concern involving a child or children enrolled at another school, the Principal may report his concern to the CPFS District Office as a private citizen.</p>
<p><b>Specialist pastoral care staff (counsellor / chaplain / psychologist)</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting students affected by abuse</b>          Where the College employs specialist pastoral care staff, they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• operate within and not exceed the scope of their professional training, scope of practice, and parameters outlined by applicable professional bodies (e.g., codes of conduct etc).</li> <li>• to the extent possible subject to the above, support students affected by child abuse, including students who are alleged to have perpetrated abuse</li> <li>• adhere to industry recognised, evidence informed practices</li> <li>• assist in referring students and families to appropriate external specialist services where appropriate</li> </ul> <p>Specialist pastoral care staff in consultation with the Principal, determine what actions, adjustments and supports are in the best interests of the student. Counselling must not impact on the reliability of the student's disclosure and/or contaminate evidence where a Police investigation into child abuse is occurring. Professional judgement is used when the College Psychologist decides to discuss observations with or seek clarification from parents/guardians. Questions and responses are documented verbatim. The Police may use this information in their investigations.</p> <p>The College Psychologist will, when providing direct psychological services to a student, consider the impact of possible trauma stemming from abuse and apply evidence based support and interventions.</p> <p><b>Recordkeeping</b>          The College Psychologist documents all information relating to a child protection matter.</p> <p>All records are confidential and stored securely and must comply with the record-management procedures of the Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics.</p>

## Staff Training

Staff will be:

- fully informed annually of their obligations and responsibilities to proactively protect children from abuse
- committed to their obligations and responsibilities to proactively protect children from abuse
- trained in child protection matters and the identification of possible sexual abuse, including the recognition of 'grooming'.

This policy and its requirements will be:

- communicated annually to staff communicated to new staff during induction

Students aged 18 are legally considered adults and as such CPFS does not have a child protection mandate for them. The Principal will contact the Police when aware of any assault or crime against a young adult. The Youth Legal Service is available for consultation.

Prompt and full responses to any allegations will be undertaken promptly, with well documented records retained securely and confidentially. Refer to **Recordkeeping and Documentation** for more information.

It is vital to remember that confidentiality is paramount and that disclosure of this information should only be discussed with those in the College who are required to know.

## Definitions

### **Child** (Section 3 of the Act)

A person who has not reached the age of 18 years of age and, in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who is apparently under 18 years of age.

Young people aged 18 and over are considered to be adults and are not covered by this legislation. However, schools still owe a duty of care to any students at the school. In these instances, police should be informed of any assault or crime against the young person.

### **Child Protection Concern**

A concern about the wellbeing of a child based on the observation of indicators or information that may lead to a concern for:

- the care of the child;
- the physical, emotional, psychological and educational health and/or sexual development of the child; and
- the safety of the child.

### **Child Abuse**

Occurs when a child has been subjected to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect which has resulted or is likely to result in harm to the child's wellbeing. It may involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or arise from a single incident.

Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law:

- (1) Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver.
- (2) Sexual abuse, in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:
  - (a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
  - (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
  - (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.
- (3) Emotional abuse includes:
  - (a) psychological abuse; and
  - (b) being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.
- (4) Neglect includes failure by a child's parents to provide, arrange or allow the provision of,
  - (a) adequate care for the child; or
  - (b) effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child.

### **Physical Abuse**

Occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver. It may also be the result of putting a child at risk of being injured.

Some examples are: hitting, shaking, punching; burning and scolding; excessive physical punishment or discipline; attempted suffocation; or shaking a baby.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Occurs when an adult harms a child's development by repeatedly treating and speaking to a child in ways that damage the child's ability to feel and express their feelings. Emotional abuse includes psychological abuse and being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.

Some examples are: constantly putting a child down; humiliating or shaming a child; not showing love, support or guidance; continually ignoring or rejecting the child; exposing a child to family and domestic violence; threatening abuse or bullying a child; threats to harm loved ones, property or pets.

### **Psychological Abuse**

Included under emotional abuse is psychological abuse. This abuse damages a child's intellectual faculties and processes, including intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development. Children are likely to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered or only of value in meeting another's needs.

### **Family and Domestic Violence**

Under the Restraining Orders Act 1997 Section 6, an act of family and domestic violence means one of the following acts that a person commits against another person with whom he or she is in a family and domestic relationship:

- (a) assaulting or causing personal injury to the person;
- (b) kidnapping or depriving the person of his or her liberty;
- (c) damaging the person's property, including the injury or death of an animal that is the person's property;
- (d) behaving in an ongoing manner that is intimidating, offensive or emotionally abusive towards the person;
- (e) pursuing the person or a third person, or causing the person or a third person to be pursued:
  - (i) with intent to intimidate the person; or
  - (ii) in a manner that could reasonably be expected to intimidate, and that does in fact intimidate, the person;
- (f) threatening to commit any act described in paragraphs (a) to (c) against the person.

### **Neglect**

When a child is not provided with adequate food or shelter; effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment, and/or care, nurturance or supervision to a severe and/or persistent extent where the health or development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk.

### **Sexual abuse** (Section 124A of the Act)

'Sexual abuse' in relation to a child, includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- (a) The child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; or
- (b) The child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- (c) There is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

This legislation is not intended to capture all sexual activity involving children and young people. Reference should be made to consent laws in Western Australia, The Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 sections 320 - 322.

### **Reasonable belief**

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof.

## **Related Policies**

*Child Protection – Disclosures*

*Child Protection – Grooming Policy*

*Child Protection – Indicators of Child Abuse*

*Child Protection – Informing Parents/Guardians*

*Child Protection – Investigating Concerns*

*Child Protection – Record Keeping and Documentation*

*Child Protection – Reporting a concern*

*Child Protection – Sexting*

*Child Protection – Student Possession of Material*

*Critical Incidents Notification Policy*

*Mandatory Reporting Policy*

*Protective Behaviours Curriculum Policy*