



Child Safe Policy

This Child Safe Policy has been developed in accordance with and implements Principle 1 of the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations** (National Principles).

The Child Safe Policy is published on our School's public website and provided to new Staff, and to Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors at induction. It is also communicated through other mediums such as School Website and Welcome/Induction Packs. A PDF version of St Mark's Child Safe Policy and our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is available here.

Purpose

Our Child Safe Policy, which includes our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the School to promoting children's wellbeing and safeguarding children from harm, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

It is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of our approach to the School as a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the School's entire Child Safe Program.

The Child Safe Policy provides the framework for:

- implementing the National Principles
- developing systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the School
- creating a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child protection culture
- promoting and openly discussing child safety issues within the School
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in South Australia.

Scope

The School's Child Safe Policy applies to all adults in the School, including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and other family members. This Policy applies in all School environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g. camps and excursions).

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Refer to **Valuing Safe Communities: Statement of values**

All children and young people who come to St Mark's have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that

affect their lives.

We have a zero tolerance for harm to children and young people and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The School regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

Child Safe Standards

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles were developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission in response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Principles are comprised of 10 Principles that were informed by, but go further than, the 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission. They are:



Children and Young People's Rights to Safety, Information and Participation

St Mark's is a child safe and child-centred organisation. Our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning

and assessment environments.

We ensure students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our School and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the School

The School recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort, and the local community in which our School operates) know about the School's operations and policies, including the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We build cultural safety at the School through partnerships with relevant communities.

Valuing Diversity in the School

Our School values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- support students with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- welcome students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- ensure that all Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and communities with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring that our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

Our Child Safe Program

St Mark's is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safe Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Safe Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from harm, and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the School. It includes:

- Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- clear information as to what constitutes harm and associated key indicators of different forms of harm to children and young people
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Notifications to the Department for Child Protection (DCP), and Reporting to Police, which make clear that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must, as their first priority, fulfill their legal obligations to report harm or risk of harm to a child to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) and to Police
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Notifications to DCP, and Reporting to Police, which make clear that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must, as their first priority, fulfill their legal obligations to report harm or risk of harm to a child externally
- clear procedures for reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to incidents or allegations of harm to a child or young person
- strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Senior Leadership Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability
- child safety training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of harm to protect, support and assist students
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the National Principles)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of St Mark's induction process, all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors are required to complete induction in our child safety policies, practices and procedures. All Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing child safety training.

Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are supported and supervised by the School's Child Safety Officers and Senior Leadership Team to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child safety.

Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the School

Any person, including a staff member, Volunteer, Contractor, parent/carer or a student, can at any time report a reasonable suspicion about harm to a child or young person directly to CARL on 13 14 78 or online. All serious concerns must be reported via the Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78 and must NOT be submitted online via CARL.

CARL is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

If you need guidance on making a report, or have questions regarding child safety, contact one of the Child Safety Officers.

Our Child Safe Program provides detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents and concerns to relevant external authorities.

It also contains detailed guidance for Members of the Council, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to identify key indicators of different forms of harm to children and young people and how to report child safety incidents or concerns:

- to relevant external authorities, including DCP and the Police
- internally to one of our Learning Community's Child Safety Contact Officers.

Students at the School are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the School. These include by contacting CARL and/or by reporting internally to the School via informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the School may be subject to harm should immediately contact CARL. They should then also contact:

- the School's Senior Child Safety Officer James Heyne, by phoning (08) 8391 0444 or emailing jheyne@stmarks.sa.edu.au, or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the Chair of the Council.

Any person can also contact the Senior Child Safety Officer, or School Council if they have concerns regarding the School's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Responsibilities for Child Safe at the School

Child Safe is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students. Specific responsibilities include:

The School's Child Safety Officers

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and protection issues and can support Staff and Volunteers making a report to CARL. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the School, subsequent to reporting directly to CARL. They are also responsible for championing child safety within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Contact details for our Child Safety Officers are set out below:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address
Lori Saracini	Deputy Principal	(08) 8391 0444	lsaracini@stmarks.sa.edu.au

St Mark's has also appointed James Heyne as the School's Senior Child Safety Officer. The Senior Child Safety Officer is contactable by phone on (08) 8391 0444 or by emailing jheyne@stmarks.sa.edu.au.

The Senior Child Safety Officer has additional child safety responsibilities, such as being the School's contact person for child safety concerns or queries by parents/carers and other members of the wider School, and coordinating the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and the Council.

The Council

The Council is the School's governing body. It is responsible for approving our Child Safe Program and ensuring that the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement the National Principles, and our Child Safe Program.

The Council's Child Safe Responsible Officer

One member of the Council is appointed or identified as a Child Safe Responsible Officer. The Child Safe Responsible Officer is responsible for ensuring that a child safe culture is prioritised, modelled and championed at the Council level of the School.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the School, and the Child Safe Program. The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Safe Program is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School.

The School Senior Leadership Team

Each member of the School Senior Leadership Team is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's Child Safe Program to be effectively implemented within the School, and to support the Principal in the practical application of the School's child safety strategies, policies, procedures and work systems.

Staff Members

All Staff are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Safe Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of harm and risk of harm to children and young people, and Working with Children Checks.

Each current and new School staff member is required to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and acknowledged the School's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of harm and risk of harm, to be observant, to meet their legal obligations to report harm and risk of harm directly to CARL and the Police, and subsequently raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the Child Safety Officers.

Volunteers

All Volunteers at the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

All Volunteers are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of harm and risk of harm to children and young people.

Relevant Volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check as set out in the Child Safe Human Resources Management section, below.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of harm to children and young people, to be observant, to meet their legal obligations to report harm and risk of harm directly to CARL and the Police, and subsequently raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the Child Safety Officers.

Contractors

All Contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

All Contractors engaged by the School are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of harm and risk of harm to children and young people.

Relevant Contractors, as set out in the Child Safe Human Resources Management section below, are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

The School may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor. Relevant contractors are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check as set out in the Child Safe Human Resources Management section, below.

Direct Contact and Regular Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and School cleaners. This also includes allied health professionals, music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School. The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in all School environments. They must have lodged a child safe environments statement to the Department of Human Services prior to being engaged by the School.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct.

The School may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Safe Human Resources Management

St Mark's applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff and Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers. Our recruitment procedures comply with the School's [Child Safe Human Resources Management](#) and ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. All Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors at the School are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

The School ensures that the School Senior Leadership Team, Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors undergo child safety induction, and ongoing education and training as part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from harm.

Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors are provided with regular supervision and performance monitoring by their manager/a senior member of Staff.

The School ensures that professional development programs for Staff include child safety education and training programs.

Child Safe Risk Management

The School recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for harm to children and young people to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

The School has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all School environments.

Record Keeping

The School has a Child Safe Record Keeping policy and is committed to best practice record keeping.

In accordance with our policy, and as required by our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the School are recorded

using the Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Harm to a Child or Young Person Template.

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal privacy legislation.

Program Review

St Mark's is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safe Program. The Program as a whole is reviewed annually for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, the School to actively seeks, actions, and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider School, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, and will communicate any adjustments or amendments widely throughout the School.

Non-Compliance with Our Child Safe Policy

St Mark's enforces this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Policy Review

This Child Safe Policy has been approved by the Council on 20th June 2022.

The Policy is reviewed at least biennially, in light of experience, the effectiveness of procedures and the publication of relevant research.