

# Child Safety Policy

## 1. Carey's Commitment

Carey Baptist Grammar School (“Carey”) is committed to providing a safe environment for all students, acting in their best interests, promoting their wellbeing and keeping them safe at all times.

All members of the Carey community, including students, staff, board members, contractors, parents, guardians and volunteers share responsibility for providing an environment which supports the safety and wellbeing of Carey students and are required to uphold the School's commitment to student safety and zero tolerance of child abuse both at school and elsewhere, including:

- Promoting the safety, wellbeing, participation and empowerment of all students in our care, taking into account students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse, including listening and responding to the concerns of students, either for themselves or for others, educating all members of the School community to understand, identify, discuss and report student safety matters and ensuring any allegation of abuse is reported to the School, the Police or the Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection.
- Promoting student safety within all School Environments.
- Providing an environment where all members of our school community feel encouraged to play an active role in developing a culture of risk minimisation and student safety.
- Implementing and continuously improving procedures and systems that promote and influence an organisational culture of student safety and that provide a safe environment for our students.
- Supporting the wellbeing of all of our students and staff and providing confidential support to those who disclose and/or report student abuse. The care and wellbeing of any victim of student abuse is of paramount importance to the School, with both support and counselling available.
- Treating any student safety concerns very seriously and dealing with any allegation or evidence according to the law and the School's policies and procedures.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The Principal and the Board are responsible for:

- developing strategies to embed a culture of student safety at Carey;
- Allocating roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
- Inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;
- Put the strategies into practice, and inform the Carey community about these practices; and
- Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

These strategies give the highest priority to the promotion and protection of students' safety, health, development, education and wellbeing. This is achieved through:

- Overseeing development and implementation of key policies and processes
- Ensuring student safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings
- Having the Principal and other responsible staff report regularly to the Board on student safety matters
- Consideration by the Principal, responsible staff members and the Board of areas for improvement.

Carey's Reporting Child Abuse Procedure also indicates the senior staff leaders (Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of School Section or Head of Student Development) who have specific responsibilities in relation to the promotion of student safety and for receiving and making reports of suspicion of student abuse.

## 3. Values and Principles

Carey's values and principles are set out in the Carey Charter and the Strategic Directions.

In relation to child safety, Carey has moral and legal responsibilities to provide an environment in which all students are safe in our care. Carey will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this. Carey is committed to:

- Child safety policies and procedures that will support ongoing assessment, identification and minimisation of the risk of child abuse in the school environment.
- Appropriate conduct and behaviour towards and between students at all times.
- Policies which support the processes that will assist Carey to engage the most appropriate staff to work with students.
- Effective reporting mechanisms.

## 4. Definitions

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Child</b>                 | An individual under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.   |
| <b>Child abuse</b>           | Child abuse includes- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Any act committed against a child involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A sexual offence; or</li> <li>(ii) The offence of grooming;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) The infliction, on a child, of – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Physical violence; or</li> <li>(ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(c) Serious neglect of a child.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Student</b>               | An individual who is enrolled as a student at Carey, including students aged 18 and over.  |
| <b>Child -connected work</b> | Work that is authorised by Carey and is performed by an adult in the School Environment while children or students are present or reasonably expected to be present.   |
| <b>Student Safety</b>        | Student safety encompasses matters related to protecting all students from abuse, managing the risk of student abuse, providing support to a student at risk of student abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of student abuse.  |
| <b>School Environment</b>    | The School Environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Carey for use by a student during or outside school hours, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Our main campuses at Kew and Donvale, Bulleen Sports Complex, Boat Shed and Camp Toonalook</li> <li>(b) Online school environments, including email and intranet systems</li> <li>(c) Other locations provided by Carey for students' use, including locations used for school camps, sporting events, tours, excursions, competitions and other events.</li> <li>(d) Transport organised by Carey.</li> </ul> |

## 5. Reporting Allegations

Carey takes all allegations of abuse seriously and has resources in place to investigate them thoroughly and in a timely manner. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with any allegations of abuse.

Carey will work with all students, families, staff, board members, contractors and volunteers to know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse, are a victim of abuse, or if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

### Mandatory reporting obligations

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) (“**CYFA**”) requires certain professionals to make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (“**DHHS**”) when, in the course of their position or employment:

- they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection because the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse; and
- the child’s parents or caregiver have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm.

At the School, mandatory reporters under the CYFA include the Principal, registered teachers and nurses (“**Mandatory Reporters**”).

Mandatory reporters are required by law to notify the DHHS as soon as practicable after forming such a belief, and after each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

It is not mandatory to report emotional and psychological abuse or neglect, but you are at liberty to do so.

### Reasonable grounds for belief

You have reasonable grounds to notify when:

- a child tells you that he/she has been physically or sexually abused;
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child is talking about themselves);
- someone else, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the child, tells you that a child has been abused;
- your observations of the child’s behaviour or knowledge of children lead you to believe that the child has been abused; or
- you observe physical signs or indicators of abuse (e.g. bruises, cuts etc.).

NB: We encourage reporting where you hold a concern about the safety of a child or student aged 18 or over.

### Mandatory obligation to report child sexual abuse

In addition to the obligations above, any person (of or over the age of 18) who receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. The penalty for individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) is 3 years imprisonment.

Carey supports and encourages students, staff, board members, families, volunteers and contractors to make a report to the police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or student is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child or student.

### Voluntary reporting

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse, *may* disclose that information to the Police or the DHHS. A child is to be considered to be “in need of protection” if:

- the child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child;
- the child’s parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child;
- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child;
- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of emotional or psychological harm and the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child;
- the child’s physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parents are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care.

If a person would like internal guidance or support with addressing their concerns, they are encouraged to speak with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of School Section or Head of Student Development.

NB: We encourage reporting where you hold a concern about a student aged 18 or over.

### Protection of reporters

Any staff member, board member, volunteer or contractor that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the School, and will not be penalised by the School for making the report.

If a staff member, board member, volunteer or contractor is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child or student, they should speak to the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of School Section or Head of Student Development for guidance and information. Ultimately, it is a personal decision of the staff member, board member, volunteer or contractor whether they choose to make a report to an external authority or not.

For further information on reporting abuse, please refer to Carey's Reporting Child Abuse Procedure.

## 6. Responding & Reporting

### Disclosure of an incident of child abuse to you

If a child or student discloses an incident of abuse to you, you should:

- try to separate them from other children discreetly and listen to them carefully;
- let them use their own words to explain what has occurred;
- reassure them that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing;
- explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/care giver, specific people in your organisation, or to the police;
- do not make promises to them such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe
- do not leave them in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company stay with them, otherwise get support from the counselling/pastoral team
- as soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child or student's words and then you:
  - should report the disclosure to the Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of School Section or Head of Student Development and,
  - must consider whether your reporting obligations have been triggered.
- ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately and that the record is stored securely.

### Allegation against a member of the School

In the case of an allegation being made against a staff member, board member, director, volunteer and/or contractor at the School, the Principal will follow the School's Reporting Child Abuse Procedure. The School will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the safety of the child or student is paramount.

The first step is to withdraw the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down (with pay, where applicable), re-assignment to other duties that do not have direct contact with children, or to work under increased supervision while the matter is being investigated.

### Case management

In the event of a child or student disclosing an incident of abuse to someone they trust it is essential that it is dealt with sensitively and professionally.

### Investigations

The School will appropriately investigate all allegations relating to an incident of abuse in accordance with its obligations and to the extent reasonably practicable. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the School to conduct an investigation in addition to any investigation conducted by authorities (e.g. the police).

The Principal will conduct an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by DHHS or the police, and will co-operate with the authorities as required.

All people covered by the School's child safety policies and procedures must co-operate fully with any investigation by DHHS, the police or the School.

The Principal will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other staff, board members, volunteers and contractors may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements).

An investigation conducted by the School will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved in the investigation. The School will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the School to engage a person (or persons) from outside the School to conduct an independent investigation in relation to allegations.

The outcome will depend on the findings of the investigation, but may include withdrawal from active duty, re-assignment to duties with no contact with children, increased supervision, disciplinary action, dismissal or criminal prosecutions.

### Interviews

DHHS and/or the police may conduct interviews of students at the School without the parent(s) knowledge or consent.

Interviewing students at the School should only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the best interest of the student to proceed in this manner.

DHHS and/or the police will notify the Principal or a member of the leadership team of their intention to interview the student on the School premises.

When an officer from DHHS or the police come to the School premises, the Principal or a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to the student.

When a student is being interviewed by DHHS and/or the police, school staff must arrange to have a supportive adult present with the student.

#### Support for the student

As part of Carey's duty of care and commitment to pastoral care, Carey will provide support to students impacted by abuse. This may include:

- Development of an individual safety plan;
- Acting as a support person for the student;
- Counselling;
- Attending DHHS' case planning meetings;
- Observing and monitoring the student's behaviour; and
- Liaising with appropriate professionals.

#### Support for the reporter

Following a report, the Head of Student Development will arrange for a debriefing and support for the members of the community who made the report.

#### Requests for information

DHHS and/or Child FIRST and/or the police may request information about the student or family for the purpose of investigating a report and assessing the risk to the student.

In certain circumstance, DHHS can also direct school staff and Department staff to provide information or documents about the protection or development of the student. Such directions should be in writing and only made by authorised persons within DHHS.

## **7. Record keeping**

All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, must be recorded in the form of an Incident Report. Places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm are what is recordable. Reports will be securely stored in the Principal's Office by the Personal Assistant to the Principal].

## **8. Recruitment**

Carey has recruitment practices that enable the Principal and the Board to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work for the School will perform appropriately in relation to student safety.

Carey has recruitment processes that assist in the effective selection of suitable staff, volunteers and contractors.

These processes aim to achieve the following outcomes;

- New and existing staff, volunteers and contractors understand the importance of student safety and are aware of Carey’s policies and procedures.
- Each role at the School that involves child-connected work has a clear statement, which includes a clear job description, duties and responsibilities regarding student safety and relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to student safety.
- Compliance with School policy for recruitment and selection of staff for obtaining, verifying and recording information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work, including process for screening and background checks.
- Induction of new staff, volunteers and contractors into the School’s policies, codes, practices and procedures, governing student safety and child-connected work
- A staff member’s continuing suitability for child-connected work is monitored and assessed.

All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for Carey will be informed about the School’s student safety practices and its student safety code of conduct.

All employees engaged by the School as classroom teachers must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, which includes a Police Criminal Records Check Teachers must provide evidence of such registration before they commence employment, and are informed of Carey’s student safety practices and its student safety code of conduct within their Letter of Appointment.

All non-teaching staff, board members, volunteers and contractors engaged at the School are required to have a Police Criminal Records Check prior to being engaged by the School. The School’s HR Managers records all Police Criminal Records Check on the School’s Human Resource Management System and this is checked annually to see who requires a renewal.

The School may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at the School and during their time with the School in regular intervals.

All successful applicants engaged at the School will be assessed on an ongoing basis:

- during any scheduled performance review; and
- after any concern is raised regarding their conduct with children,

to ensure that they remain suitable for child-connected work.

## 9. Privacy

The School will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the *Privacy Policy*.

### Principles

There are two guiding principles in respect to a child or student's privacy.

- First, the School will operate on the best interest's principle. All staff, board members, volunteers and contractors will do what they believe to be in the best interest of the child or student. This principle supersedes all others.
- Second, the School will respect a child or student's confidentiality except in situations where it conflicts with the best interest's principle.

As much as is reasonably possible, an individual's confidentiality is to be protected. Both those who are making reports and those about whom accusations are being made are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, staff, board members, volunteers and contractors must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with the School's child safety practices and its child safety code of conduct, and relevant statutory requirements.

### Notifying the parents of the student

The person making the report should not inform the parents or carers of a report. The person making the disclosure, Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of School Section or Head of Student Development must consult with DHHS and/or the police to determine what information should be shared with parents/carers. DHHS or the police may advise:

- Not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is 16 years or older and does not wish for their parents/carers to be contacted)
- To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

## 10. Reducing or removing risks of abuse

Carey has policies and practices in place for the early identification and response to any incidents of abuse in its physical or online environment. These policies and practices:

- Promote understanding by all Carey staff of Carey’s expectations in relation to behaviour and conduct when interacting with student and the consequences of failing to abide by those expectations.
- Seek to achieve ongoing risk assessment to identify and mitigate risk in all School Environments, taking into account the age and needs of the students, the nature of the activities undertaken at Carey and the particular risks they might present.
- Provide ongoing training, education and support (at least annually) for all Carey staff in relation to:
  - Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse; and
  - Child abuse risks in the School Environment.
- Require appropriate human resources policies to assess staff in relation to compliance with their student safe obligations and continued suitability for child-connected work.

If the Principal and/or the Board identify risks of child abuse occurring in one or more School Environments, the Principal and/or the Board must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) Carey will take to reduce or remove the risks (“**risk controls**”).

As part of Carey’s risk management strategy and practices, the Principal and the Board will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

## 11. Promoting student empowerment and participation

The School has strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

- Standards of behaviour for students
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- Resilience
- Wellbeing
- Child abuse awareness and prevention

Carey will utilise its curricular, pastoral and co-curricular programs to enhance student awareness, teaching students about child safety and child abuse and encourage them to disclose behaviour that makes them feel unsafe.

## 12. Communication

The School is pro-active in the area of prevention and will communicate the School's child safety practices and its child safety code of conduct in the manner below.

| STUDENTS  | PARENTS, GUARDIANS, COMMUNITY, SPONSORS, PARTNERS  | EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, CONTRACTORS, BOARD MEMBERS   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions of enrolment</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Intranet/Careylink</li> <li>• School assemblies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions of enrolment (Parents will receive a hard and electronic copy)</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Parent information evenings</li> <li>• School newsletter</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Intranet/ Careylink</li> <li>• Letters of appointment/ contracts</li> <li>• Induction Training and refresher training</li> <li>• Annual Training Session</li> </ul> |

The School will ensure that the School's child safety practices and its child safety code of conduct are communicated in an accessible manner for:

- younger students, by discussing the documents in-person (and any other method deemed appropriate and effective for the particular age of the student); and
- students living with a disability, by discussing the documents in-person (and any other method deemed appropriate and effective for the particular type of disability that the student is living with).

## 13. Review

The School will review this policy every two years and following any significant incident, if one were to occur.

## 14. Other Related Carey Policies

- Reporting Child Abuse Procedure
- Grievance, Complaint and Dispute Resolution Policy for the Carey Community
- Whistle-blower Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Working with Children Accreditation.
- Rights and Responsibilities of Students
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Anti-discrimination

- Program Support Group Students with Disabilities
- Responsible Use of ICT/Mobile Devices
- Various ELC student welfare /safety policies

Approved by the Carey Board July 2017

Next review: November 2018