

Policy

Safeguarding Reporting

1. Policy Statement

Scotch College (“the College”) staff, Council members, volunteers and contractors must act in accordance with this policy to respond to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse involving children or young people in the College’s care.

2. Rationale

The purpose of this policy, in accordance with *Ministerial Order 1359 - Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, is to ensure all incidents, disclosures and suspicions involving children and young people, are accurately reported and responded to in a consistent, timely and sensitive manner.

This policy aims to assist personnel to:

- recognise types and indicators of abuse and neglect
- respond to the immediate needs of individuals involved in an incident (including personnel)
- follow the College’s reporting procedures
- ensure their legal responsibilities when working with children and young people are upheld.

3. Scope

The scope of this policy includes child abuse perpetrated (or alleged to have been perpetrated) by a person within the College community or by any other person.

This policy applies:

- to all personnel, as defined.
- to all forms of child abuse. Types and indicators of abuse are outlined in Appendix 2.
- across all school environments, as defined.

The scope of this policy excludes:

- Breaches of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct, and reporting requirements relating to these breaches (including the Reportable Conduct Scheme, Failure to Protect Offence, and Failure to Disclose offence). They are covered within the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.
- The sharing of information with other Information Sharing Entities. That is covered by the College’s Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Policy.

This policy is maintained publicly and communicated to the College community in accordance with the College’s Policy Control Schedule.

4. Definitions

Refer to Appendix 1.

5. Guiding Principles

- All personnel have a duty of care and, at times, a legal obligation, to ensure that ‘reasonable steps’ are taken to prevent harm to children and young people.
- All personnel are responsible for supporting a transparent culture, whereby any actions that contravene the College’s Safeguarding policies, however minor, are reported and documented.
- Failure by personnel to make a report in accordance with this policy is considered a serious breach that may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

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- All personnel are required to understand their obligations to make a report, in balance with requirements to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of parties involved, by discussing any concerns and allegations only with authorised personnel.
- The College provides ongoing training of personnel in relation to all of the College's Safeguarding policies. Training in relation to this policy includes detailed training on logging a Safeguarding incident report, notification requirements and support available.
- The College upholds the rights of children and young people, and their families, to have their safeguarding concerns responded to in a way that respects diverse backgrounds, including children and young people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, live with a disability, are LGBTQU+, or who are unable to live at home.

6. Action required to respond to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

There are four critical steps that must be undertaken to respond to all incidents, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns of child abuse, or breaches of policy where appropriate:

1. Responding
2. Reporting
3. Sharing of Information
4. Supporting

RESPONDING

Incidents

Immediate responses may include:

- **Reducing the harm and risk of harm** to those impacted by the incident including by:
 - making the surroundings safe to prevent immediate recurrence of the incident, e.g.:
 - removing potentially harmful person(s)
 - increasing supervision
 - moving uninvolved children and young people away from incident
 - moving to a safe place
 - alerting others to risks that extend beyond the local environment, for example, other areas within the College
 - calling emergency services such as Police, Fire Brigade or Ambulance if required.
- **Providing immediate care and support** to children and young people, families, personnel and others involved in the incident including addressing:
 - physical well-being e.g. providing first aid or arranging medical treatment if a person suffers any harm or injury as a result of the incident
 - emotional well-being (including psychological) e.g. arranging for coverage of duties and supervision responsibilities, facilitating access to counselling, debriefing and support for others involved in, witnessing or becoming aware of the incident.
- **Where possible, and acting on advice of relevant authorities (e.g. Police), preserve evidence in situations where allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect has occurred. This can include:**
- ensuring that the person who may have perpetrated the abuse and the child or young person who has been subject to

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- the abuse remain in their clothing, or that the clothing is not washed and is sealed securely in a bag
- not cleaning or disturbing the area in which the abuse has occurred and protecting any physical items such as weapons from being touched or removed.

Disclosures or allegations

When responding to a disclosure or allegation by a child or young person, personnel should:

- listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without dispute
- clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions (taking guidance from the College's online Incident Report Form)
- provide reassurance that the child or young person has done the right thing in making a disclosure and is believed, and that the College will take immediate action in response.
- explain to the child or young person that other people may need to be told, in order to stop what is happening. Do not promise to keep any information a secret.
- record notes as early as practicable to ensure all information is captured before completing the College's online Incident Report Form. Notes taken can be attached to the form prior to submission.

Responses should be tailored to the specific needs of the child or young person and consider whether the child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, has a disability, identifies as LGBTQI+, has a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and/or is unable to live at home.

REPORTING

Personnel are required to report any reasonable concerns or instances of abuse by any person immediately. Where that is not possible, reporting must occur no later than before that person's shift or session of work or volunteering with the College ends.

It is not the role of personnel to investigate an allegation / concern.

Personnel must also immediately report each new instance of suspicion of harm and / or breach of policy as they become aware of it.

Internal Reporting Requirements

Guidance is provided within the online Incident Report Form to assist personnel to complete the form thoroughly and accurately. All reports must be documented fully and written factually and objectively. Details to be captured include:

- details of the person/s involved
- date, time, location of the incident/disclosure/allegation
- incident type and how incurred
- what was said, and relevant factual information without assumptions (where possible, noting the exact words used by the person making the allegation / disclosure)
- any actions already taken.

A verbal report may be made to the Child Protection Officer (Vice Principal Head of Senior School), Vice Principal Teaching and Learning or Vice Principal Head of Junior School. Details of all verbal reports must still be captured within the Incident Report Form. If a reporter does not feel comfortable making a report to these individuals, or the incident involves one or more of these individuals, the reporter must make a report directly to the Principal.

Upon receipt of a report via the online system, the Child Protection Officer or Head of Junior School is responsible for:

- ensuring the immediate response was sufficient and taking any further action needed

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- ensuring a Safeguarding Incident Report Form is completed correctly and following-up with the reporter if required
- management of the incident in line with the College's Safeguarding Incident Management Policy.

The reporting of a matter via internal reporting mechanisms does not displace or discharge an individual from any other legal and regulatory reporting obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes a child is at risk of child abuse. Refer below for external reporting obligations.

External Reporting Requirements

The College's Child Protection Officer (Vice Principal Head of Senior School), Principal, Vice Principal Teaching and Learning, Vice Principal Head of Junior School and the College's Psychologist are responsible for the fulfilment of external reporting obligations driven by legal and regulatory requirements. This includes identifying when reporting is required to Police, child protection authorities, the Commission for Children and Young People and other relevant government bodies including any professional bodies and/or accrediting/regulatory bodies.

The Principal is made aware of any incidents requiring external authority notification.

Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting requirements are the legal obligations of specified professionals (including teachers) to report incidents of child abuse and /or neglect where they have reasonable belief that abuse has, or is likely to, occur. If the incident meets mandatory reporting thresholds or if unsure, personnel within the College who are Mandatory Reporters must, as soon as practicable and before the end of the shift, notify the Child Protection Officer and the Principal that a report is to be made to the prescribed child protection authority of their suspicion and its basis. Incidents involving personnel within the College or others (e.g. family members) must be reported to child protection authorities.

The above does not preclude other non-mandated individuals from making a report to the child protection authority or the police if they have reasonable concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child.

Reporting to the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF)

The College is accredited with the Australian Childhood Foundation. As such, the following reporting requirements must be fulfilled by the Child Protection Officer, by completing the Child Abuse Incident – ACF Report Form:

- All critical incidents (as determined via the College's Safeguarding Incident Management Policy) must be verbally reported to ACF within 24 hours of the College becoming aware of the incident
- Any allegations of child abuse that involves College personnel must be reported within 28 days of the College becoming aware of the incident.

SHARING OF INFORMATION

The College seeks to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all parties to a safeguarding incident (including the alleged perpetrator) as far as reasonably practicable, except where doing so would compromise the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person and/or the investigation of the allegation.

After an incident has been reported, and where appropriate, the process of sharing information with the child/young person, their families and involved personnel will begin as soon as reasonably practicable. The process will be adapted to fit the needs of any child/young person, family and personnel, and the requirements of any investigation processes.

Any liaison with external authorities, including the Police and Child Protection, must take place via the Office of the Principal. The Office of the Principal will:

- Provide authorities with information about the incident to assist authorities in their investigation
- Consult with authorities to determine what information can be shared with parents / caregivers. This may include:
 - Not contacting the parents / care givers in circumstances where it is alleged they have been engaged in the

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abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish their parent/care giver to be contacted.

- Contacting the parents / care givers and providing agreed information as soon as possible.

The decision to share information will consider:

- whether the ongoing safety of those involved in or impacted by the incident would be compromised by the sharing or non-sharing of information
- the advice of police and child protection (care must be taken not to compromise their investigations)
- the rights of those impacted by the incident to privacy, confidentiality, procedural fairness and a presumption of innocence in accordance with College's policies and employment law, and
- the need (of those potentially impacted by the incident) to know of the incident.

SUPPORTING

The Child Protection Officer will lead the process of referring children and young people involved in a safeguarding incident to appropriate wellbeing and support services both within the College, or externally as required. Support will be provided to:

- the child or young person directly involved in the incident and their family, with consideration as to whether the child or young person is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, has a disability, identifies as LGBTQI+, has a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and/or is unable to live at home
- other children or young people who may have witnessed or been impacted by the incident.

The Head of People, Research and Professional Growth will lead the processes of providing support to personnel. Support includes internal support and referral to professional counselling, and will be offered to:

- personnel who witnessed and/or reported the incident
- any personnel against whom a complaint is made – this includes emphasising to all personnel the allegation will be thoroughly investigated following principles of procedural fairness, and that 'guilt' is never assumed
- other personnel impacted by the incident.

7. Records and Documentation

The College's Safeguarding Incident Reporting system is a secure repository to which access is appropriately restricted to authorised personnel. Any hard-copy notes are digitised and appended within the Safeguarding Incident Reporting system, before being securely destroyed.

Records relating to safeguarding incidents and allegations are maintained in accordance with the College's Records Management Policy and Privacy Policy.

8. Implementation of this policy

The responsibilities and actions required of personnel in implementing this policy are outlined in Appendix 3.

9. Review and Monitoring

This Policy must be reviewed at least once every two years or following any significant incident, audit or legislative changes.

10. Related Documents

1. Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
2. Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct

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3. Safeguarding Incident Management Policy
4. Scotch College Records Management Policy (Staff Policy Portal only)
5. Scotch College Privacy Policy
6. Scotch College Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy (Staff Policy Portal only)
7. Scotch College Complaints (Parent, Student and Community) Policy

APPENDIX 1 – Definitions

Term	Definition
Bullying	Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats); • Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	Child - a person under the age of eighteen years. The College extends this definition to include persons over the age of 18 while enrolled at the College.
Emotional or psychological abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
Family Violence	Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults and towards children in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.
Harm	Harm to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; and • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Information Sharing Entity	Information Sharing Entities are authorised to share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme. An Information Sharing Entity List is maintained by the Victorian Government and may be located and searched at www.vic.gov.au/information-sharing-entity-list . The List is updated at regular intervals but is not a live list. A list of the persons and bodies that are Information Sharing Entities for the purpose of the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme may be located and searched at www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme . The List is updated at regular intervals but is not a live list.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
Personnel	All who work for the College whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including; employees, casual employees, volunteers, Council and Council committee members and contractors.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over-training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury, can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt. Physical abuse also includes threats to physical harm.
Reasonable belief	A reasonable belief is more than suspicion. There must be some objective basis for the belief. However, it is not the same as having proof and does not require certainty. For example, a person is likely to have a reasonable belief if they observed the conduct themselves, heard directly from a child that the conduct occurred, or received information from another credible source (including another witness).
Reasonable steps	Personnel may breach a duty of care towards a child or young person if they fail to act in the way that a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation. In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include (but are not necessarily limited to): acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable, seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or agencies when the unsure of what steps to take, reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities such as Police or Child Protection, arranging counselling and/or other appropriate support for the child, providing ongoing support to the child and sharing information with other personnel who will also be responsible for monitoring and providing ongoing support to the child or young person.
School environment	Any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used by students during or outside school hours as part of school authorised activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the College boarding facilities; b) a campus of the College; c) online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the College for use by a student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and

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	<p>d) other locations provided by the College or through a third-party provider for a student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. camps; ii. accommodation of students (approved accommodation providers); iii. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or iv. sporting events, excursions, trips, competitions or other events.
Sexual abuse	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. teacher) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.</p>
Sexual exploitation	<p>Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power, (physical, financial or emotional) over a child or young person, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them. It often involves situations and relationships where children and young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and the child or young person may not even realise they are a victim.</p>

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APPENDIX 2 – Key Indicators of Abuse

Abuse	Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unexplained cuts, abrasions, bruising or swelling unexplained burns or scalds, cigarette burns rope burns or marks on arms, legs, neck, torso unexplained fractures, strains or sprains; dislocation of limbs recurrent injuries bite marks mouth and dental injuries ear or eye injuries disclosure of physical threats being made consistent sickness/nausea from potential poisons covering themselves with clothes inappropriate to weather conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoidance of particular staff, fear of a particular person sleep disturbances changes in behaviour (e.g. unusual mood swings, uncharacteristic aggression) changes in daily routine, changes in appetite unusual passivity, withdrawal self-harm, suicide attempts inappropriate explanations of how injuries occurred excessive compliance to staff rough handling
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> direct or indirect disclosure of abuse or assault trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs difficulty walking or sitting pain or itching in genital and/or anal area; bruising, bleeding or discharge self-harm, abuse, suicide attempts torn, stained or blood-stained underwear or bedclothes sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy unexplained money or gifts recurrent pain on passing urine or faeces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sleep disturbances changes in eating patterns inappropriate or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge changes in social patterns sudden or marked changes in behaviour or temperament anxiety attacks, panic attacks, clinical depression refusal to attend usual places (e.g. work, school, respite) going to bed fully clothed excessive compliance to staff inappropriate or excessive masturbation
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speech disorders in the case of a child, lags in physical development, failure to thrive injuries sustained from self-harm or abuse suicide attempts anxiety attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-harm or self-abusive behaviours challenging/extreme behaviours excessive compliance to staff very low self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness clinical depression marked decrease in interpersonal skills extreme attention-seeking behaviour
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> physical wasting, unhealthy weight levels poor dental health food from meals left on face and/or clothes throughout the day dirty, unwashed body and/or face, body odour person always wearing the same clothes ill-fitting and/or unwashed clothes person is always over- or underdressed for the weather conditions food is consistently poor quality, insufficient, inedible and/or unappetising persistent illnesses without appropriate medical treatment suffering persistent infestations such as scabies or headlice disclosure of being left alone for long periods of time that are inappropriate to age or maturity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> constant tiredness persistent hunger unexpectedly poor social/interpersonal skills signs of loss of communication and other skills staff member, service provider, carer or support person consistently fails to bring the person to appointments, events, activities person is persistently denied opportunities to socialise with others in the community excessively clingy or fearful
Family Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eating and sleeping difficulties concentration problems inability to play constructively clinginess defiant behaviour rebelliousness temper tantrums cruelty to pets physical abuse of others avoidance of peers dropping out of school academic failure delinquency/offending eating disorders substance misuse depression suicide ideation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fearfulness numbing increased arousal adjustment problems developmental delay physical complaints overly compliant behaviour withdrawal loss of interest in social activities self-harm poor school performance use of controlling behaviours distrust of adults violent behaviours violence toward a parent/care giver (particularly their mother) early pregnancy

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APPENDIX 3 - Roles and Responsibilities for Implementation of this Policy

Role	Responsibility
College Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorise this policy • Receive reports on specified categories of incidents (per the College's Safeguarding Incident Management Policy)
College Council via its Risk Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide oversight and endorsement of this policy • Receive reports on specified categories of incidents, provide support and advice as appropriate, and utilise data to inform the College's incident and risk management strategies
Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement policies and procedures across the College • Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures • Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support, advice and resource to understand and implement this policy and related procedures • Report Reportable Conduct (Principal) (per the College's Safeguarding Child Protection Reportable Conduct Policy) • Establish Critical Incident Management Team in response to Moderate and Critical Incidents (per the College's Safeguarding Incident Management Policy and Critical Incident Management Plan) • Initiate reporting to external authorities as required by legal and regulatory requirements
Child Protection Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders • Provide training and advice in the application of policy and procedures • Assist with messaging across the College
Child Protection Officer and Head of Junior School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure this policy and related procedure is followed and implemented • Receive and manage incident reports in line with the College's Safeguarding Incident Management Policy • Assess each situation reported and notify necessary individuals • Responsible for the response and recovery coordination of an incident • Report to the Critical Incident Management Team where required • Provide support and advice in the application of this policy
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and compliance with this policy and related procedure. • Immediately control any situation including liaising with key stakeholders, obtaining and documenting details of the incident • Complete Incident Report Form in accordance with this policy • Undertake Safeguarding compliance training as required by the College including training in the application of this policy