



Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People

(Replaces 2009 Policy of the same title)

South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools, July 2011.

‘Let us give children a future of peace!’

Pope John Paul II
1996

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'Children and young people are our present and our future. They have the right to grow and to develop their full potential physically, emotionally and spiritually. That potential is their families' and communities' responsibility to nurture and fulfil'. South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council, Charter, 2006.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. South Australian Catholic schools place the highest priority on the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.
- 1.2. In South Australia Child Protection policy and practices support a proactive role in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people, the provision of child safe environments and intervention procedures for responding to abuse and neglect.
- 1.3. The Archdiocese of Adelaide, in partnership with the Diocese of Pt Pirie, established the South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council to oversee the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within the South Australian Catholic Church community, in partnership with families.
- 1.4. The Council developed a Charter, a Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People and Implementation Procedures for all agencies of the Catholic Church including Catholic schools and the Catholic Education Office.
- 1.5. The SACCS Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People is informed by the South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Charter, Policy and Implementation Procedures and the Children's Protection Act 1993.
- 1.6. The Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People draws on the wisdom and guidance of experts in the area, and from a range of documents. It revises the 2009 Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People and the Catholic Education SA Procedures for dealing with Child Abuse 2002. (Please refer to the References section for associated documentation).
- 1.7. Schools have additional responsibilities for the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people and in providing child safe environments.

These responsibilities include:

- a duty of care to students
- responsibilities as mandated notifiers of child abuse and/or neglect
- the provision of child protection curriculum for every student
- a code of conduct to promote respectful and caring relationships.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. Respectful relationships that support the dignity of each person including children and young people are central to the life and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- 2.2. Children and young people deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- 2.3. Primary responsibility for children and young people resides with the family and schools work in partnership with families.
- 2.4. In Catholic schools guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people require honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- 2.5. Adults have the responsibility to protect children and young people.
- 2.6. Children and young people have a right to be heard regarding decisions that affect their life.
- 2.7. Children and young people are encouraged to participate in all dimensions of life and to develop skills to contribute to their own safety and wellbeing.
- 2.8. Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and co-operation with Church, government, police and human service agencies.
- 2.9. Complaint processes are consistent with the principles of natural justice and fairness and the relevant SACCS policies
- 2.10. All people involved in child protection issues and incidents are to be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1. All Catholic schools are to be child safe environments where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- 3.2. Catholic schools play a significant role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect and are responsible for implementing policies and practices, including the provision of a child protection curriculum, for the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.

4. A GUIDE TO RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility of all people involved in Catholic education is to ensure that there is a total community approach towards the protection of children and young people from abuse and/or neglect.

4.1. Responsibilities of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools:

- 4.1.1. To develop, monitor and review the policy in accordance with legal requirements and the Church's teachings
- 4.1.2. To ensure that resources are available to facilitate ongoing training and support for school leaders and staff in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people
- 4.1.3. To provide representation on the appropriate child protection committees.

4.2. Responsibilities of the Catholic Education Office

- 4.2.1. To allocate training resources for personnel to assist in the delivery of professional development programs for school leaders and staff in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people
- 4.2.2. To provide advice and support for school personnel dealing with the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people
- 4.2.3. To provide advice and support for school personnel to develop curriculum in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people
- 4.2.4. To encourage school personnel to review on a regular basis their legal obligations under the Children's Protection Act 1993
- 4.2.5. To ensure that an inter-agency approach to the management of child protection is fostered and supported
- 4.2.6. To provide current information on the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.

4.3. Responsibilities of school leaders

- 4.3.1. To provide a safe school environment for the protection of children and young people
- 4.3.2. To ensure school personnel understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations, responsibilities and correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect
- 4.3.3. To support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification

- 4.3.4. To implement policies and organisational procedures which provide children and young people with a safe school environment. This will be done in consultation with schools boards and parent communities
 - 4.3.5. To promote models of behaviour between school personnel and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
 - 4.3.6. To ensure that student management practices respect the dignity of children and young people
 - 4.3.7. To provide training and development opportunities for school personnel to develop curriculum in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people
 - 4.3.8. To initiate and support the implementation of child protection and abuse prevention curriculum at the classroom level so that children and young people have access to these programs throughout their school years
 - 4.3.9. To monitor and evaluate child protection and abuse prevention curriculum
 - 4.3.10. To provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the protection and abuse prevention curriculum
 - 4.3.11. To ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children and young people in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.
- 4.4. Responsibilities of school personnel (including paid or unpaid volunteers)
- 4.4.1. To treat children and young people with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children and young people in their care
 - 4.4.2. To notify the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78, if in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
 - 4.4.3. To provide a physically and psychologically safe environment where the well being of children and young people is nurtured
 - 4.4.4. To undertake regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities and those of the Catholic Education SA, in relation to child protection and the health and well being of children and young people
 - 4.4.5. To teach children and young people skills and assist them to develop an understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety and well being

- 4.4.6. To assist children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.

5. REFERENCES

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<http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-people/child-protection/child-protection-charter>
- 5.2. South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People, 2009
http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/f/4463/Child%20Protection%20Council%20Policy.pdf
- 5.3. South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council Implementation Procedures for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People, 2009
http://www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/_files/f/9471/Implementation%20Procedures%20booklet.pdf
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<http://online.cesamet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-13434/FINAL+PDF+-+CESA+Strategic+Plan.pdf>
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- 5.12. National Safe Schools Framework, accessed at http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/natsafeschools_file.pdf
- 5.13. Child Wise, Choose with Care, Building Safe Organisations http://www.childwise.net/images/stories/documents/online_publications/12_Steps_to_building_child_safe_orgs.pdf
- 5.14. Responding to Abuse and Neglect: education and care mandatory training and update training 2009-2011 <http://online.cesnet.adl.catholic.edu.au/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-3500>
- 5.15. Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/RespondingtoProblemSexual.pdf>
- 5.16. Safe School Environments, Department for Families and Communities <http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/Home/FamiliesSA/ChildSafeEnvironments/tabid/281/Default.aspx>
- 5.17. The Children's Protection Act, 1993 <http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/web/menu/Other%20websites/OtherWebsites.aspx> then type in *Children's Protection Act, 1993*
- 5.18. Working Together to Keep Children Safe: South Australian Interagency Child Protection Information Book Charter <http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/tabId/968/itemId/285/Training-for-mandated-notifiers--reporting-child.aspx> then click on "guidelines for reporting child abuse and neglect"

6. GLOSSARY

Catholic Church community	The concept of Church community is broad and includes any Catholic Church body and all people involved in the life and work of the Church. The term Church body is defined below.
Catholic School	Includes colleges, schools, special schools, preschools, early learning centres administered by the Archdiocese of Adelaide and Diocese of Port Pirie
Child Abuse or Neglect	Abuse or neglect in relation to a child means: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sexual abuse of the child <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Physical or emotional abuse of the child , or neglect of the child, to the extent that the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child’s wellbeing; or a child’s physical or psychological development is in jeopardy, and abused or neglected has a corresponding meaning (section 6, Children’s Protection Act)
Child or Young Person	Conception to 18 years of age, may include young adults with disabilities.
Church Body	Includes a diocese, religious institute and any other juridical person, body corporate, organisation or association, including autonomous lay organisations that exercise pastoral ministry within, or on behalf of, the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Adelaide or the Diocese of Port Pirie.
Church Personnel	Includes any cleric, member of religious institute or other persons who are employed or engaged by a Church body, or appointed by a Church body to voluntary positions, in which they work with or are in close proximity to children or young people, or are engaged in other forms of pastoral care.
Family	Includes units consisting of parents, care-givers, young people and children. Parents may be biological, adoptive or foster and the units may consist of blended and extended families, single parent families, families with children or young people in respite or foster care or relatives with the care of children or young people’
Legally Mandated	Persons obliged by law to notify the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78. Please refer to <i>(Section 11 of the Children’s</i>

to Notify	<i>Protection Act 1993)</i> http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/web/menu/Other%20websites/OtherWebsites.aspx <i>then type in Children's Protection Act, 1993</i>
Suspicion on Reasonable Grounds	Reasonable grounds to report suspected abuse and/or neglect may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when your own observations of a particular child's behaviour and/or injuries, or your knowledge of children generally lead you to suspect abuse is occurring • when a child tells you she/he has been abused, or • a child telling you that they know of someone who has been abused (she/he may possibly be referring to her/himself), or • when you hear about it from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend, neighbour or sibling of the child who is at risk.
School Activities	All school related teaching and learning experiences, including lessons, retreats, excursions, sporting activities, etc.
School Leaders	School Directors, Principals, Principal's Delegates Deputy Principals, Assistant Principals,
School Personnel	Persons working in a Catholic school in paid or voluntary capacities (e.g. teachers, Education Support Officers, ground staff, canteen workers, LAP volunteers etc.).

This document will be updated as regulatory or other matters arise.

Published by the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools.
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