CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The St Edmund's College Child Safeguarding Policy implements the requirements of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework. It also implements, and is to be read and understood in conjunction with:

•   the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework

•   EREA Child Safeguarding Policy

•   EREA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

•   the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

This Child Safeguarding Policy has been approved by EREA on 7 December 2020

It is to be reviewed on December 2023

The Child Safeguarding Policy is published on our College'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 our newsletter and our website: Child Safety.

Purpose

Our Child Safeguarding Policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the College to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse, neglect or other harm.

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

The Child Safeguarding Policy provides the framework for:

• the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the College

• the creation of a safe and supportive College environment and a positive and robust child safe culture

• the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the College

• compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in the ACT.

Scope

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

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

St Edmund's College endorses, implements and complies with the EREA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, which is set out on our website.

Child Safeguarding Standards

In addition to implementing the requirements of the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework, the College's commitment to child safety is based on the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, which set out the following overarching standards that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse, neglect and other harm.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) expand on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, specifically for Catholic settings. They set out 10 overarching standards that guide the development of a child safe culture for Catholic entities. Compliance with the NCSS is mandatory for all Catholic entities.

The NCSS are:

Standard 1	Standard 6
Committed leadership, governance and culture	Effective complaints management
Standard 2	Standard 7
Children are safe, informed and participate	Ongoing education and training
Standard 3	Standard 8
Partnering with families, carers and communities	Safe physical and online environments
Standard 4	Standard 9
Equity is promoted and diversity is respected	Continuous improvement
Standard 5	Standard 10
Robust human resource management	Policies and procedures support child safety

The EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework

The College's Child Safeguarding Program is also based on the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework.

This Framework includes a set of Child Safeguarding Standards that express the College's own overarching commitment to the child safe values and principles that guide the development of our Child Safeguarding Program. The Framework builds on the NCSS.

The EREA Child Safeguarding Standards are:

Standard 1: Committed Leadership, Governance and Culture
Child Safeguarding is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Standard 2: Children and Young People are Safe, Informed and Participate
Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Standard 3: Partnering with Families, Carers and Communities
Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
Standard 4: Equity is Promoted and Diversity Respected
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
Standard 5: Robust Human Resource Management
People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice
Standard 6: Effective Complaints Handling
Processes for raising child safety concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children and young people, families, carers, relevant communities, and staff
Standard 7: Ongoing Education and Training
Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
Standard 8: Safe Physical and Online Environments
Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
Standard 9: Regular Review and Continuous Improvement
Implementation of the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards and of the College's Child Safeguarding policies and procedures is regularly reviewed and improved
Standard 10: Policies and Procedures Support Child Safety
Policies and procedures document how the College is safe for children and young people
Standard 11: EREA Protocols and Requirements
EREA protocols and requirements support ongoing compliance with and reporting against the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards

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

St Edmund's College 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 classroom learning and assessment environments.

We ensure that 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 organisation and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the College

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

We ensure that families and relevant communities know about the College's operations and policies, including its Child Safeguarding 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 classroom learning and assessment environments.

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

Valuing Diversity in the College Community

Our College 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/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families

• welcome 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

• seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities

• ensure that all Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those 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 Safeguarding Program

St Edmund's College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safeguarding 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 College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

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

• Child Safe Codes of Conduct

• clear information as to what constitutes child abuse, neglect and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse, neglect or other harm

• clear procedures for reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse, neglect or other harm

• 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 Leadership Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

• procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to CYPS, Reportable Conduct and Reporting to Police

• 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 linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with a disability

• child safeguarding training

• information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse, neglect or other 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 EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards)

• a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of St Edmund's College's induction process, all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete induction in our child safeguarding policies, practices and procedures. All Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers also receive refresher and ongoing child safeguarding training.

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

Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the College

Our Child Safeguarding Program provides detailed guidance for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse, neglect and other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally at the College. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

We recognise that some individuals, particularly children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse, neglect and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns. Our Child Safeguarding Program provides guidance on identifying additional vulnerabilities and barriers, and contains strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the College community and enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the College.

Students at the College are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College. These include 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 College may be subject to abuse, neglect or other harm can contact:

• the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer Ian Garrity, by phoning 02 6295 0620 or emailing

igarrity@stedmunds.act.edu.au, or

• the Principal or, if the concern relates to the Principal, the EREA Colleges Ltd Director of Schools.

Students, parents/carers, family members and other community members can also raise child safety incidents or concerns through the College's Complaints Handling Policy.

Any person can also contact the Senior Child Safeguarding Officer, the Principal or EREA Colleges Ltd Director of schools if they have concerns regarding the College'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 or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Support for Students, Families and Staff Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure

Child safety incidents or concerns can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, as well as on their families. In addition to reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, the College plays a central role in addressing this trauma and has a duty of care to ensure that students feel safe and supported at the College.

The range of measures employed by the College to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern will depend on:

• the degree of severity of the situation

• the risk of harm to the student

• the capability and willingness of the parent/carer to protect the student from harm

• for students with a disability, the chronological age, developmental age and cognitive function of the student

• any additional measures that may be required for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and international students.

Child Safeguarding Officers will work with the student and their family to develop a Student Support Plan. Support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include offering or organising referrals to internal or external support, such as the College Counsellor, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation which specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm.

Former students who may disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the College are also offered similar support by the College.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors involved. The College assists impacted Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to access necessary support.

Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Our Child Safeguarding Program sets out the policies, procedures and practices that the College will follow when notified of any child safety incident or concern involving a student, College staff member, Volunteer, Contractor, Visitor or other person connected to the College or the College environment.

These are summarised in our Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the College and its Staff Members.

Responsibilities for Child Safeguarding at the College

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

The College's Child Safeguarding Officers

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the College's Child Safeguarding Officers. Our Child Safeguarding Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and child protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child safeguarding within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

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

Name	Position	Contact Number	Email Address
Ian Garrity	Deputy Principal	02 6295 0620	igarrity@stedmunds.act.edu.au
Monica Day	Assistant Principal: Student Wellbeing	02 6295 0688	mday@stedmunds.act.edu.au
Linda James	College Counsellor	02 6239 0606	lijames@stedmunds.act.edu.au

Our Senior Child Safeguarding Officer

St Edmund's College has also appointed Ian Garrity as the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer. The Senior Child Safeguarding Officer is contactable by phone on 02 6295 0620 or by emailing igarrity@stedmunds.act.edu.au.

The Senior Child Safeguarding Officer has additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal, the College Leadership Team and EREA.

Edmund Rice Education Australia and the EREA Board

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and the EREA Board are the College's governing body. The EREA Board is responsible for approving our Child Safeguarding Program and ensuring that the College has appropriate resources to effectively implement the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and our Child Safeguarding Program.

The Principal

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

EREA Colleges Ltd Director of Schools

The EREA Colleges Ltd Director of Schools supports and advises the Principal in relation to the relevant child protection legislation and the implementation of the College's Child Safeguarding Program.

The School Advisory Board

Under the EREA governance structure, the School Advisory Board is responsible for working collaboratively with the Principal to ensure consistency and faithfulness to the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition and the Touchstones of Liberating Education, Gospel Spirituality, Inclusive Community, and Justice and Solidarity. As part of this role, the Advisory Board has responsibility for approving major College policies that are consistent with EREA policies.

The College Leadership Team

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

Staff Members

All Staff are required to comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Safeguarding Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse, neglect and other harm, and Working with Vulnerable People Registrations. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of abuse, neglect and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers.

Volunteers

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

All Volunteers are required to comply with our Child Safeguarding 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 child abuse, neglect and other harm.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse, neglect and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers.

Contractors

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

All Contractors engaged by the College are required to comply with our Child Safeguarding 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 child abuse, neglect and other harm. The College may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

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

External Education Providers

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

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in all College environments. All External Education Providers engaged by the College are required by the College to comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. St Edmund's College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Safe Human Resources Management

St Edmund's College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and relevant Volunteers and Contractors. Our recruitment procedures comply with the College'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 and relevant Volunteers and Contractors are required to maintain a valid Working with Vulnerable People Registration.

The College ensures that the College Leadership Team, Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors undergo child safeguarding 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 subject to regular supervision and performance monitoring while engaging with students.

The College ensures that professional development programs for Staff include child safeguarding education and training programs.

Child Safe Risk Management

The College recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

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

Record Keeping

The College has a Child Safeguarding 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 College are recorded using the Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse, Neglect or Other Harm Template.

In maintaining records of child safety incidents or concerns, the College maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

Policy and Program Review

St Edmund's College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safeguarding Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

The College is committed to actively seeking, actioning, and incorporating into this Policy, feedback from students, families, the wider College community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, and will communicate any adjustments or amendments widely throughout the College community.

Non-Compliance with Our Child Safeguarding Policy

St Edmund's College enforces this Child Safeguarding 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

• in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.