

May 2004

Child Protection at Shalom Christian College

Shalom Christian College recognizes that protecting students from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to maximizing their personal and academic potential. For this reason the welfare and best interests of the children within our College will always be a primary consideration.

We expect our students to show respect to our staff and volunteers and to comply with safe practices and we expect all employees to ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students, and are not unlawful. The College will respond diligently to a report of suspected or actual harm, or risk of harm to a student.

What does the College mean by harm?

Recent Queensland legislation defines harm as:

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:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- Sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- Domestic or family violence.

How does the College protect students from harm?

The College has a comprehensive Child Protection Policy, which covers the actions to be taken if a member of staff or a parent of the College becomes aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been done to a student of the College by other staff, people outside the College or by other students.

What should you do if you become aware or reasonably suspect that harm has been caused to a student of the College by a member of staff, someone outside of the College or by other students?

You should report your concerns to me, the Head of Primary or the Assistant Principal or to any other member of College staff.

What will happen next?

If you report your concerns to a member of staff other than myself, the member of staff will report it to me immediately, or if the subject of the complaint is myself then the member of staff will report to the Chairman of the College Board.

What will the Principal or the Chairman of the Board do?

If the Principal, or Chairman of the Board, receives a report of harm or suspected harm to a student of the school; and he/she becomes aware of the harm having been caused or reasonably suspects the harm to have been caused, then the matter will be reported

to police immediately if the harm relates to sexual abuse; or to the Department of Communities if appropriate; or it may be dealt with internally if the matter does not require mandatory reporting to an outside body.

What happens about confidentiality?

Your report will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to myself and those directly involved. The Chairman of the College Board may also need to be informed. It is the school's policy that confidentiality between the College and parents will be respected as much as possible and any concerns raised by parents will not rebound adversely on their children.

Each person who has access to information regarding suspected or disclosed harm has an obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality. However, the College is unable to promise absolute confidentiality since the steps of the Policy will require disclosing, internally and externally, certain details involved in responding to the report. State authorities can compel people to give evidence about actions under the Policy and to produce documents. You would be fully informed if information you provided were to be passed on to a third party.

Any action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of an allegation not requiring police intervention, would be handled confidentially within the school.

How will the College help my child?

I will ensure that the following things are done to reduce the chance of harm occurring:

- Ensure that each staff member understands and fulfils their obligations under this Policy and the Policy for reporting abuse.
- Ensure that there is an acceptable reference for each staff member engaged since the commencement of this protocol, from his or her previous employer.
- Ensure that each staff member and volunteer who has contact with children has a current positive suitability notice issued by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

If I receive a report of harm to your child, I will support the child by:

- responding rapidly and diligently to the report;
- reassuring the student;
- protecting the child's confidentiality as much as possible;
- offering continuous support; and
- providing counselling if requested.

What should I do if I require more information?

The School's complete Child Protection Policy is available at the College administration. Parents and students may have access to this policy at any time. You may also make an appointment to discuss the policy with me if you wish to clarify any matters.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Shirley
Principal

Shalom Christian College

Child Protection Policy

I, _____, have participated in a Professional Development Program that has alerted me to the existence of the College's Child Protection Policy. Having actively participated in this Professional Development Program, I am fully aware of the Policy in regard to:

- ❖ Dealing with allegations of harm
- ❖ Procedures for reporting harm
- ❖ Preventing bullying
- ❖ Preventing harm to students from people outside of the school
- ❖ Preventing student self harm

Further, I have received a copy of the College's Child Protection Policy and have stored this copy in a place that I can refer to the policy and procedures as and when necessary.

I understand that:

"Employees of Shalom Christian College must not under any circumstances engage in sexual contact of any nature with a student of the school. It is irrelevant whether the conduct is consensual or non-consensual, or condoned by parents or caregivers. The age of the student is also irrelevant.

Failure to behave in an appropriate manner may result in criminal proceeding and o/or disciplinary action, including dismissal." CPP p6

Signed: _____

Date: _____