



REPORTING CONCERNS OF HARM AND ABUSE POLICY

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DIFFERENCE

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Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about:

- a. how the Freshwater Christian College (the College) will respond to harm, or allegations of harm, to students under 18 years; and
- b. the appropriate conduct of the school's staff and students and to comply with accreditation requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all Directors of the College Board, students, and staff, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term, and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers, and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at Freshwater Christian College.

References

Legislation:

- Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)
- Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (Qld)
- Criminal Code Act 1899 (sections 229BB and 229BC)

Freshwater Christian College's:

- Complaints (Students and Parents) Policy
- Staff Complaints Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Report of Suspected Harm or Sexual Abuse Form

Definitions

Harm, as per s9 of the Child Protection Act 1999, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

- 1) It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- 2) Harm can be caused by—

- a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - b) sexual abuse or exploitation.
- 3) Harm can be caused by—
- a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or
 - b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Child in need of protection, as per s10 of the Child Protection Act 1999, is a child who—

- a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and
- b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

Sexual abuse, as per s364 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances—

- a) the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- b) the relevant person has less power than the other person;
- c) there is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

College Board, is the governing body of Freshwater Christian College.

Director of the College Board, is a member of the College Board of Cairns Christian College Ltd, trading as Freshwater Christian College.

Board Chair, is the Chair of the College Board.

Staff, in this policy, refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.

Health and Safety

The College has written processes in place to enable it to comply with the requirements of the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#) and the [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#).

Responding to Reports of Harm

When the College receives any information alleging 'harm'¹ to a student (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) it will deal with the situation compassionately and fairly so as to minimise any likely harm to the extent it reasonably can - refer to Freshwater Christian College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Information relating to physical or sexual abuse is handled under the obligations to report set out in this policy².

Conduct of Staff and Students

All staff, contractors, and volunteers must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students. Staff, contractors, and volunteers must not cause harm to students³.

Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

If a student considers the behaviour of a staff member to be inappropriate, the student should report the behaviour to:

- College Chaplain - Mrs Hannah Paul (Child Protection Officer)
Contactable via email, hannah.paul@fcc.qld.edu.au; phone 07 4243 3619; or in person at F block, room 2; or
- Deputy Head of Primary (Wellbeing) - Mr Aaron Hammill (Child Protection Officer)
Contactable via email, aaron.hammill@fcc.qld.edu.au; phone 07 4243 3639; or in person at the side of the Library building, entrance opposite the playground; or
- Deputy Head of Secondary (Wellbeing) - Mr Caleb DeVries (Senior Child Protection Officer)
Contactable via email, calebd@fcc.qld.edu.au; phone 07 4243 3618; or in person at F block, room 2.⁴

Dealing with a Report of Inappropriate Behaviour

A staff member who receives a report of inappropriate behaviour must report it to the Principal. Where the Principal is the subject of the report of inappropriate behaviour, the staff member must inform a Director of the College Board (the school's governing body)⁵. Reports will be dealt with under the College's Staff Complaints Policy.

¹ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(7): the definition of 'harm' for this regulation is the same as in section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

² Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(1)

³ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(1)

⁴ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(1)

⁵ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)

Reporting Sexual Abuse⁶

Section 366 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member becomes aware, or reasonably suspects, in the course of their employment at the school, that any of the following has been sexually abused by another person:

- a) a student under 18 years attending the school;
- b) a kindergarten-aged child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the school;
- c) a person with a disability who:
 - i) under section 420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school.

then the staff member must give a written report about the abuse or suspected abuse to the Principal or to a Director of the College Board immediately.

The College's Principal or a Director of the College Board must immediately give a copy of the report to a police officer.

If the first person who becomes aware or reasonably suspects sexual abuse is the College's Principal, the Principal must give a written report about the abuse, or suspected abuse to a police officer immediately and must also give a copy of the report to a Director of the College Board immediately.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) the name of the person giving the report (the **first person**);
- b) the student's name and sex;
- c) details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused by another person;
- d) details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
- e) any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
 - i) the student's age;
 - ii) the identity of the person who has abused, or is suspected to have abused the student;
 - iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse⁷.

⁶ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)(c)*

⁷ *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.68*

Reporting Likely Sexual Abuse⁸

Section 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member reasonably suspects in the course of their employment at the College, that any of the following is likely to be sexually abused by another person:

- a) a student under 18 years attending the school;
- b) a kindergarten-aged child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the school;
- c) a person with a disability who:
 - i) under section 420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school.

then the staff member must give a written report about the suspicion to the Principal or to a Director of the College Board immediately.

The College's Principal or the Director of the College Board must immediately give a copy of the report to a police officer.

If the first person who reasonably suspects likely sexual abuse is the College's Principal, the Principal must give a written report about the suspicion to a police officer immediately and must also give a copy of the report to a Director of the College Board immediately.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) the name of the person giving the report (the **first person**);
- b) the student's name and sex;
- c) details of the basis for the first person reasonably suspecting that the student is likely to be sexually abused by another person;
- d) any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
 - i) the student's age;
 - ii) the identity of the person who is suspected to be likely to sexually abuse the student;
 - iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the suspected likelihood of abuse⁹.

⁸ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)(c)*

⁹ *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.69*

Reporting Physical and Sexual Abuse¹⁰

Under Section 13E(3) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, if a doctor, a registered nurse, a teacher or an early childhood education and care professional forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child "in the course of their engagement in their profession", they must make a written report.

A **reportable suspicion** about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child:

- a) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and
- b) may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

The doctor, nurse, teacher, or early childhood education and care professional must give a written report to the Chief Executive of the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services, and Child Safety (or another department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999*). The doctor, nurse, teacher, or early childhood education and care professional should give a copy of the report to the Principal.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) the basis on which the person has formed the reportable suspicion¹¹;
- b) the child's name, age, and sex descriptor;
- c) details of how to contact the child;
- d) details of the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates;
- e) particulars of the identity of the person suspected of causing the child to have suffered, suffer, or be at risk of suffering, the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates;
- f) particulars of the identity of any other person who may be able to give information about the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates¹².

¹⁰ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16 (2)(d)*

¹¹ *Child Protection Act 1999 s.13G (2)(a)*

¹² See *Child Protection Regulation 2011 (Qld) s.10 "Information to be included in report to chief executive"*

Contacting Child Safety - Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services, and Child Safety

A report can be made by telephone, using the contact details below:

- Child Safety - Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (FNQ Regional Intake Services) can be contacted during business hours (9 am to 5 pm, Mondays to Fridays) on 1300 684 062
- outside of business hours, contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135.

Responsibilities under the Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)

The *Criminal Code Act 1899* includes two offences that pertain to the failure to report a child sexual offence and the failure to protect a child against a child sexual offence. A child sexual offence is an offence of a sexual nature by an adult against a child under 16 years or a person with an impairment of the mind.

Failure to Report¹³

Under section 229BC of the Code, all adults must report sexual offences against a child by another adult to police as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is, or ought reasonably to have been, formed.

Failure to make a report, without a reasonable excuse, is a criminal offence. This offence applies to all adults, inclusive of students 18 years or older, as well as parents/guardians and volunteers at the school.

A reasonable excuse not to make a report under the *Criminal Code Act 1899* includes that a report has already been made under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse) and the *Child Protection Act 1999* (reporting significant harm or risk of significant harm) as per this policy.

Failure to Protect¹⁴

Under section 229BB of the Code, all adults in positions of power or responsibility within institutions to reduce or remove the risk of child sexual offences being committed must take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from a child sexual offence. A failure to protect is an offence.

¹³ *Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) s.229BC*

¹⁴ *Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) s.229BB*

Awareness

The College will inform staff, students, and parents of its processes relating to the health, safety, and conduct of staff and students in communications with them and it will publish these processes on its website, online in the student portal 'Student Cafe', in the parent portal 'Parent Lounge', in the staff links section of the College's student management system (Staff Kiosk), and available on Google Shared Drives, FCC Policies. Printed copies are available from the College office. The College also uses student and staff induction processes, and at staff meetings, to raise awareness of its processes.¹⁵

Accessibility of Processes

Processes relating to the health, safety, and conduct of staff and students are accessible on the College website, online in the student portal 'Student Cafe', in the parent portal 'Parent Lounge', in the staff links section of the College's student management system (Staff Kiosk), and available on Google Shared Drives, FCC Policies. Printed copies are available from the College office¹⁶.

Training

The College will train its staff in processes relating to the health, safety, and conduct of staff and students on their induction and will refresh training annually¹⁷. Staff training is completed online and recorded electronically, and discussions at staff meetings are minuted.

Implementing the Processes

The College will ensure it is implementing processes relating to the health, safety, and conduct of staff and students by auditing compliance with the processes annually¹⁸.

Complaints Procedure

Suggestions of non-compliance with the College's processes may be submitted as complaints under the College's complaints policy¹⁹.

¹⁵ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(a)

¹⁶ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(b)

¹⁷ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(c)

¹⁸ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(d)

¹⁹ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(5) and s.16(6)

Policy details

Status	Approved	Supersedes	Child Protection Policy v2025
Version	v1	Authorised by	College Board
Last reviewed	23/02/2026		
Review cycle	It is intended that this policy will be formally reviewed every year, but may be amended sooner if triggered by changes in law, operational shifts, or as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.		