

Our Child Protection Policy

PURPOSE

Our Child Protection Policy demonstrates the strong commitment of the School to child safety and provides an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

It outlines the key elements of our approach to the School as a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the School's entire Child Safe Program. (1)

This policy provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the NSW Child Safe Standards and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the School
- the creation of a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child safe culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the School
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and safety in NSW.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) – the Care and Protection Act.
- The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW) – the WWC Act.
- The Children's Guardian Act (NSW) 2019
- Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) 2010.
- Children (Education and Care Services) National Regulation (NSW) 2011.
- The Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)

SCOPE

The School's Child Safe Policy applies to all adults in the School community, including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors.

This Policy applies in all School environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g., camps and excursions).

Child Safe Codes of Conduct

Our Child Safe Codes of Conduct include a Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct and a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy. Together, these Codes of Conduct set boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in our School community and students, including in physical and online environments.

We also have a Student Code of Conduct, which includes standards of behaviour for students relevant to child safety.

We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Safe Codes of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

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

Queenwood is a child safe and child-centred organisation. We ensure that our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. 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 School

The School 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 School's operations and policies, including its Child Safe 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 learning and assessment environments.

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

Valuing Diversity in the School Community

Our School 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 linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- support students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- support 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 and 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 promoting the inclusion of students of differing abilities.

Child Safe Human Resources Management

Recruitment and Screening

Queenwood applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students.

Our practices include:

- making our commitment to child safety clear in recruitment advertising and documentation

- requiring all Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors to maintain a valid Working with Children Check clearance (see section on Working with Children Checks)
- using additional selection, background checking and screening processes that take into account child safe considerations.

TRAINING ON AND INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD SAFE PROGRAM

As a part of Queenwood's induction process, we require all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors to complete our induction program, which includes information about our child safe policies, practices and procedures.

All Staff also receive refresher and ongoing child safe training annually, with this typically being completed during the year.

Our child safe induction and ongoing training program includes information about:

- this Child Protection Policy
- the Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- recognising child abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators, including harm caused by other children and young people
- our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns (including mandatory reporting, reporting to police and reportable conduct obligations)
- our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns
- WWCCs and other child safe human resources practices
- how to build culturally safe environments for students.

The School will provide all Visitors to the School, including Casual Volunteers and Contractors, with information about the Child Safe Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School and to relevant external authorities.

The School will provide Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors with support and supervision by their Head of Department/Manager and/or Executive Team to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child safety.

ONGOING SUPERVISION, MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

The Principal, her delegates (the Deputy Principal/Director of Wellbeing/Head of Junior School/Deputy Head of Junior School) and the Executive Team provide supervision and support to all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors to ensure that they are compliant with the School's child safe approach. Our child safe supervision and support program includes:

- annual reviews for all staff members
- appointing a supervising staff member to relevant Volunteers and Contractors
- professional development programs for Staff that include Child Safe education.

The School's Response to Child Protection Incidents or Concerns

Queenwood fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the School community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns set out in the **Procedures**, below, and our Community Feedback Policy.

We also have clear procedures that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a Volunteer, a Contractor or the School, set out in the **Responding to and Reporting Child Protection Incidents or Concerns** section of the Child Safe Program. These are summarised for students, parents/carers and other members of the School community in our public-facing Procedures for Managing Staff Misconduct and public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff.

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, students, parents/carers or anyone else reports these to the School.

The safety and wellbeing of the student/s involved in the matter will be the paramount consideration when responding to child safety incidents and concerns. The School follows the National Office of Child Safety's Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people when investigating and responding to child safety incidents and concerns.

The School's response will include:

- externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to DCJ (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Offences),

and/or the Office of the Children's Guardian (Reportable Conduct), depending on the issues raised

- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other vulnerable students (such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)
- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the law
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the School's response to it
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the School (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

Child Safe Risk Management

Queenwood recognises the importance of a risk management approach to our child safe obligations and to minimising the risk of harm to children and young people without compromising their rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

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

We identify, assess and manage Child Safe risks in all School environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body, through our risk management policy and procedures. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

Child Safe Privacy and Information Sharing

The School collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with NSW privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the School to disclose child safe information to external people

and agencies. For information about how the School collects, uses and discloses this information, refer to our Privacy Policy.

Child Safe Record Keeping

The School is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns.

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

Child Safe Program and Practice Review

Queenwood is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safe Program and our child safe practices. We review the Program annually or as legislation changes (or earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the School) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, the School:

- actively seeks, actions and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider School community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- analyses any complaints, concerns and child safety incidents that may have occurred
- communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the School community.

RELATED POLICIES

Working with Children Checks

Managing Child Protection Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School

Managing Child Protection Disclosures by Students or Former Students

Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

Child Protection Code of Conduct



RELATED DOCUMENTS

Key Information Fact Sheet for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors