



## Policy Statement

### Child Safe Policy

St Martins Lutheran College has developed the following Child Safe Policy as an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse, grooming and neglect.

This Policy forms the foundation of the Learning Community's policy framework, procedures and practices, and ultimately the Learning Community's culture with respect to child safety. It is designed to be St Martins Lutheran College's public statement of commitment to child safety and a demonstration of the Learning Community's leaders' commitment to champion child safety in our Learning Community.

The Learning Community's Child Safe Policy has been approved and endorsed by the College Council.

The Policy is reviewed at least annually, in light of experience, the effectiveness of procedures and the publication of relevant research.

This Policy is published on our public website, as well as communicated through other media such as newsletters, and in induction and welcome packs for members of the College Council, staff, Volunteers, Contractors and External Education Providers.

### Policy Objectives

This Policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the Learning Community
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the Learning Community
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in South Australia.

This Policy has been developed in accordance with Principle 2 of the Child Safe Environments Principles of Good Practice.

### Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

St Martins Lutheran College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people at the Learning Community. We support the rights of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and Volunteers, and encourage their active participation in creating and maintaining a child safe environment for all members of the Learning Community.

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## **Our Child Safe Values and Principles**

St Martins Lutheran College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse, grooming and neglect.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child are taken into consideration with a view to respecting privacy.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our Learning Community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen the Principal, College Council members, members of the Executive Team, all staff, Volunteers, Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with students.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all College Council members, staff, Direct Contact Contractors and Volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse, grooming or neglect are simple and accessible for all members of the Learning Community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically-diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

## **Our Child Protection Program**

St Martins Lutheran College has developed procedures and standards to support our overarching Child Safe Policy, through our Child Protection Program.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse, grooming and neglect and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/guardians and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters

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- procedures for recruiting and screening College Council members, staff, Direct Contact Contractors and Volunteers
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities
- a child protection training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the requirements for a child safe environment)
- a system for continuous improvement and review.

### **Responsibilities**

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At St Martins Lutheran College all members of the Council and staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

#### **College Council**

Each member of the College Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the Learning Community's Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the Learning Community and is responsible for holding the Principal and Executive Team accountable for effective implementation.

#### **The Principal**

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable, for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the Learning Community's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the Learning Community.

The Principal is also the Learning Community's Child Safety Officer and has an important role in the promotion and maintenance of a child safe environment at the Learning Community.

#### **The Learning Community's Child Safety Contact Officers**

A number of Staff are nominated as the Learning Community's Child Safety Contact Officers. Along with the Principal our Child Safety Contact Officers are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the Learning Community. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the Learning Community and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

#### **Staff Members**

All staff are required to comply with our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. Each current and new staff member is required to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and acknowledged the Learning Community's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.

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It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the Principal.

Staff, as a condition of employment at the Learning Community, must adhere to the Learning Community's Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.

### **Volunteers**

All Volunteers are required to comply with our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

Each Volunteer is required to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and acknowledged the Learning Community's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the Principal.

### **Contractors**

All Contractors engaged by the Learning Community are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the Learning Community environment.

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

All Contractors engaged by the Learning Community are required to comply with our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse, grooming and neglect.

Each Contractor is required to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and acknowledged the Learning Community's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Learning Community may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

### **External Education Providers**

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the Learning Community has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum to a student or students enrolled at the Learning Community.

The delivery of such a course may take place on the Learning Community premises or elsewhere.

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All External Education Providers engaged by the Learning Community are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the Learning Community environment.

All External Education providers engaged by the Learning Community are required to comply with our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse, grooming and neglect.

Each External Education Provider is required to have appropriate child protection policies and procedures within their organisation.

St Martins Lutheran College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

### **Reporting Concerns**

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for all members of the Learning Community as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse, grooming or neglect and how to report child protection concerns. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse, grooming or neglect incidents to relevant external authorities.

Staff, Contractors, External Education Providers, Volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse, grooming or neglect or at risk of significant harm and have queries about how to make a report are asked to contact the Learning Community's Principal or a Child Safety Contact Officer. For contact details see our Child Safety Officer and Contact Officers policy.

All communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis' and without threat of punishment or victimisation.

Please be aware that consulting with the Principal or a Child Safety Contact Officer does not change any obligation you have under legislation to report to an external authority.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

If you have any questions regarding the Learning Community's Child Safe Policy, and how it applies to you, please contact the Principal.

### **Policy and Child Protection Program Review**

St Martins Lutheran College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness, in response to a significant change at the Learning Community and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards. For more information, refer to the Continuous Review and Improvement section of this Program.

### **Related Policies and Documents**

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy
- Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people
- Child Safe Environments Principles of Good Practice
- Child Safety Officer and Contact Officers Policy

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