



LUTHERAN EDUCATION QUEENSLAND



Faith Lutheran College, Redlands Child Protection Policy and Procedures

May 2005

(Updated and accepted
College Council 4/2/2015)

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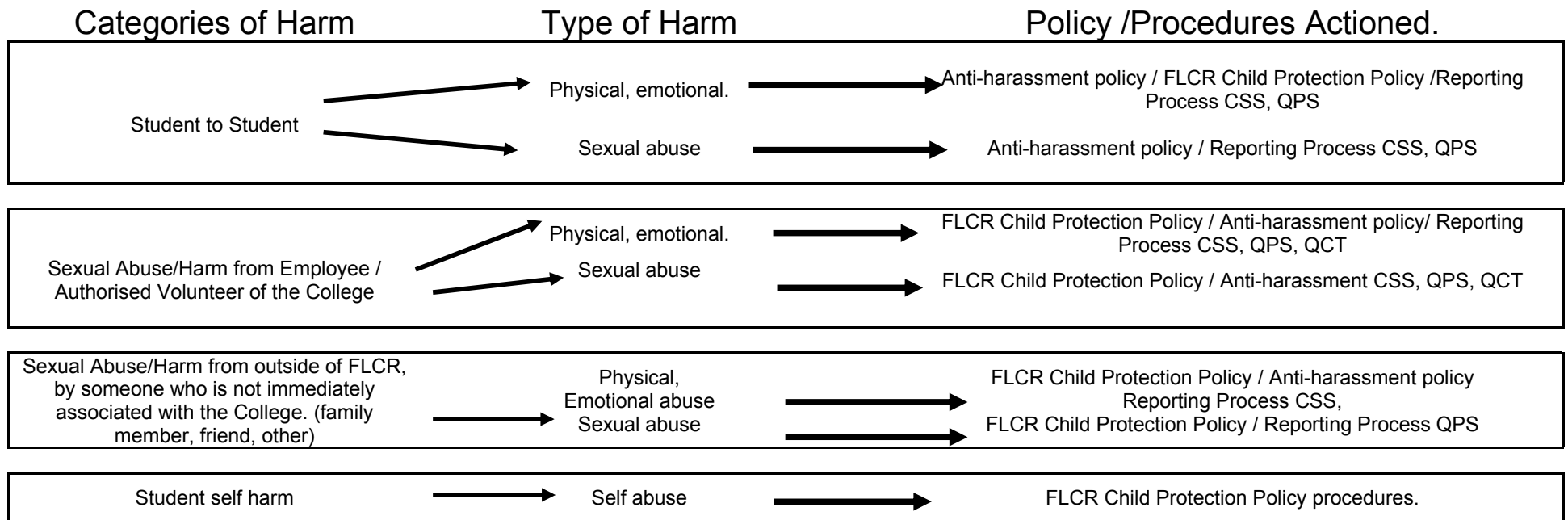
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STUDENT PROTECTION PROCESSES - SUMMARY GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF STUDENT HARM

The Policies and Procedures which are incorporated into this Student Protection Policy are:

- Student Protection Policy: Alleged Student Abuse by College Employees and Authorised Volunteers
- Student Protection Policy: Alleged Student Abuse by Persons Not Immediately Associated with the College, (Family members, friends, others)
- Student Protection Policy: Alleged Student Self Abuse Procedures
- Lutheran Church of Australia: Sexual Abuse Policy.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands Anti-Harassment Policy.
- Making a Report to Child Safety Services, Queensland Police Service, Processes Developed by Queensland Government 2003



FLCR = Faith Lutheran College, Redlands

CSS = Child Safety Services

QPS = Queensland Police Service

QCT = Queensland College of Teachers

SECTION 1 – FAITH LUTHERAN COLLEGE, REDLANDS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose of this Policy

To provide written processes about the appropriate conduct of Faith Lutheran College, Redlands staff and students that accord with legislation applying in Queensland about the care and protection of children.

Scope

Applies to all staff and students at Faith Lutheran College, Redlands.

References

Legislation

- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Child Protection Act 1999
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
- Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2001
- Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2001
- Education and Training Legislation Amendment Act 2011
- Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014

Policies

- Lutheran Church of Australia Policy and Action Plan for responding to complaints of Sexual Abuse / Harassment by Church Employees
- Student Protection Against Harm Explanatory Notes and Exemplars
- Anti-Harassment and Anti Discrimination Policy

Note: In situations where harassment causes harm to a child, it will be reported in accordance with this policy. Also, this policy **will prevail** in respect of any inconsistencies with the above policies.

Definitions

A **child** is a person under 18 years of age.

Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well being, however caused. Harm can be caused by:

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

A **student** is any person regardless of age who is enrolled at the College.

Useful Contacts

- Public Safety Business Agency, telephone 1800 113 611
- Queensland College of Teachers, telephone 07 3377 4777
- Police [local number here] or 000.

- A Safe Place for All Toll Free Number, 1800 644 628
- Child Safety Services [Reporting] 1800 080 464

PART A – PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Principles

Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will uphold the following principles under this Policy:

- Protecting students from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to maximising their personal and academic potential.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands recognises that people who are subjected to abuse are harmed by it.
- At Faith Lutheran College, Redlands, the welfare and best interests of the child will always be a primary consideration.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands expects our students to show respect to our staff and volunteers and to comply with safe practices.
- All employees at Faith Lutheran College, Redlands must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students, and are not unlawful.
- Sexual acts by an adult employee or volunteer with a student who is a child will always be sexual abuse.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will respond diligently to a report of suspected or actual harm, or risk of harm to a student.
- Reprisals against students, staff or others making a complaint will not be tolerated.
- Student management practices will be administered with respect and in a manner which maintains the student's dignity.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will act fairly and reasonably towards an employee or volunteer who is the subject of allegations of improper conduct.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will support an employee or volunteer who is the subject of a proven false allegation of causing harm to a student.
- Anybody within Faith Lutheran College, Redlands who becomes aware or reasonably suspects that a student is being harmed must report it to the College in accordance with the College's Procedures for Reporting Harm.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will take disciplinary action against employees who harm others, and appropriate action against volunteers who harm others.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will not permit people to work in a position if the College believes, on the basis of all information available that, if the allegations against them were wholly or partly true, there would be an unacceptable risk that others might be harmed.
- Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will cooperate with State authorities in resolving allegations of harm.

Guidelines

In complying with these principles, Faith Lutheran College, Redlands will be guided by the following:

Natural Justice

The principles of natural justice will apply to decisions to be made under this Policy. The two fundamental principles of natural justice are:

- That those making a decision are not biased.
- That the person to whom the complaint has been made is given prior notice of the allegations against them and have a fair opportunity to respond to the allegations.

Process

It is important to make the lodging of a complaint easy.

Confidentiality

Each person who has access to information regarding suspected or disclosed harm has an obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality. Faith Lutheran College, Redlands is unable to promise absolute confidentiality since its policies will require disclosing, internally and externally, certain details involved in responding to any complaint. Furthermore, State authorities can require people to give evidence about actions under the Policy and to produce documents.

Criminal Law

Where there are allegations of criminal behaviour, the allegations are to be referred to the police. The Principal must refer all allegations of pedophilia to the police, including those from the past, except where the alleged perpetrator is deceased.

Defamation

A person providing information about harm in good faith to a person who needs to know that information is generally excused from liability for defamation.

Promptness

All steps under the Policy should be carried out promptly. The College will keep the person/s making the complaint and the respondent informed of progress.

Protection

The Principal will ensure that the following are undertaken in order to reduce the chance of abuse occurring:-

- Ensure that each staff member understands and fulfils their obligations under this Policy (staff training), as well as the LCA Policy and Action Plan for Responding to Complaints of Sexual Abuse and Harassment by Church Employees and the Student Protection Against Harm Explanatory notes and Exemplars.
- Ensure that there is an acceptable reference for each staff member engaged from their previous employer following the commencement of this policy.
- Ensure that each non-teaching staff member and volunteer who has contact with children has a current positive Suitability Notice (Blue Card) issued by the Public Safety Business Agency¹.
- Ensure that each teaching staff member is a Registered Teacher.

Support

The College will provide support for the victim through professional counselling if it is requested, even if any allegation is not yet proved or disproved. The College will support the respondent to a complaint with professional counselling if it is requested until the matter has been resolved.

Interviews

There will be two representatives of the College present at interviews. In cases of allegations of serious harm it is best not to interview a student who is a child unless a properly qualified person conducts the interview.

Teachers

If a respondent to an allegation is a registered teacher, the College will give notification to the College of Teachers, if required to do so under the **Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005**. Employing authorities are required to notify the College of Teachers about allegations of “harm” (“any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional well being”) involving a teacher.

Public Relations

The Principal will ensure that the College is able to react quickly to allegations of harm so that accurate and relevant information is available for staff members, students and their families and for the media.

Police Action

It will be necessary to wait until the police have decided whether to charge the respondent before taking any internal disciplinary proceedings. If the police do charge the respondent, it will be necessary to wait until the charges have been dealt with in the courts before commencing internal enquiries or disciplinary proceedings. This does not preclude the Principal from seeking advice from police or others regarding the duty of care to existing students which may involve the standing down of a staff member during an investigation. The police are not required to inform the College about their investigation. Some of their

¹ Note: in relation to positive suitability notices for non-teaching staff, the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* currently exempts volunteers who are parents of children at the College from the requirement to have suitability notices.

material may be obtained under a Freedom of Information request when their work on the case is finished.

Insurer

The College will keep its insurer informed and updated (in writing) about developments. Lutheran Schools are to contact:

LCA Insurance Fund
Phone - 08 8360 7223
Fax - 08 8267 1722
Email - admin@lcainsurance.org.au

Publication

The Principal will ensure that this policy is published:-

- to staff members generally, at least once each year
- to each new staff member, on induction
- by reference to it in the College newsletter, at least twice each year
- by display on at least one notice board in the College, always

The Principal will ensure that a copy of the policy is always available from the College's administration

Review

The College will ensure that this Policy is reviewed at least once every two years.

PART B - DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF HARM

The following actions should be taken in any cases relating to harm or suspected harm against a child:

1. Record details of the allegations. Be careful not to taint the evidence of the student or the respondent. Record information exactly as it is presented to you.
2. Decide whether the allegation should be reported to authorities: see **Procedures for Reporting Harm**. If so, report it.
3. Provide details of the allegations to the respondent.
4. If there is unacceptable risk, stand down the respondent. In appropriate cases, dismiss the employee. Before taking these steps, Principals should seek advice on the applicability of legislative provisions referred to in this policy and Annexure C (Serious Misconduct and Summary Dismissal) of the *Queensland Lutheran Schools Single Enterprise Agreement 2013*. Principals can seek further advice from the LEQ Secretariat – Assistant Director. 35114050
5. Offer counselling to the student and the respondent.
6. Inform the student's parents, when and if appropriate. *Section 15 of the Child Protection Act 1999* provides that when harm to students is suspected from people outside the College, the responsibility for informing parents/caregivers rests with the investigating child protection agency officers, not with the College.
7. Inform the College's Governing body.
8. Inform the College's insurers.
9. Investigate the allegations. Note: if the allegations have been reported to police or Child Safety Services, do not begin the investigations until the police investigation is complete and the police inform you they have decided not to charge the respondent.
10. Attend to public relations.
11. Take disciplinary action (which may include termination of employment – refer to point 4 above) against the respondent if the circumstances require it.
12. Keep the student and the respondent informed as the matter proceeds.

PART C - PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING HARM

Staff members at Faith Lutheran College, Redlands are expected to reflect the highest standards of care in their behaviour towards and relationships with students.

Employees of Faith Lutheran College, Redlands must not under any circumstances engage in physical or emotional abuse or engage in sexual contact of any nature with a student of the College. 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 proceedings and/or disciplinary action, including dismissal.

The following Table outlines the procedures for reporting harm which will apply in Faith Lutheran College, Redlands.

Where a reference is made to **PROVIDING A WRITTEN REPORT** in the below procedures, the following matters are to be included in the written report:

1. name of the person giving the report;
2. name, sex and (if known) age of the child subject of the complaint;
3. details of the basis for the maker of the report becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the child has been abused/ harmed - sexually, emotionally, physically;
4. details of the actual or suspected abuse/harm;
5. particulars of the identity of the alleged perpetrator of the abuse/harm (if known); and
6. particulars of the identity of any other person who may be able to give information about the abuse/harm (if known).

Procedures for Reporting Harm/Abuse

Scope

applies to:

- harm of any student of this College who was under 18 years at the time the harm was caused; and
- behaviour of a staff member that a student considers is inappropriate.

Definition

“harm”:

- is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a student’s physical psychological or emotional well being, however caused;
- can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation.

Actions Required - If Then Statements

Subject	If	Then
<p>Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour (Accreditation Regulation s.10)</p>	<p>You are a student and you wish to report behaviour by a staff member that you consider inappropriate</p> <p>You, the Principal or Head of School/Dean of Students /classroom teacher/another staff member receive the report under the preceding step</p>	<p>report the behaviour to one of the following: The Principal/Head of School/Dean of Students /classroom teacher/another staff member</p> <p>interview the student</p> <p>interview the staff member named in the report</p> <p>interview any other person who may be able to provide useful information. Report your findings to the Principal, if you are the Head of School/Dean of Students/ classroom teacher/another staff member, with your recommendation for action to be taken.</p> <p>as Principal take action on the basis of the report. Adhere to reporting requirements (QPS, QCT, CSS)</p>
<p>Reporting Harm (Accreditation Regulation s.10)</p>	<p>You as a student are aware or reasonably suspect that harm has been caused by anyone to a student of the College who was under 18 at the time</p> <p>You are a staff member and you are aware or reasonably suspect that harm/abuse has been caused by anyone to a student of the College who was under 18 at the time</p> <p>You are:- the principal or the Head of School and you receive a report of harm or suspected harm to a student of the College; and you are aware of the harm having been caused or you reasonably suspect the harm to have been caused</p>	<p>report it to any staff member</p> <p>report it to the Principal or to the Head of School</p> <p>keep a written record of your actions</p> <p>report it to the police or the Child Safety Services</p> <p>keep a written record of your actions</p>

Faith Lutheran College, Redlands Child Protection Policy

Subject	If	Then
<p>Reporting a Reportable Suspicion (Child Protection Act 1999)</p>	<p>You are a teacher and you form a reasonable suspicion that a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and • may not have a parent who is able and willing to protect the child from harm (i.e. a protective parent). <p>You are: - the Principal or Head of School and you receive a written report from a teacher.</p>	<p>Report the suspicion in writing to the Principal or Head of School.</p> <p>Forward the report to the local Child Safety Services Centre and inform the police also.</p>
<p>Reporting Sexual Abuse (Education General Provisions Act s.366, 366A Reg 68)</p>	<p>you are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a staff member; and • become aware of or you reasonably suspect that anyone has sexually abused or is likely to sexually abuse any of the following: <p>(a) a student under 18 years attending the College;</p> <p>(b) a pre-preparatory age child registered in a pre-preparatory learning program at the College;</p> <p>(c) a person with a disability who –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) under section 420(2), is being provided with special education at the College; and (ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the College <p>You, the Principal or the Chairperson of the College Council (a director of the College’s governing body), receive a report under the preceding step</p>	<p>give a written report about the abuse to the Principal or the Chairperson of the College Council (a director of the College’s governing body) immediately (Failure to do so could result in a substantial fine)</p> <p>contents of the written report are prescribed by Regulation 68 made under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (see page 11)</p> <p>Give a copy of the report to a police officer immediately and QCT, CSS as required. (Failure to do so could result in a substantial fine.)</p>

PART D - PREVENTING BULLYING

Faith Lutheran College, Redlands has a responsibility to ensure that the rights of its students are safeguarded. These include the right to a learning environment free from discrimination and harassment.

All schools must take reasonable steps to ensure that students learn in a safe, supportive and caring environment without fear of being bullied, discriminated against or harassed.

By definition bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person or group by a more powerful person or group of persons. It may be manifested in many ways e.g. harassment (verbal, sexual or psychological), victimisation, alienation, coercion, intimidation, exclusion, ostracism, discrimination.

In any form bullying is not acceptable behaviour and results in hurt, fear, loss of self-esteem and decreased social effectiveness for the victim. Within the context of the Faith Lutheran College, Redlands bullying is entirely contrary to the ideals of the College. In accordance with the College's Mission statement therefore this policy seeks to:

- develop in students respect and concern for others, of all races and creeds;
- develop in students an understanding that they must take responsibility for their own behaviour;
- develop in students critical and effective thinking and problem solving skills;
- develop in students life skills related to healthy life styles; and
- develop an environment that nurtures and promotes student self-esteem and self confidence.

Implementation

The following steps are a guide to dealing with reports of bullying.

1. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached, to ensure the student's safety. It is **never** acceptable to turn a blind eye to bullying.
2. A clear account of the incident should be recorded and given to the Principal or Principal's delegate.
3. The Principal or delegate will then work through the College's anti-bullying policy. In situations where bullying causes harm to a child it will be reported in accordance with the Child Protection Policy. (see The Personal Power Program on Page 24).

Students

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice;
- reassuring the student;
- offering continuous support; and
- providing encouragement to form and maintain friendships with non-bullying students.

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened;
- discovering why the student became involved;
- establishing the wrong doing and the need to change; and
- enlisting the support of parents/caregivers to help change the behaviour and attitude of the student, where appropriate.

Within the curriculum the College will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in assemblies and subject areas, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

Resources for schools can be obtained from Kids Help Line -

www.kidshelp.com.au/info7/contents.htm

PART E – PREVENTING HARM TO STUDENTS FROM PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF THE COLLEGE

Over 85% of children are harmed by someone they know and trust – a parent, sibling, other relative, family friend or care provider. Employees should be aware of the physical, emotional and behavioural indicators of risk of student harm, and actual harm. These indicators are more significant if they are severe and/or consistent over time.

Indicators of harm

Physical abuse and excessive punishment

- student presents with bruises, burns or fractures at a frequency which is inconsistent with normal activity;
- students offer explanations for an injury which appear inconsistent with that injury;
- student or another person advise that he/she has been subjected to or threatened with physical harm;
- reluctance/refusal to participate in swimming or other activities where getting changed or wearing more revealing clothes may show signs of harm;
- excessive absenteeism.

Emotional abuse and/or deprivation

- poor peer relationships/withdrawn;
- inclined to seek adult company and/or students who are older or younger;
- avoiding going home on a regular basis;
- learning difficulties, including poor concentration;
- attention seeking behaviour such as stealing, lying, running away, disrupting classes repeatedly.

Physical neglect and/or inadequate supervision or care

- students appear underweight for age and body type;
- inadequate clothing;
- asking other students for food or money or not bringing food to the College;
- excessive absences from the College and/or high frequency of illness/infection;
- student often arrives at the College early and/or leaves late.

Sexual abuse

- bruises, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, arms, lower abdomen or thighs;
- bruises, scratches or other injuries not consistent with accidental injury;
- difficulty walking or sitting;
- persistent headaches or recurrent abdominal pain;
- unexplained pain in genital area;
- torn, stained or bloodied underwear;
- itching, soreness, discharge or unexplained bleeding;
- painful and recurrent urination;
- recurrent urinary tract infections;
- signs of sexually transmitted diseases;
- pregnancy in adolescents where the identity of the father is vague or secret.

Where an employee has concerns or is unsure whether or not observations should be cause for concern, it is mandatory that they report their concerns to the Principal.

The Principal will contact the Child Safety Services to discuss, in the first instance, that there is a concern and to seek advice as to the appropriateness of formally reporting the matter.

If it is deemed, after this discussion, that further investigation is warranted, then the Principal, on behalf of the employee who made the original observation, will report the matter to the Queensland Police Service. Reporting to the police is mandatory where an employee of the College becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects a child has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused. Reporting to Child Safety Services is mandatory when a teacher forms a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and may not have a parent who is able and willing to protect the child from harm (i.e. a protective parent).

At this time the employee concerned must be available to give a first hand account of the situation.

It should be noted that the role of the employee is not an investigative one. Staff must not undertake investigations beyond satisfying themselves that they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has been, or is at risk of harm. Neither the employee nor the Principal is obliged to obtain proof, establish the cause of harm or assess its severity.

Once a report has been made, the employee is not required to take further action, beyond the requirement to exercise a duty of care.

Evidence

The investigation of these matters is a complex and sensitive process. In the course of an investigation, officers from the child protection agencies may request permission to interview the student concerned. In most cases, in order to ensure the interests of the child are protected, the student may be interviewed before the matter is discussed with the parent/caregiver.

The responsibility for informing parents/caregivers of notifications and any interviews rests with the investigating child protection agency officers, not with the Principal. For this reason, any person making an inquiry or complaint concerning an investigation or an interview must be promptly referred to the Principal who will refer the enquirer to the appropriate Department, with the explanation that it is the responsibility of that Department to answer such inquiries or complaints.

Confidentiality

The identity of the person reporting the matter must not be revealed to any person or officer of any Department without that person's consent.

Child protection agencies operate under strict laws of confidentiality. This means they do not divulge the identity of the person reporting the matter except to others requiring the information to perform duties under the *Child Protection Act 1999*, neither do they divulge information about their investigations to the person reporting the matter.

Section 22 of the Child Protection Act 1999 provides for the protection from civil liability for persons who, acting honestly, notify or give information about suspected harm to a child. It also states that merely because the person gives the notification, the person cannot be held to have breached any code of professional etiquette or ethics, or departed from accepted standards of professional conduct. Furthermore, Section 366 (5) of the *Education General Provision Act 2006* provides similar protection with respect to reports of sexual abuse.

Support for the Student

The College has a responsibility to offer a long-term, supportive environment for all students. The following are suggested as ways to support a student who may be in need of protection:

- Treat the student with respect and dignity.
- Be sensitive to the student's needs, feelings and concerns.
- Monitor the situation.
- Maintain confidentiality as far as is practicable.
- Immediately notify the Principal if, after the initial report, any further incidents of harm are suspected.

PART F – PREVENTING STUDENT SELF HARM

During their schooling, some students may be at risk of harming themselves. This harm may occur with or without suicidal intent; or may be symptomatic of, or associated with, a known medical condition or intellectual disability.

Self-harm with suicidal intent

Youth suicide rates in Australia are among the highest in the industrialised world. Common risk factors include:

- previous attempts at suicide (most powerful risk predictor);
- depression;
- drugs and alcohol abuse;
- conduct disorder;
- disruptive and unsupportive family background;
- relationship conflicts;
- poor coping skills;
- psychiatric illnesses;
- ready availability of lethal means to commit suicide;
- copycat behaviour after an incident of self-harm by another person.

Other risk factors include:

- recent bereavement;
- chronic physical illness;
- anniversary phenomenon (of past losses or major life events);
- early loss experiences;
- College failure;
- perfectionism and overachievement as a result of students having high expectations of themselves;
- Relationship breakdowns.

Threats of self-harm by a student should be taken seriously and reported to the College counsellor and Principal immediately. It is much safer to be cautious and act on the concern, than to do nothing.

An employee who becomes aware of, or suspects, a student is experiencing significant psychological distress, should consult the College counsellor, for further advice and report the information to the Principal.

In the case of an acutely distressed student, the immediate safety of the child is paramount. An employee should ensure the immediate safety of the student, arrange for an adult to be with the student at all times and then report concerns to the Principal and the College counsellor. Employees should note, that while it is important to support a student, they should be careful not to substitute support for professional help.

Following a report, the College counsellor will meet with the distressed student, **on the day of the report**, to conduct an initial assessment and determine an appropriate course of action. In cases of serious concern, the Principal, or counsellor under the direction of the Principal, will notify the student's parents and make arrangements for access other professional or specialist assistance.

Self-harm without suicidal intent

Not all cases of self-harm relate to suicidal intent. Students may engage in a variety of high risk behaviours, such as alcohol/substance abuse; drug-taking; unsafe promiscuity; cutting/burning oneself.

All College employees are expected to act to prevent all high risk behaviours occurring within the College, and support any other interventions undertaken to reduce the risk of such behaviours occurring outside the College.

Employees who are aware that a student is engaging in, or is at risk of engaging in, high risk activities should consult with the College counsellor for further advice and report their concerns to the Principal.

Following a report, the Principal will consult with the student counsellor to determine what course of action should occur. Possible actions include:

- contacting parents
- arranging professional assistance
- consulting with the local office of the Child Safety Services
- contacting the police, where appropriate.

Self-harm as a symptom of a medical condition or intellectual disability

Where it is known that a student has a propensity to engage in self harm that is symptomatic or associated with a known medical condition or intellectual disability, the College Principal, in cooperation with other qualified College staff and external treating professionals (where applicable) will develop an individual program of management to prevent or reduce the likelihood of the student engaging in self-harm at the College.

The program will complement any other management procedures adopted outside the College setting to address the self harm behaviour.

The program of management will be monitored on an on-going basis and modified as appropriate to maximise socially adaptive behaviour.

SECTION 2 - SAMPLE INFORMATION LEAFLETS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

A Leaflet for Parents

This leaflet has been designed to explain the child protection policy of our College. Copies will be sent out with the College handbooks, reports or newsletters – and they are readily available at the College office.

Possible wording of a leaflet follows.

Child Protection at Faith Lutheran College, Redlands

Faith Lutheran College, Redlands recognises that protecting students from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to maximising 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 professional 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 resulting from either within the College or from outside of the College.

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 well being. 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 the Principal or Head of School or to any other member of the College staff.

What will happen next?

If you report your concerns to a member of staff other than the Principal, the member of staff will report it to the Principal immediately, or if the subject of the complaint is the Principal then the member of staff will report to the Chairperson of the College Council.

What will the Principal or the Chair of the Council do?

If the Principal or Chair of the Council receives a report of harm or suspected harm to a student of the College; and he/she becomes aware of the harm or reasonably suspects the harm to have been caused then it will be reported to police immediately if the harm relates to sexual abuse. Alternatively the report may be handed onto the Child Safety Services if appropriate; or it may be dealt with internally using other policies and procedures 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 the Principal (where it does not relate to him/her) and those directly involved. The Chairperson of the College Board may also need to be informed. It is the College's policy that confidentiality between the College and parents will be respected as much as possible and any concerns raised by parents will not adversely effect 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 certain details involved in responding to the report, internally and externally. State authorities can require people to give evidence about actions under the Policy and to produce documents. You would be fully informed if information you provided is 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 College.

How will the College help my child?

The Principal 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 from his or her previous employer engaged following the commencement of this policy.
- Ensure that each staff member and volunteer who has contact with children (and who is not excluded under this Legislation) has a current positive Suitability Notice (Blue Card) issued by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

If the Principal receives a report of harm about your child, he/she 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 College's complete Child Protection Policy is available at the College administration. Parents and students can have access to this policy at any time. You may also make an appointment to discuss the policy with the Principal if you wish to clarify any matters.

A Leaflet for Students

Child Protection - Students

Every student has the right to feel safe and free from harm while at Faith Lutheran College, Redlands. We expect you to respect your teachers and other students and we expect that you will receive the same respect in return. You should **never** allow yourself to feel unsafe without reporting it to someone you trust.

Who should I tell if I am not feeling safe at the College or at home?

Anyone on staff, including the College Counsellor or Pastor. If you do not feel comfortable talking to a member of staff you may like to write him or her a letter.

If you would prefer to talk to somebody outside of the College on a confidential basis, you can also call Kids Help Line which is a free call - 1800 551 800.

What will happen if I report what is happening to a member a staff?

If the concern is worrying you but not causing you immediate harm, then the member of staff will discuss with you ways to solve your problem. If the concern is serious and the member of staff believes that you are being harmed or in danger of being harmed, he or she will report it to the Principal.

What if I don't want the member of staff to tell the Principal?

The member of staff will try to keep your concerns confidential as much as possible. However, if the member of staff is aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been caused by anyone to a student of the College then the law says that the matter must be reported to the Principal and it may have to be reported to the Police. If the staff member has no choice about reporting what you have told them to some-one else he or she will explain to you exactly what will happen next.

Remember the most important thing is that you feel safe and free from harm. You must tell someone if you are being harmed or afraid that you will be harmed.

SECTION 3 - THE PERSONAL POWER PROGRAM – AN EXAMPLE OF A PROGRAM TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY

Outlined below are the details of a Program which would meet the requirements of the College's Preventing Bullying policy. It is just one example.

The Personal Power Program (PPP)

This program involves the implementation of the College's bullying policy. It is a proactive program which seeks, by education, cooperation and consultation, to empower individuals to function comfortably and effectively within the College and the wider community. It seeks to build and reinforce attitudes conducive to developing respect for all individuals and allowing all individuals to reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

The basic beliefs underlying the program and the strategies employed are:

1. Every individual has value in a community.
2. Every individual has the right to feel safe from bullying or harassment in all its forms.
3. Every conflict can be resolved. Victims and bullies both need help to solve conflict.
4. A 'No-Blame' approach is the most effective means of dealing with conflict resolution.
5. Every individual in a community is responsible for the safety of other individuals in that community.
6. Every individual in a community is responsible for ensuring that other individuals in that community can reach their potential in a supportive and non-threatening environment.

Stage 1 - Research and Analysis

The first step in the program is to gather data about the extent and type of bullying that may be occurring in the College. A Bullying Survey, perhaps designed by Year 9 students in their HRE program, is given to the whole College/particular year levels/ a random sample/parents, staff and students (the College needs to make its own decision about the size of the sample and the appropriate participants); and analysed to gauge the type and extent of the problem.

Stage 2 - Education and Awareness Raising

A. Staff Awareness Program (Week 1)

The results of the survey are presented to staff for consideration and discussion. As a result of the discussion the staff reaches a consensus on:

- overall philosophies
- strategies for staff use
- approaches to use with students
- how to identify problems
- the ongoing support needed by staff.

B. Student Awareness (Weeks 2 - 6)

The results of the survey are presented to students, accompanied by a program to raise awareness about bullying throughout the College. Possible strategies include:

- an address by the Principal to explain the College's attitude towards bullying and policy to combat bullying;
- an address to the full College assembly by student leaders or other members of the College community;
- theme within the College that every individual in the College is responsible for the success of the anti-bullying program;
- a poster/poetry competition;
- a Students' Against Violence Day during which the Student Representative Council sells ribbons to raise funds for a child abuse charity;
- drama performance devised by students to show some aspect of bullying;
- establishment of an Anti-bullying Committee;
- appointment of students as contact persons for those who want to report bullying - these students to receive training in readiness to take on their roles in second term; and
- identification of staff members as contact people for students wishing to report bullying.

Stage 3 - Implementation

For any incidents of bullying it is assumed that a member of staff/senior student will deal with the problem on the spot, in order to defuse the immediate conflict. Following this the following steps should be taken:

1. Identification

Student reports bullying incidents/problem to student Personal Power Program mentors, PPP contact staff, or any other staff member, prefect or responsible student. The person receiving the report notifies a PPP contact staff member as soon as possible.

2. Initial Interview

With one or more PPP contact staff, the victim and bully are interviewed separately, and the incident is recorded by each in writing on a standard proforma. The interviewer makes both parties aware of the bullying strategy and policy and discusses the issues surrounding the particular incident. The interviewer works with the students to devise strategies for conflict resolution. The interviewer attempts to reach a position where both parties are satisfied with the outcome; i.e. the victim feels secure and the bully is prepared to modify his/her behaviour in future. The victim understands that any further bullying must be reported immediately.

The strategy at this stage is not to apportion blame, or to punish; but to support the victim and make the perpetrator aware of the College policy and of the consequences if behaviour does not change.

3. Follow Up Interview

If the incident is repeated or the problem continues - both parties record incident/problem in writing on a standard proforma. The PPP Contact staff member interviews the victim and bully together and discusses the problem; makes the bully aware of the feelings of the other person and the effects the conflict may be having; and makes suggestions of strategies for the resolution of the conflict. Help may be sought from a qualified counsellor at any stage.

A letter is sent to both sets of parents explaining the situation, outlining the strategies that have been determined and reinforcing the consequences that may flow from a repeat of bullying.

If a solution to a particular problem has not been found, the College may consider the use of an outside person, such as a trained mediator, to assist in reaching a resolution.

4. Reinforce (as above), employ sanctions

- Official warnings to cease offending
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of the College premises
- Internal Suspension
- Major fixed term suspension
- Seek help from qualified counsellor
- Permanent exclusion

Stage 4 - Reappraisal and Reaction

Records are kept, centrally, of all reported incidents of bullying in the College. These are analysed on a regular basis to ascertain major areas where bullying occurs, sex and age of victims and bullies, and strategies which have been successful. A review of the College's policy is undertaken every 12 months, taking into account this annual data.

APPENDIX A

All schools within Lutheran Education Queensland have this policy, are bound by it, and their use of the policy is confirmed.

Bethania Lutheran Primary School Glastonbury Drive Bethania Qld 4205	Bethania
Bethany Lutheran Primary School 126 Cascade Street Raceview Qld 4305	Raceview
Concordia Lutheran College 154 Stephen Street Toowoomba Qld 4350	Toowoomba
Faith Lutheran College Faith Avenue Plainland Qld 4341	Plainland
Faith Lutheran College 1-15 Beveridge Road Thornlands Qld 4164	Redlands
Good News Lutheran School 49 Horizon Drive Middle Park Qld 4074	Middle Park
Good Shepherd Lutheran College 115 Eumundi Road Noosaville Qld 4566	Noosaville
Grace Lutheran College Cnr Anzac Avenue and Mewes Road Rothwell Qld 4022	Rothwell
Grace Lutheran Primary School 38 Main Road Clontarf Qld 4019	Redcliffe
Immanuel Lutheran College Wises Road Maroochydore Qld 4558	Maroochydore
Living Faith Lutheran Primary School Cnr Brays Road and Ogg Road Murrumba Downs Qld 4503	Murrumba Downs
Lutheran Ormeau Rivers District School (LORDS) 68 Mirambeena Drive Pimpama Qld 4209	Pimpama
Pacific Lutheran College Woodlands Boulevard Birtinya Qld 4575	Kawana Waters
Peace Lutheran College Cowley Street Kamerunga Qld 4870	Cairns
Peace Lutheran Primary School 36 East Street Gatton Qld 4343	Gatton
Prince of Peace Lutheran College 20 Rogers Parade West Everton Hills Qld 4053	Everton Hills
Redeemer Lutheran College 745 Rochedale Road Rochedale Qld 4133	Rochedale

Faith Lutheran College, Redlands Child Protection Policy

Redeemer Lutheran College 2 Collard Street Biloela Qld 4715	Biloela
St Andrews Lutheran College 175 Tallebudgera Creek Road Andrews Qld 4220	Andrews
St James Lutheran College Cnr Urraween Road & Pantlins Lane Hervey Bay Qld 4655	Hervey Bay
St John's Lutheran Primary School 24 George Street Bundaberg Qld 4670	Bundaberg
St John's Lutheran School 84-92 Ivy Street Kingaroy Qld 4610	Kingaroy
St Paul's Lutheran Primary School 55 Smith Road Caboolture Qld 4510	Caboolture
St Peters Lutheran College Indooroopilly 66 Harts Road Indooroopilly Qld 4068	Indooroopilly
St Peters Lutheran College Springfield Education City Drive Springfield Central Qld 4300	Springfield
St Stephens Lutheran College 60 Glenlyon Road South Gladstone Qld 4680	Gladstone
Trinity Lutheran College 641 Ashmore Road Ashmore Qld 4214	Ashmore

(And any other Lutheran Schools that may be opened within Queensland)