



Koinonia Christian Academy Inc.

Child Protection Procedures

1 General

Koinonia Christian Academy (the School) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for children to develop academically, spiritually, emotionally and socially based on the principles of God's Word.

All adults have a responsibility to care for children and to protect them from any kind of abuse or neglect. The school is responsible to provide a safe environment for children and to provide an education that fosters their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity. During their time at school, we are entrusted by parents with the care of their children, who are precious in the sight of God.

The following procedures are to be used in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy to help build a safe and supportive environment for children.

2 Staff Employment

The School Board in conjunction with the Principal will:

- Clearly state the requirements of the Working With Children Check in advertising any positions at the school
- Request references from any prospective employees
- Contact the referees prior to any decision of employment is made
- Carry out a Working With Children Check verification prior to employing any prospective employees
- Conduct a formal interview with prospective employees part of which will cover Child Protection issues
- Request a signed staff agreement part of which covers requirements of Child Protection Legislation
- Provide training to any new staff member that covers their legislative obligations under the Acts relating to child protection in New South Wales, during the employees induction period (see section 4 of these procedures)
- Keep a copy of staff agreements and the Working With Children Check Verification filed in the Admin Office

3 Volunteers

All volunteers working at the School must have been known by the Board members for a period of not less than six months.

All volunteers working at the School must have a current Volunteer Working With Children Check unless they are a parent or close relative of a current student.

Parents or close relatives of students at the school helping on an irregular basis are exempt from having a Working With Children Check under most circumstance however if the Schools position is that volunteering on a regular basis by parents will require a current Volunteer Working With Children Check.

Parents volunteering on overnight camps are required by the School to have a current Volunteer Working With Children Check.

If you are in doubt about your status please see the Principal.

The principal will:

- Approve any volunteers working at the school
- Carry out a Working With Children Check verification prior to a volunteer working at the school (see section 5 of these procedures)
- Provide training to any new volunteer worker that covers their legislative obligations under the Acts relating to child protection in New South Wales, during the volunteers induction period (see section 4 of these procedures)
- File a copy of the signed Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement and Working With Children Check Verification in the Admin Office

4 Information and Training

Upon employment induction, and at the first staff meeting of each year, the Principal will:

- provide training and circulate information to all staff and volunteers that covers their legislative obligations under the acts relating to child protection in New South Wales including:
 - a) *The Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection and Community Services) Act 1998*, which added Part 3A of *the Ombudsman Act 1974*;
 - b) *The Children and Young Person (Care and Protection) Act 1998*; and
 - c) *The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*;
- provide all staff and volunteers with a copy of the schools Child Protection Policy to read with an accompanying Acknowledgement to sign;
- Sight and then file copies of the signed Acknowledgement in the Admin Office.

Staff members and volunteers will be informed of the following:

- Legal and moral responsibilities related to child protection, mandatory reporting, Biblical principles and other relevant standards of behaviour relating to child protection.
- Requirements to notify and investigate allegations of reportable conduct in compliance with the Ombudsman Act 1974.
- Obligations under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 which prohibits persons with convictions for serious sexual offences from working in positions of child-related employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised.
- Obligations related to mandatory reporting and processes set in place if action is required.

5 Screening

The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 requires that persons engaged in child-related work have current Working With Children Check clearances.

The Principal will:

- request the worker's or volunteer's name, date of birth and Working With Children Check number for verification purposes;
- carry out a Working with Children Check Clearance verification, which complies with the legislative requirements of the State of NSW, for all paid staff and volunteers prior to their commencement of work and at each subsequent 5 yearly renewal;
- keep a printed copy of all clearances on file in the Admin Office;
- review WWCC verifications at the start of each year for current employees and volunteers and notify an employee or volunteer if their WWCC is nearing renewal;
- notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of any persons who will not be employed in child-related work (whether paid or unpaid) as a result of such checks.

Note – It is the responsibility of the child-related worker to ensure that when they are eligible to apply for a Check or when their Check is up for renewal that they do so.

6 General Procedures to Promote a Safe & Supportive Environment

All personal counseling is to be carried out within sight of another staff member, parent or guardian of the child.

Staff members will respect a child's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

Adults and children are expected to respect each other's privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Staff members will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No staff member will be alone in a room with a child while either is changing.

Staff members have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at School activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

All children are to be supervised during School hours until they have been dismissed into their parents/carers care.

In choosing games, activities or sports, staff members consider the levels of safety; physical contact and intimacy required and exercise caution.

Staff members should be careful of children who actively seek physical attention.

Staff members should obtain permission slips for special outings, and also general permission for staff members/volunteers to provide transport.

Staff members should be alert for strangers.

During excursions and outings staff members should check toilet areas / change rooms for safety prior to students using those facilities.

7 Mandatory Reporting (refers to Part A and Section 3 of the Schools Child Protection Policy)

Should there be reasonable grounds to suspect risk of significant harm then;

Staff will:

- Notify the Principal/Teacher delegate as soon as possible; or
- If there is an immediate danger to the child or young person and the Principal/Teacher delegate is not contactable you should speak to the Police and/or the Child Protection Helpline directly and then advise the Principal or next most senior member of staff at the School as soon as possible.
- Not investigate the matter yourself!
- Keep the matter confidential.

The Principal/Teacher delegate will:

- Use and follow the procedures in the Mandatory Reporting Guide either using the PDF version or the online version at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
- If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been abused or is suffering abuse on School property or during a School activity, notify the Ombudsman, Community Services, the NSW Police, and the School's insurer without any undue delay.

Note – Within the School, it is deemed that mandatory reporting has taken place if the Principal has been notified. Full accountability then rests with the Principal to be the mandatory reporter. The Principal will become the liaison person with Community Services, the Police and the Ombudsman.

8 Reportable Conduct (this relates to Part B of the Schools Child Protection Policy)

8.1 Initial Actions

If staff members:

- a) have any concerns relating to another employee engaging in reportable conduct as set out in Part B of the Schools Child Protection Policy; or

- b) have concerns of another employees inappropriate behavior; or
- c) become aware that another employee has been charged with or convicted of an offence involving reportable conduct; or
- d) have information about themselves regarding reportable or inappropriate conduct then;

The staff member should:

- Immediately notify the Principal; or
- If this is in relation to the Principal then immediately notify the Vice President of the School Board

The Schools appropriate authority (Principal or Vice President) will take these initial steps as soon as possible:

- Make a determination on the face value of the information received as to whether it is an allegation of reportable conduct considering the welfare of the child.
- Assess whether Community Services or the Police need to be notified (ie, if reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm or a potential criminal offence) and notify the appropriate agency as necessary. If they have been notified, seek clearance from these statutory agencies prior to the school proceeding with the Reportable Conduct investigation;
- Notify the child's parents (unless to do so would be likely to compromise the investigation or any investigation by Community Services or the Police);
- Notify the Ombudsman within 30 days of receiving the allegation;
- Carry out a risk assessment and take action to reduce/remove risk, where appropriate; and
- Investigate the allegation or appoint someone to investigate the allegation.

8.2 Investigation Principles

The delegated investigator will use the investigation principles as set out in Part B Section 3.2 of the Schools Child Protection Policy. The employee may expect a fair investigative process which includes:

- confidentiality;
- adequate access to information regarding the allegation;
- an opportunity to respond to the allegation;
- reasonable notice for meetings and interviews;
- the right to have a support person present for interviews;
- an impartial decision maker and an impartial decision making process;
- the opportunity to respond to adverse findings and disciplinary action.

Where there is concern about the capacity to undertake a fair and proper investigation of an allegation against an employee, the School should seek advice from the NSW Ombudsman or the Department of Community Services.

Note – While the investigative process needs to be impartial it is also important to try and give support to all parties through the investigative process including the child/children, witnesses and the person subject to the allegation.

8.3 Risk Assessment through the investigative process

The Principal, Board Vice President and/or Appointed Investigator will apply risk management principles as set out in Part B Section 4 of the Schools Child Protection Policy comprising of:

- an initial risk assessment;
- ongoing risk assessments through the investigation; and
- risk assessment at the conclusion of the investigation

The Head of Agency will take appropriate action to minimize the risks identified.

Note – A decision to take action on the basis of a risk assessment is not indicative of the findings of the matter.

8.4 Confidentiality

The Principal, Board Vice President and/or Appointed Investigator will:

- Remind all parties involved of their responsibility to maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation process.
- File all records about allegations of reportable conduct against employees in a secure cabinet in the Admin Office
- These will be accessible by the Principal or with the Principal's express authority.

8.5 Reporting

At the conclusion of the investigation a finding will be made as to the allegation.

The Principal will:

- Make a decision as to what action, if any, is required in relation to the PSOA, the child/children involved and any other parties.
- Notify the parties involved including relevant authorities as necessary as per the Schools Child Protection Policy Part B Section 3
- Send the final report to the Ombudsman

8.6 Disciplinary Action

Depending on the final outcome of the investigation the School Board in conjunction with the Principal may take disciplinary action against the PSOA (including termination of employment).

In relation to any disciplinary action the School will:

- a) give the PSO details of the proposed disciplinary action; and
- b) give the PSO a reasonable opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

8.7 Complaints by Parents, Carers or Community Members

As stated in the Schools Child Protection Policy Part B Section 1.5, parents, carers or other stakeholders have the right to raise complaints or allegations regarding staff misconduct and/or reportable conduct. The School takes such complaints seriously, and will deal with them immediately. Complaints will be dealt with via the above procedure or as outlined in our Complaints and Grievance Policy depending on the nature of the complaint.

9 Related Documents

- P3.6.1 Child Protection Policy
- Complaints and Grievance Policy
- *The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *The Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*
- *The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)*
- The NSW Government Mandatory Reporters Guide Dec 14.pdf
- <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
- Child Safe Risk Management Template