



INTRODUCTION

This policy consolidates a series of policies which have been developed and implemented by Southern Cross Grammar (SCG) to create a safe learning environment and safeguard the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of its students. SCG recognises that it has a moral and legal duty to protect its students from foreseeable harm. This includes the provision of safeguards against mistreatment and timely reporting of child abuseⁱ. Preventative measures include careful selection of staff, staff training and the implementation of a staff code of conduct to enforce a high level of professional standards. SCG is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally, racially and/or linguistically diverse background, any children who are vulnerable, including LGBTI+ students and providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Together this group of policies and procedures assist SCG to

- embed an organisational culture of child safety
- meet its moral and legal duties to its students,
- fulfil its statutory responsibilities to protect its students
- fulfil its statutory responsibility to report child abuse.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Southern Cross Grammar has zero tolerance of child abuse

- The interests of the childⁱⁱ are paramount
- All children have the right to feel safe and be safe at school
- All children have equal rights to protection
- All staff play a vital role in creating a safe school environmentⁱⁱⁱ
- All staff and other members of the SCG community have a responsibility to protect children and young people from mistreatment

All adult members of the SCG community have a legal responsibility to report child abuse.^{iv}

STAFF RECRUITMENT

All applicants applying for child connected work^v at SCG are informed of SCG's child protection policies and procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and zero tolerance of child abuse.

SCG uses a combination of pre-employment screening processes to filter out inappropriate job applicants:

- Checks are carried out to verify the applicant's identity, employment history and qualifications
- Job applicants selected for interview are subjected to rigorous questioning
- References are checked, not only for competence but also for suitability to work with children
- All teachers must be VIT registered and
- All other employees, volunteers and contractors must have a positive Working with Children Check (WWCC) Assessment Notice.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

New staff undergo induction which emphasises duty of care, child protection, and the statutory duty to report child abuse.

All staff undergo regular training in recognising symptoms of child abuse, duty to report and reporting procedures. All staff are required to complete an online training module on preventing and reporting child abuse and to update their knowledge and skills on a yearly basis.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

SCG has a Staff Code of Conduct which includes Guidelines for SCG Staff/Student Contact. Relationship boundaries are clearly explained and staff are directed to avoid behaviours and actions which could place students and staff at risk of harm or of allegations of harm.

DUTY STATEMENTS

All staff position descriptions include a statement concerning the staff member's duties and responsibilities with respect to child protection.

VISITORS TO SOUTHERN CROSS GRAMMAR

All visitors to SCG must be clearly identified, sign in to the online visitor management system, Passtab and wear the Passtab generated sign in sticker.

All visitors without a WWCC card are directly supervised by a SCG staff member who holds a current WWCC card or VIT registration.

E-SAFETY

SCG has in place policies and guidelines to support and encourage cyber-safe behaviours. These include Acceptable Use policy and guidelines for both students and staff.

RISK MANAGEMENT

SCG has clear strategies, including policies and procedures to

- The provision of a safe learning environment for its students
- Identify risks of child abuse and to mitigate those risks
- Assist staff to detect suspected child abuse
- Safeguard the child and
- Report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

BULLYING

SCG acknowledges that bullying is a serious issue in schools and can result in high levels of student anxiety with risk of serious harm to the students.

Emotional and physical wellbeing of students, including outlining ways of reporting and seeking assistance with bullying, is prioritised and placed developmentally appropriately into the F-12 curriculum at SCG Grammar.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING

SCG has in place a process for the early detection of students at risk and a framework of support and counselling.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

All teachers understand their mandatory reporting obligations.

All staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibility to protect the child and young people and to report child abuse.

All parents and other adult members of the SCG community have been informed of their legal obligation to inform the police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16.



STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

SCG has strategies in place to empower its students through building

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

SCG has clear strategies, including policies and procedures to

- Southern Cross Grammar, Staff Code of Conduct
- Southern Cross Grammar, Working with Children Check Policy
- Southern Cross Grammar, Acceptable Use Policy
- Southern Cross Grammar, Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Southern Cross Grammar, Behaviour Management Guidelines
- Southern Cross Grammar, Mandatory Reporting Policy

LEGISLATION

- Crimes Act 1958 Vic
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe Schools) Act 2015
- Ministerial Order 870
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended)
- Worker Screening Act 2020
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Crimes Act (Vic) incorporating Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014
- National Safe School Framework

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review.

i Section 11.3(1) of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006

"child abuse includes—

- (a) any act committed against a child involving—
 - (i) a sexual offence; or
 - (ii) an offence under section 49M(1) of the **Crimes Act 1958**; and
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of —
 - (i) physical violence; or
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) serious neglect of a child .

ii "child" means (other than in Part 6A) a person who is under the age of 18 years, (Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 - sect 3)

iii "School environment" means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including

- (a) A campus of the school;
- (b) Online school environments (including email and internet systems); and
- (c) Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, competitions and other events).

iv Registered teachers, school principals, doctors, nurses, midwives, out-of-home care workers (excluding volunteer foster carers and kinship carers), early childhood teachers and workers, registered psychologists, youth justice workers, school counsellors and people in religious ministry all have a mandatory obligation to report physical and sexual abuse. All other adult members of the community have a legal obligation to report sexual abuse.

v "Child connected work" means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.