



# NHILL LUTHERAN SCHOOL

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## CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY

Nhill Lutheran School has developed the following Child Protection and Safety Policy. This policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse. It is designed to be communicated through our public website as well as through other mediums such as newsletters and in induction and welcome packs for School Council members, staff and volunteers.

### Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Nhill Lutheran School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

At Nhill Lutheran School we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in the children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

### Definitions

**Child abuse:** Child abuse: includes any act committed against a child involving sexual offences or grooming; the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm; serious neglect of a child and a child's exposure to family violence.

**School environment:** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use by a child during or outside school hours including the school campus, online environments such as internet and email systems, other locations provided by the school for a child's use including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

## Child Safe Principles

The School'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.

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 and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations of appropriate behaviour with the children are established in our Child Safety 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 School community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, volunteers, third party contractors \*\* and external education providers, as all are involved in child-connected work.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all School Council \*members/directors\*, staff and volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
11. All children, especially those who are vulnerable for whatever reason, have a right to care and support.
12. 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.
13. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

## Objectives

This policy provides the framework for:

- ✓ The development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the School;
- ✓ The creation of a positive and robust children protection culture;
- ✓ The promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the School; and
- ✓ Complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

## Child Protection Program

Nhill Lutheran School is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks 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.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse 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 and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
- ✓ Procedures for recruiting and screening School Council members, staff 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 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 Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- ✓ A system for continuous improvement and review

As part of Nhill Lutheran School's induction process all staff and direct contact volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.

All staff, volunteers and school council members are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the School's Child Protection Officer's to ensure that they are compliant with the school's approach to child protection.

## **Responsibilities**

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Nhill Lutheran School all members of the School Council and staff, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

### **School Council**

Each member of the School Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program are to be effectively implanted within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal and management 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 Protection and Safety Policy and the School's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the School.

### **The School's Child Protection Officers**

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Protection officers. Our Child Protection officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for promoting child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

### **Staff Members**

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. 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 one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

## **Volunteers**

All Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

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 one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

## **Third Party Contractors**

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All service providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the service provider.

## **External Education Providers**

An external education provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School.

The delivery of such a course may take place on a School premises or elsewhere.

All external education providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All external education providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

Nhill Lutheran School 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 members of the School Council, staff and volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School's Child Protection Officers.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.**  
**Policy and Program Review**

Nhill Lutheran School is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

DATE: June 2016

FOR REVIEW: June 2017