

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Westminster School seeks to provide opportunities for students to discover and develop their individual talents and interests. In a caring Christian environment and within the framework of good order and discipline, the School aims to guide all its students towards their full stature as mature and responsible citizens.

Westminster School acknowledges its responsibility to support the care and protection of children while they are at school or involved in activities organized by the School.

2. Policy Statement

While we recognise that the primary responsibility for a child's care and protection lies with the child's family, the School will provide a safe and caring environment to assist children and young people to develop and reach their full potential. Adults are the people in our society who have the responsibility for child protection and therefore employees and volunteers of Westminster School will act in a positive way to develop a safe environment for the children and young people in their care. They will take action to fulfil their duty of care.

We also recognize that children and young people can act in ways that jeopardise the physical and emotional well being of other children and young people, and that adults have a responsibility to prevent, limit or address such behaviours.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- All Westminster School employees and volunteers, irrespective of whether or not they are working directly with children and young people; All third party providers and users of our site and or services who are identified as working directly with children and young people, working in unsupervised proximity to children and young people or accessing records relating to children and young people at Westminster School;
- All members of Westminster School Council and Council sub-committees.

It applies:

- On and off Westminster School's site, for example including camps, excursions and overseas trips organised by the School
- At functions where individuals are representing the School
- In relation to Boarding and Homestays that are part of Westminster School's service offerings.

4. Underlying Principles

Children's rights

- Children are the most vulnerable members of our society Children need to know and believe that they have the right to be safe at all times
- Children are entitled to basic human rights regardless of special needs, cultural, or socio-economic factors
- Children are people in their own right deserving of respect, care and protection
- Children are entitled to the support of a person to act as an advocate on their behalf.

Child protection

- The safety of children and young people is Westminster School's paramount obligation and must not be overridden by other interests.
- Risks to the safety of children and young people have the potential to occur through direct or indirect contact with children and young people, formal or incidental access to information about children and young people and the direct or indirect capacity to influence the standards and delivery of Westminster School services to children, young people and their families.
- Risks to the safety of children and young people must be responded to immediately they are known or suspected.
- The assessment and monitoring of a person's suitability to be engaged with Westminster School is continuous, and people engaged with our School must be suitable to do so at all times.
- Assessing a person's suitability to be engaged with Westminster School must be based on sufficient and relevant information.
- All people engaged with Westminster School have a responsibility to report inappropriate conduct of adults towards children and young people, and of children and young people to other children or young people.
- Establishing and monitoring a person's suitability to be engaged with Westminster School is only one means by which the School meets its Child protection obligations.
- Other School policies and processes are essential in supporting this policy's purpose and principles, including employee and volunteer training, induction, Codes of Conduct, and complaints and investigation processes.

5. Responding to suspicions of abuse or neglect

Disclosures of abuse or neglect by children and young people must be treated with the utmost care and respect, in line with the recommended practice in the current Responding to Abuse and Neglect training program.

Staff and volunteers with a legally mandated Notification responsibility must notify the relevant Government Department if they form a suspicion on reasonable grounds in the course of their work or in carrying out their official duties that a child/young person has been or is being abused or neglected. (See Mandatory Reporting Procedure and Checklist)

All staff and volunteers have an ethical responsibility to report suspected child abuse and neglect, and should discuss any suspicions or concerns with a School manager, Head of School or the Principal.

6. Screening and suitability processes

Suitability for working directly or indirectly with children and young people must be established at the point of recruitment and monitored throughout the period of engagement with Westminster School, in line with current Westminster Screening and Suitability Procedures.

- Checks of criminal and other relevant history as prescribed in relevant sections of the Children's Protection Act must be conducted through an approved screening authority.
- Criminal and other relevant history clearances must be current while people covered by this policy are engaged with Westminster School



- Continuous monitoring of suitability will include:
 - Documenting and acting on information about inappropriate conduct towards children or young people by people covered by this policy
 - Supervision, assessment, observation and mentoring of staff and volunteers
- Information that suggests a person is unsuitable to be engaged with Westminster School must be responded to as soon as that information is available
- Changes to Westminster screening or suitability policy requirements must be applied to existing staff and volunteers where legislation and employment contracts allow.
- The investigation and use of information relating to unsuitability must occur in a manner which respects the person's right to natural justice and procedural fairness
- Westminster staff making suitability assessments must:
 - be without vested interest in the appointment, approval or recruitment of any particular person
 - maintain screening and suitability process records that can be called upon at any time.

7. Training and support for employees and volunteers

All employees and volunteers are to complete and maintain Responding to Abuse and Neglect certification requirements associated with their roles within prescribed timelines.

The School supports employees and volunteers to fulfil their child protection responsibilities, including Mandatory Notification responsibilities, through

- Providing a documented Mandatory Reporting Procedure and Checklist
- Designating staff who can be contacted for advice or support in that procedure
- Westminster School's Employee Assistance Program
- Scheduling professional learning opportunities in response to emerging needs.

8. Curriculum and pastoral strategies

Westminster School students will be supported to recognise and report abuse and neglect through the School's pastoral care and student wellbeing programs.

All children and young people will be supported to build positive, respectful relationships with other children and young people and with adults.

All students will have the opportunity to build trusted relationships with at adults in the School who can be approached with issues and concerns, such as Heads of House, Chaplains, class teachers and tutors.

9. Physical environment

The School will regularly review and monitor its physical environment, and adjust it as required to reduce the opportunity for abuse to occur. Monitoring will occur through yard duty, inspections and general vigilance.

10. A Guide to Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Principal

- Foster and support a whole school approach to the management of child protection.



- Ensure a safe environment for children at Westminster School
- Provide advice and support for school personnel dealing with issues of child abuse
- Allocate training resources for personnel to assist in the delivery of professional development programs for Mandated Notifiers
- Provide current information on child protection issues
- Encourage school personnel to regularly review their legal obligations under the Children's Protection Act, 1993 ("the Act").
- Ensure staff and volunteers undergo and hold appropriate criminal history screening clearance checks prior to commencement and at three yearly intervals.
- Ensure appropriate adjustments to the physical environment as required to reduce the opportunity for abuse to occur.

Responsibilities of School Leaders

- Ensure all School personnel understand their obligations and responsibilities as Mandated Notifiers and develop appropriate procedures
- Provide access to ongoing training and development for staff to enable them to fulfil their key responsibilities
- Inform and consult with parents and encourage the participation of families in child protection issues
- Provide ongoing child protection and abuse prevention programs in the School
- Apply point of engagement screening and suitability procedures where relevant to their role
- Continuously monitor the suitability of Westminster staff, volunteers and contractors to be working directly or indirectly with children and young people, and respond to information suggesting unsuitability as soon as that information is made available
- Monitor, evaluate and review child protection and abuse prevention programs
- Assist staff in their role as advocates for all children in their care.

Responsibilities of School Personnel

- Provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.
- Develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.
- Support children to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths.
- Provide the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety interventions for children
- Respect the diverse and special needs of children
- Complete required training and development relevant to child protection.
- Apply point of engagement screening and suitability procedures where relevant to their role.
- Monitor the physical environment and report issues which create an opportunity for abuse to occur.
- Be sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour which may be indicative of abuse



- Maintain current and appropriate criminal and other history screening clearances as required
- Make full and honest disclosure of any relevant matters throughout the period of engagement with Westminster School
- Maintain familiarity with and adhere to the current version of *Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children or Young People*

11. Associated documents

Legislation

- Children's Protection Act (SA) 1993

External standards / conventions / frameworks

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- National Safe Schools Framework
- Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young People (SA Cross-Sector)
- Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct in SA Education and Care Settings (SA Cross-Sector)
- Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People (SA Cross Sector)
- Guidance in Responding to Children and Young People (DECD)
- Information Sharing: Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families (SA Gov't)
- Appendix to the Information Sharing Guidelines 2011 (AISSA)

Westminster School policies / programs / procedures

- Child Protection Concerns Checklist (adapted from DECD checklist for Westminster School)
- Mandatory Notification Procedure
- Mandatory Notification Checklist (adapted from DECD checklist)
- Mandatory Notification Record
- Recruitment Procedure
- Screening and Suitability Procedures

Policy Title	Child Protection Policy
Version Number	1.0
Author	Gill Oscar
Reviewer(s)	Kim McLean, AISSA (Mary Pickett), SLT
SLT Approved	28 October 2014
Council Approved	19 March 2015
Next Review	March 2017