

Policy

Student Protection



HEREWORTH
DESIGNED FOR BOYS

Background

Hereworth School is committed to the wellbeing and holistic development of its students. This Policy is in place to ensure all is done to safeguard that wellbeing and holistic development.

Purpose

This Policy is designed to achieve a greater awareness and ongoing commitment to the students' wellbeing.

The principles of this Policy are based on:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of a student are paramount.
- Every student has inherent rights, including dignity, privacy, respect and safety.
- A child has a right to be protected from harm or risk of harm.
- The value of the family unit is to be respected but not to the detriment of the wellbeing and best interests of the student.
- All appropriate measures will be taken to protect students from all forms of harm.
- In every preventative or protective action relating to harm, the total wellbeing and best interests of the student are the primary concerns.
- Harmful acts by anyone in authority over a student are a breach of trust and professional misconduct – in addition to any breach of law.
- Any form of sexual behaviour by an adult employee to, or with a student or students who comes under his/her care is always sexual abuse.
- Child sexual abuse is a serious criminal offence and will always be reported to the police.
- All employees have a responsibility to care for students who come under their care and to promote their best interest and wellbeing.
- Reporting information or allegations of harm concerning a child within the school is mandatory.
- Reporting any discussion heard or overheard, concerning suicide within the school is mandatory.
- Anglican schools will cooperate with relevant State authorities in matters regarding the protection of students.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against any employee who harms a student.

Guidelines

- Following the reporting of any allegation the Headmaster must inform the Chair immediately.
- Following the reporting of the information/allegation, each employee who has access to information has an obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality and privacy with respect to that information.
- The complainant and respondent (where appropriate) will be kept informed of progress in resolving the complaint.
- All employees involved in situations where harm or inappropriate behaviour is disclosed or suspected must be treated with natural justice, dignity, sensitivity and respect, including the alleged perpetrator.
- Proactive and reactive pastoral care structures will be in place in the school.
- The school will investigate all incidents where discussion concerning suicide are concerned.

- The School will cooperate with relevant State authorities in matters regarding the protection of students.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against any employee who harms a student.

Mandatory reporting to the Education Council is required when:

- an employer dismisses a teacher for any reason
- a teacher resigns from a teaching position, or finishes a fixed-term contract, and the employer had advised the teacher within the previous 12 months that it was dissatisfied with, or intended to investigate, any aspect of the teacher's conduct or the teacher's competence.
- Mandatory reporting to the Education Council is also required if, within 12 months after a teacher ceases to be employed by the employer, the employer receives a complaint about the teacher's conduct or competence while he or she was an employee.
- Failure to make a mandatory report is an offence under the Education Act.

Professional and Behavioural Obligations

- All employees are expected to conduct themselves with the professionalism implied by their position, Code of Conduct, training and/or as stated in their employment contract. Employees are expected to behave at all times in a manner supportive of the welfare and best interests of all students;
- Volunteers and visitors are also expected to behave at all times in a manner supportive of the welfare and best interests of all students.

Behaviour of a sexual, physical or psychological nature which exploits the special position of trust and authority between an employee or volunteer and a student, regardless of age, is a breach of obligations and of this Policy. Such behaviours may include:

- transporting a student, regardless of age without seeking the consent of a parent or caregiver or without informing the Headmaster;
- seeking to visit a student, regardless of age at his/her home without the consent or knowledge of the parent or caregiver and/or Headmaster;
- inviting a student, regardless of age, to the employee's home unaccompanied without the consent of a parent or caregiver or without informing the Headmaster;
- sending or receiving correspondence of an inappropriate nature;
- inappropriate giving of gifts;
- physical or emotional aggression, violence or bullying;
- Seclusion of a child or young person is no longer an acceptable tool in behaviour management
- Physical restraint is a serious intervention that should only be used in circumstances where it is absolutely necessary
- sexual exhibitionism;
- development of an intimate relationship incompatible with the professional relationship, initiated by either party;
- exposing to a student, regardless of age, pornographic material in any medium;
- inappropriate discussion of matters of sexual behaviour;
- obscene language, especially of a sexual nature;
- gestures or actions of a suggestive or obscene nature;
- jokes of a sexual nature told in the presence of student/s;
- voyeurism (gaining pleasure from secret watching of another);
- repeatedly seeking to be alone with a student; or
- detaining a student in locked facilities or facilities that do not have immediate access to relevant staff members.

This is not an exhaustive list; any behaviour which exploits a student is unacceptable.

- The Board must ensure that:
 - (a) staff, students and parents are made aware of the processes;
 - (b) staff are trained in implementing the processes;
 - (c) the school is implementing the processes; and
 - (d) the processes are readily accessible by staff, students and parents.
- The School must have robust screening requirements and appropriate employment selection procedures must be adopted for the recruitment and selection of all employees to the School.
- Volunteers and Contractors should also be subject to screening

Making a Complaint

- The School must have written processes for responding to harm or allegations of harm of students and the appropriate conduct of school staff and students. The written processes must also include a process for reporting the allegations. The School is to have a written complaints procedure to address allegations of non-compliance of these processes. These requirements are the responsibility of the Headmaster.
- In the event that a person, for example a parent, has a concern that the processes within this Student Protection Policy and associated procedures have not been complied with, then the person is able to make a complaint pursuant to the Complaints Policy.
- Persons affected by student protection matters will react and respond differently. It is imperative that all appropriate support is provided to those concerned. The Headmaster is to ensure that any student or staff member involved in any student protection incident is provided with opportunities for support and debriefing as appropriate.
- In circumstances where it may be suspected or apparent that other students may have been involved or exposed to a student protection matter or concern, the Headmaster is to seek guidance from appropriate external advisers or agencies.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed and, if appropriate, updated by the Board every two years.

.....
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

.....
Headmaster

Dated

to be reviewed on or before.....