

Child Protection Policy

Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about: (a) how the school will respond to harm, or allegations of harm, to students under 18 years; and (b) the appropriate conduct of the school's staff and students to comply with accreditation requirements.	
Scope	Students and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, parents, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at <i>The River School</i> .	
Responsibility	School Principal	
References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld) • Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) • Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld) • Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld) • Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) • Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld) • Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulations 2020 (Qld) • Criminal Code Act 1899 • The River School Child Risk Management Strategy (for the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)</i>) 	
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The River School Child Protection Reporting Form • The River School Work Health and Safety Policy (for the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)</i>) • The River School Code of Conduct Policy • The River School Complaints Handling Policy • The River School Complaints Handling Procedure 	
Status	Approval by AME Ltd Board 21/08/2024	Supersedes CPP2023
Last Review Date	August 2024	Next Review Date August 2025
Review Cycle	Annually	Version ID CPP2024
Authorisation	Board Chair	Date of Authorisation 21 st August 2024
Policy Owner:	AME Ltd Board	

1. Definitions

- **Section 8 of the Child Protection Act 1999** — A **child** is an individual under 18 years.
- **Section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999***
“**Harm**”, to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.
 1. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
 2. Harm can be caused by—
 - a) physical; psychological; emotional abuse; neglect; or
 - b) sexual abuse or exploitation
 3. Harm can be caused by—
 - a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or
 - b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
- **Section 10 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*** - A **child in need of protection** is a child who—
 - a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; **and**
 - b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.
- **Section 364 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*** - “**Sexual abuse**”, in relation to a sexual behaviour the student and another person in the following circumstances —
 - (a) the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the student
 - (b) the student has less power than the other person;
 - (c) there is a significant disparity between the student and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

2. Health and Safety

The School has written processes in place to enable it to comply with the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld).

3. Responding to Reports of Harm

When the School receives any information alleging 'harm'¹ to a student (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) it will deal with the situation compassionately and fairly so as to minimise any likely harm to the extent it reasonably can. This is set out in the school’s Child Risk Management Strategy. Information relating to physical or sexual abuse is handled under obligations to report set out in this policy².

4. Conduct of Staff and Students

All staff, contractors and volunteers must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students. Staff, contractors and volunteers must not cause harm to students³.

¹ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(7)*: the definition of 'harm' for this regulation is the same as in section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*

² *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(1)*

³ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(1)*

5. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

If a student considers the behaviour of a staff member to be inappropriate, the student should report the behaviour to:

- Anne Donoghoe (Principal)

or

- Sue Attrill (Deputy Principal)⁴

If one, or both, of the aforementioned people are involved in the inappropriate behaviour, the student should report the incident to any staff member whom they are comfortable disclosing details of the events to.

6. Dealing with Report of Inappropriate Behaviour

A staff member who receives a report of inappropriate behaviour must report it to the Principal. Where the Principal is the subject of the report of inappropriate behaviour, the staff member must inform a member of the school's governing body⁵. Reports will be dealt with under the school's *Complaints Handling Policy*.

7. Reporting Sexual Abuse⁶

7.1. Section 366 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member becomes aware, or reasonably suspects, in the course of the staff member's employment at the school, that any of the following has been sexually abused by another person:

- a) A student under 18 years attending the school;
- b) A kindergarten aged child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the school;
- c) A person with a disability who:
 - i. under section 420(2), of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - ii. is not enrolled in the preparatory year at our school.

The staff member (the first person) must give a written report about the abuse or suspected abuse to the School's Principal or a director of the school's governing body immediately.

The non-State school's Principal or a director of a non-State school's governing body must immediately give **a copy of a report given** to the Principal or director to a police officer.

If the first person who becomes aware or reasonably suspects sexual abuse is the school's Principal, the **Principal** must give a written report about the abuse, or suspected abuse to a police officer immediately and must also give a copy of the report to a director of the school's governing body immediately.

7.2 A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) the name of the person giving the report (the **first person**);
- b) the student's name and sex
- c) details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused by another person;

⁴ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2) and s.16(3)*

⁵ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)*

⁶ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)(c)*

- d) details of the abuse or suspected abuse;
- e) any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
 - i. the student's age;
 - ii. the identity of the person who has abused, or is suspected to have abused, the student;
 - iii. the identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse⁷.

8. Reporting Likely Sexual Abuse⁸

8.1. Section 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* states that if a staff member reasonably suspects in the course of their employment at the school, that any of the following is likely to be sexually abused by another person:

- a) a student under 18 years attending the school;
- b) kindergarten aged child registered in a kindergarten learning program at school;
- c) a person with a disability who:
 - i. under section 420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - ii. is not enrolled in the preparatory year at school.

The staff members (first person) must give a written report about the suspicion, to the school's Principal or a director of the school's governing body immediately. **The school's Principal or a director of the governing body must immediately give a copy of a report given to the Principal or director to a police officer.**

8.2. If the first person who reasonably suspects likely sexual abuse is the school's principal, the principal must give a written report about the suspicion to a police officer immediately and must also give a copy of the report to a director of the school's governing body immediately.

A report under this section must include the following particulars:

- a) the name of the person giving the report (the *first person*)
- b) the student's name and sex;
- c) details of the basis for the first person reasonably suspecting that the student is likely to be sexually abused by another person;
- d) any of the following information of which the first person is aware –
 - (i) the student's age;
 - (ii) the identity of the person who is suspected to be likely to sexually abuse the student;
 - (iii) the identity of anyone else who may have information about the suspected likelihood

9. Reporting Physical and Sexual Abuse⁹

9.1 Under Section 13E (3) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, if a doctor, a registered nurse, or a teacher [approved teacher under the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* employed at school], forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child "in the course of their engagement in their profession", they must make a written report.

9.2. A 'reportable suspicion' about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child —

- a) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; **and**
- b) may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

⁷ *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.68*

⁸ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(2)(c) & Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.69*

⁹ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16 (2)(d)*

9.3. If a doctor, nurse or teacher forms a reportable suspicion about a child in the course of the person's engagement as a relevant person, the person must give a written report to the Chief Executive of the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (or another department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999*). The doctor, nurse or teacher should give a copy of the report to the principal [Section 13G of the *Child Protection Act 1999*].

A report under this section must include the following particulars: -

- a) the basis on which the person has formed the reportable suspicion¹⁰
- b) the child's name, age and sex descriptor;
- c) details of how to contact the child;
- d) details of the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates;
- e) particulars of the identity of the person suspected of causing the child to have suffered, suffer, or be at risk of suffering, the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates;
- f) particulars of the identity of any other person who may be able to give information about the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates¹¹.

9.4. The person is not required to give a report about a matter if:

- (a) giving the report might tend to incriminate the person; or
- (b) the person knows, or reasonably supposes, that the chief executive is aware of the matter.

Child Safety Regional Intake Services: 1300 703 762

Child Safety after Hours Services Centre: 1800 177 135

10. Responsibilities under Criminal Code Act 1899 (QLD)

10.1 The *Criminal Code Act 1899* includes two offences that pertain to the failure to report a child sexual offence and the failure to protect a child against a child sexual offence. A child sexual offence is an offence of a sexual nature by an adult against a child under 16 years or a person with an impairment of the mind.

10.2 Failure to Report¹²: Under section 229BC of the Code, all adults [which includes students 18 years and over, parents/guardians and volunteers] must report sexual offences against a child by another adult to police as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is, or ought reasonably to have been, formed. Failure to make a report, without a reasonable excuse, is a criminal offence. A reasonable excuse not to make a report under the *Criminal Code Act 1899* includes that a report has already been made under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse) and the *Child Protection Act 1999* (reporting significant harm or risk of significant harm) as per this policy.

10.3 Failure to Protect¹³: Under section 229BB of the Code, all adults in positions of power or responsibility within institutions to reduce or remove the risk of child sexual offences being committed must take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from a child sexual offence. A failure to protect is an offence.

11. Awareness

The School will inform staff, students and parents of its processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students in communications to them and it will publish these processes on its website¹⁴. Staff, students, and parents are made aware of the school's child protection process via; the school's public website and Facebook page, as well as hard copies available in the staff room and office.

¹⁰ *Child Protection Act 1999 s.13E*

¹¹ See *Child Protection Regulation 2023, section 4 'information to be included in reports'*

¹² *Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) s.229BC*

¹³ *Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) s.229BB*

¹⁴ *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(a)*

12. Accessibility of Processes

Processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students are accessible on the school website and will be available on request from the school administration¹⁵.

13. Training

The school will train its staff in processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students on their induction and will refresh training annually¹⁶. Training will include Independent Schools Qld (ISQ) Child Protection Online Course and discussion of The River School *Child Protection Policy* and procedures at staff meetings and targeted Professional Development workshops. Evidence of staff training will be recorded on The River School's Professional Development attendance register, staff meeting minutes and agendas. The School Board will be advised of staff training and procedural updates via the Principal's report to the Board.

14. Implementing the Processes

The school will ensure it is implementing processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students by auditing compliance with the processes annually¹⁷. This will involve evidence of staff training, all related forms, policy and procedures, reviewed and updated.

15. Complaints Procedure

Suggestions of non-compliance with the school's processes may be submitted as complaints under The River School's *Complaints Handling Policy*¹⁸.

Appendices

- Child Protection Decision Support Tree For Principals and Board Directors
- Child Protection Decision Support Tree For Teachers
- Child Protection Decision Support Tree For Non-Teaching Staff
- Child Protection Reporting Form

Additional Resources

- ISQ Fact Sheet "Child Protection Reporting by Legislation"
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Child Protection Regulation 2023

¹⁵ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(b)

¹⁶ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(c)

¹⁷ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(d)

¹⁸ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(5) and s.16(6)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AS READ AND UNDERSTOOD

I _____ have read, understood, and agree to comply with the terms of this Child Protection Policy.

- Visitor
- Volunteer
- Student teacher / Work Experience / Vocational training
- Staff member of The River School

- **Position held within The River School:**

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____