



CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

Purpose

This policy describes Cedar College's Child Protection practices. Cedar College acknowledges that every child has the right to be safe from harm at all times. Child Protection is paramount to schools which are required to provide safe physical and online environments. Schools are required to implement appropriate Policies and Procedures to establish and maintain child safe environments. These must be regularly reviewed and updated.

Background

Cedar College believes that creating child safe environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by all sectors of the school community. Sharing responsibility for the care and protection of children helps to develop a stronger, more child-focused community.

Cedar College is committed to the safety of children and young people, and will ensure:

- That children and young people are valued, respected and encouraged to participate and that the safety and protection of children is always the first priority;
- Compliance with the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations;
- Bullying and harassment are not tolerated; and
- Information about services that can assist children and young people are displayed in areas accessible to children and young people.

Child safe environments: Principles of good practice which state that a child safe organisation:

- Takes a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues where the safety and wellbeing of children is the paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices;
- Is one that values and embraces the opinions and views of children;
- Encourages and assists children to build skills that will assist them to participate in society; and
- Takes action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological harm or risk of harm.

Statement of Intent

Cedar College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The College acknowledges that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing, development and effective learning. The safety and wellbeing of our children is a paramount consideration in all that we do. We acknowledge the vulnerability of children and young people in our care and take a proactive, preventative, and participatory approach to protecting them through:

- the on-going development of a positive, child safe culture;
- the development, implementation and monitoring of rigorous policies and procedures;

- seeking to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities, vigilant and, if required, prepared to respond in an appropriate and timely manner.

The College acknowledges that the whole school community has a responsibility to uphold these values.

Legal Obligations

Cedar College is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and participation of children and young people. This includes:

- A commitment to:
 - Supporting mandatory notifiers to report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm as outlined in the mandatory notification section;
 - Ensuring safe environments for children and young people are maintained; and
 - Lodging a Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement with the SA Department of Human Services.

Responsibilities

Maintaining a child safe environment is the responsibility of the Board, the Principal and of all staff members. The School Board has the overarching responsibility for maintaining a child safe environment. At a school level, staff members have different responsibilities, including requirements relating to mandatory reporting, as outlined below:

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the following:

- Promoting Child Protection wherever possible, and ensuring that Child Protection is included regularly in staff training;
- Ensuring that Child Protection is included in the school's curriculum;
- When a mandatory report has been made, assisting staff to complete site documentation, and then sign the mandatory notification record and ensure this is stored appropriately;
- Ensuring that students and staff receive adequate support if involved in a harm or risk of harm situation;
- Ensuring that staff are supported when making a mandatory report; and
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers have completed Working with Children Checks and RRHAN-EC training, and that third parties have completed Working with Children Checks where required.

Staff

All staff of Cedar College are responsible for the following:

- Reporting any suspected abuse to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78, or making an online report for non-urgent cases;
- Advising the Principal when a report is being/has been made (unless the report involves the Principal in which case it should be reported to the Board Chair);
- When concerning behaviour has been observed, the staff member who witnessed it must alert an appropriate senior staff member; and
- Taking action if children and young people have disclosed information about inappropriate behaviours of other adults.

Code of Conduct, Professional Boundaries and Expectations of Staff and Volunteers

Cedar College has developed a Child Safe Environment Code of Conduct to specify standards of conduct and care, professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour when working and interacting with

children. This is based on information outlined in the *Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people guidelines*. The aim is to provide guidance to staff on how best to support students, and how to avoid or manage difficult situations. The Code of Conduct applies to all staff and breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action or, in the case of serious breaches, dismissal.

Compulsory behaviour:

- Staff and volunteers must comply with the school's Child Safe Environment Policy;
- Staff and volunteers must behave as a positive role model to students;
- Staff and volunteers must promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students;
- Staff and volunteers must promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability;
- Suspicions of child abuse must be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL – 13 14 78) and to the Principal, or to the Board Chair if the situation involves the Principal;
- Concerning behaviour, breaches of the Code of Conduct or Protective Practices guidelines must be reported to the Principal, or to the Board Chair if the breach concerns the Principal. The Principal (or other person) will be responsible for developing an appropriate plan of action and ensuring it is followed;
- Students must be treated with respect and encouraged to speak up and participate in matters affecting them;
- Actions must be undertaken transparently and with the knowledge and consent of the Principal;
- When working one-on-one with children and young people, actions must be:
 - Public – ensure the environment is visible, public and busy. Use the site's authorised ICT systems;
 - Authorised – parents must be informed and have given consent and the activity must be authorised by the Principal;
 - Timely – the activity must be a legitimate part of your role, support must be provided within normal work hours where possible, and sessions should be concise and not unnecessarily prolonged; and
 - Purposeful – the activity should address or be linked to an identified wellbeing and/or learning need of the child or young person;
- Manage challenging behaviour through non-physical intervention, such as directing other children and young people to move away from the situation, talking to the child, directing the child or young person to a safe place, and directing other children to a safe place. Physical restraint should only be used as a last resort and must only be used when the safety of a child or young person or adult is threatened. Physical restraint must not be used as a response to property destruction, disruption to the education or care activity, refusal to comply, verbal threats, leaving an education care setting, or a need to maintain good order unless someone's safety is clearly threatened;
- Become as familiar as possible with the values of various cultural groups enrolled in an education or care site, as different cultures have different attitudes and traditions surrounding the concept of appropriate touch; and
- Ensure that the privacy of students is respected, and that personal information is managed in accordance with the school's Privacy Policy.

Unacceptable behaviour:

- Failure to act when an allegation of child abuse is made, including failure to report the allegation;
- Failure to intervene in situations where sexual harassment is occurring;
- Inappropriate comments about a child or young person's appearance, including excessive flattering comments;

- Inappropriate comments, conversations or enquiries of a sexual nature;
- Use of inappropriate nicknames;
- Obscene gestures and/or language;
- Jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature;
- Facilitating/permitting access to pornographic material;
- Facilitating/permitting access to sexually explicit material that is not part of an endorsed curriculum;
- Correspondence of a personal nature via any medium (including phone, text message, letters, email, social media, internet posts) that is unrelated to the staff member's role. This does not include class cards or bereavement cards;
- Discussing personal lifestyle details or opinions of self, other staff or children and young people unless directly relevant to the learning topic and with the individual's consent;
- Corporal punishment (for example, physical discipline or smacking);
- Inappropriate use of physical restraint/restrictive practices;
- Unwarranted or unwanted touching of a child or young person personally or with objects (for example, pencil or ruler);
- Initiating, permitting or requesting inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person (for example, massage, kisses, tickling games) or facilitating situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child or young person (see below for "Acceptable Touch");
- Inviting/allowing/encouraging children and young people to attend your home (see below for "Attendance at Homes or Social Gatherings");
- Attending children and young people's homes or their social gatherings (see below for "Attendance at Homes or Social Gatherings");
- Being alone with a child or young person outside your responsibilities;
- Entering change rooms or toilets occupied by children or young people when supervision is not required or appropriate;
- Transporting a child or young person unaccompanied;
- Using toilet facilities allocated to children and young people. Where separate toilet facilities are not available for staff, it is permissible to enter once certain that no students are inside nor will enter during use;
- Undressing using facilities allocated to children and young people, or in their presence;
- Tutoring outside The College's directions or knowledge;
- Giving personal gifts or special favours;
- Singling the same children and young people out for special duties and responsibilities;
- Privately giving money and/or gifts to individual children/young people;
- Photographing, audio recording or filming children or young people via any medium when not authorised by the site leader to do so and without required parental consent;
- Using personal rather than school equipment (such as filming or recording devices) for approved activities, unless authorised by the site leader to do so;
- Correspondence or communication (via any medium) to or from children and young people where a violation of professional boundaries is indicated and where the correspondence has not been provided to the Principal/leader via the staff member;
- Still/moving images or audio recordings of children and young people on personal equipment or kept in personal locations such as car or home that have not been authorised by the Principal;
- Uploading or publishing still/moving images or audio recordings of children and young people to any location, without parental and site leader's consent;

- Creating or using private chat rooms;
- Filming/recording students for the use of behaviour training/modification without obtaining prior permission from the Principal and parents; and
- Following a student's personal social media account, or allowing them to follow your personal social media account.

Acceptable Touch

Staff and volunteers should work hard to create and model a culture where acceptable touch is known. However, even non-intrusive touch may be inappropriate if a child or young person indicates they do not wish to be touched. Acceptable touch and physical contact may include:

- Providing students with technical assistance in practical subjects, such as touching the arm, hand, upper back or shoulder, for example. Verbal permission must be gained from the student prior and personal space respected;
- Non-intrusive gestures such as high fives, shaking hands, a brief congratulatory and gentle pat on the shoulder or upper back, where warranted. These can be promoted to students in place of more intrusive actions such as spontaneous hugging;
- Assisting with the toileting and personal care needs of a student with a disability (an individual plan for students with these needs must have been negotiated with parents);
- Providing First Aid; and
- Supporting a child who has hurt themselves.

Attendance at Homes or Social Gatherings

With the knowledge of the Principal/Heads, a staff member may attend the home or activity of a student, or a student attend the staff members home/activity. The purpose for the visit is key to determining whether it is appropriate. In most cases, if it is a parent-to-parent social/church/sporting visit/event or a student-to-student visit with parental supervision it would be considered acceptable:

- *"Social contact should be generated via the relationship the staff member has with the parents of children and young people or by an event. Avoid being alone with Children and Young People in these situations" P.11 – Protective Practices guidelines 2nd ed.*

As mentioned above, the key in all situations is to make it **public, authorised, timely and purposeful**.

In every circumstance where the above scenarios occur, the staff member or volunteer should recognise that **they are first and foremost an employee or volunteer of The College**, understand the level of risk as a staff member or volunteer in this scenario and **apply the protective practices guidelines at all times**. The staff member or volunteer should also conduct themselves in a way that does not bring into question their suitability to work or volunteer with children and young people in our community, and workplace matters should not be discussed on these occasions. All other "Compulsory Behaviours" and "Unacceptable Behaviours" listed above, still apply in these circumstances.

The following questions may help staff to recognise when professional and/or legal boundaries are at risk of being breached:

- *Am I dealing in a different manner with a particular child or young person than with others under the same circumstances?*

- *Is my dress/availability/language/demeanour different from the normal with a particular child or young person?*
- *Would I modify my behaviour with a child or young person if a colleague were present?*
- *Would I judge my conduct negatively if I observed it in another adult?*
- *Is it possible that the consequences of my actions will have negative outcomes for children and young people?*
- *Is it possible that the consequences of my actions will negatively affect people's confidence in my suitability to work with children and young people?*

If an honest answer to any of the above questions is 'yes' then a staff member must alter their behaviour immediately and consider seeking professional support or counsel." P.9 – Protective Practices guidelines 2nd ed.

Any concern a staff member has about whether or not a situation may be compromising or breaching a professional relationship should be discussed with the Principal or delegate and an approved plan of action followed. For example, a staff member may want advice about transporting a friend's child to and from the site or how to manage their own child's enrolment.

For any further guidelines, staff and volunteers should refer to "Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people" 2nd edition, specifically page 9 & 11.

Graduate or Former Students

The acceptable and unacceptable behaviours outlined above apply to any interactions with students who have graduated Cedar College, or have been former students of Cedar College, until both the following two dates occur:

- The first day of school in the year following their Year 12 graduation; and
- The former student has turned 18 (ie. the former student is a legal adult).

Recruitment, Selection, Screening and Background Checks

Cedar College will ensure that all employees, volunteers, service users and third parties have a current Working with Children Check, and that these are updated every 5 years. Cedar College will not employ a person or allow someone to volunteer unless a Working with Children Check has been conducted in the preceding 5 years.

In order to thoroughly screen and assess potential employees and volunteers, Cedar College will also conduct background checks and risk assessments. This may involve:

- Undertaking face-to-face interviews;
- Confirming qualifications;
- Requesting referee reports and obtaining reference checks;
- Conducting criminal history assessments; and/or
- Undertaking other background checks (for example, psychological testing, or on the job observation).

A Volunteer Application Form must be submitted in order to be a volunteer at the College. This form requires volunteers to submit to the College:

- A Working With Children Check;
- RRHAN-EC Certificate; and
- Protective Practices Certificate.

They must also declare that they will:

- Abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct, and Child Safe Environment Code of Conduct;
- Finish trainings by 4pm if they do not have a current First Aid certificate (the school nurses are on site until 4pm); and
- Declare their appropriateness to work with children based on previous work or any criminal history.

All adults (18 years and over) who live on the school site, including the children of staff, must undergo a Working with Children Check.

Risk Management

To help maintain a safe environment for children and young people, Cedar College will review its risks regularly and implement strategies to minimise and manage these risks.

Mandatory Reporting

All staff and volunteers must undertake the appropriate RRHAN-EC (Responding to Risks, Harm and Neglect – Education Certificate) course relevant to their role, and maintain their training to ensure currency.

This training states that any person who, while in the course of their work or volunteering suspects that a child is being or has been harmed or is at risk of harm, must report their suspicion to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL). This includes all persons who are not mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the legislation. 000 should always be called in an emergency.

All serious concerns of suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported via CARL by phoning 13 14 78. The telephone line is available 24 hours a day. Serious concerns include the suspicion that a child or infant is in imminent or immediate danger of serious harm or serious injury, or is experiencing chronic neglect. The following information is required to be provided when making a report to CARL:

- The child's name, age, date of birth and address;
- A description of the injury, abuse and/or neglect (current and previous);
- The child's current situation;
- The location of the child, parent or caregiver and alleged perpetrator; and
- When and how you found out about the harm or risk of harm.

Non-serious concerns can be reported via eCARL, which is the online Child Protection reporting system.

Cedar College will maintain records of all mandated reports made. The College Mandatory Report form must be used and all completed forms and associated notes, including whether made online or by phone, must be provided for the Principal and will be stored in the Principal's office. A relevant member of the Leadership team (Head of School and Director of relevant Sub-School) must also be aware of the report, and an electronic entry on the students Pastoral Care record made (no details, just that a report has been made).

Cedar College will ensure that adequate support is provided to the student involved. If the student is already connected with Cedar Care, then the relevant Cedar Care staff member must be notified by the Leadership Team member and offer support to the affected student. If the student has not seen Cedar Care before, then the offer to see Cedar Care should be made to the student. Any other staff notified in order to support the student will be on a needs-to-know basis as determined by the Principal.

It is a requirement that employees and volunteers inform the Principal of any mandatory notifications made. This will ensure that the Principal can take the appropriate action to support the child. If the concerns or allegations raised in the notification involve the Principal, then the Board Chair must be informed instead.

Failure to Report

The *Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021* established criminal offences of:

1. Failure to report child sexual abuse: a prescribed person is guilty of an offence if they fail to report to police that they know or suspect that another person (the abuser) is an employee of Cedar College and is, has, or is likely to sexually abuse a child; and
2. Failure to protect a child from sexual abuse: a prescribed person is guilty of an offence if they know there is a substantial risk that another person, who is also an employee, will engage in the sexual abuse of a child; and the prescribed person has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove that risk but negligently fails to do so.

These offences carry a penalty of imprisonment. It is critical that all Cedar College staff, volunteers and contractors understand their legal obligations.

The offences have been created because the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found that historically institutions working with children under-reported suspicions of child sexual abuse to police when a staff member was involved.

Billeting, Homestay and Boarding Houses

In the case where billeting, homestay or boarding houses are required in the life of the College, this policy will be updated to address that need.

Vulnerable Students

Cedar College acknowledges that there are vulnerable students who may be at a higher risk of experiencing abuse and neglect due to their circumstances. These students may struggle with advocating for themselves or communicating their experiences to other people. Vulnerable students include students with disability, students in care and new arrival students. Cedar College will ensure that:

- School staff will consult with a student with disability, their parent and/or other associates (such as external allied health professionals). During consultation, staff will discuss the impact of the disability to assess the student's ability to advocate for themselves;
- Staff will be mindful of the individual circumstances of vulnerable students and will be mindful of the potential signs of child abuse or neglect that vulnerable students may exhibit; and
- Individual student needs and circumstances will be considered when teaching the Child Protection curriculum. This includes being mindful of and sensitive to cultural differences.

Curriculum

Cedar College recognises the importance of addressing matters raised in the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (KS:CPC). The two main themes of the KS:CPC are 'we all have the right to be safe' and 'we can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust'.

The KS:CPC fits primarily within the Health and Physical Education learning area of the Australian Curriculum and will be implemented in the following ways:

- In the Junior Primary year levels, the Health teacher completes this program with students during Health lessons.

- In the Upper Primary year levels, classroom teachers complete the Child Protection Curriculum with students during a unit of work in Term 3.
- In the High School, Year 7-9 Child Protection Curriculum content is covered in a specific unit of work with Year 8 students during Health lessons. The Year 10-12 Child Protection Curriculum is covered within a specific unit of work with Year 10 students during Health lessons.

In addition, Cedar College is committed to ensuring that the curriculum addresses student agency where children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Online Safety

Cedar College acknowledges and accepts its responsibility to ensure that children are protected from harm when participating online.

Cedar College is committed to following the requirements outlined in the '[Responding to Online Safety Incidents in South Australian Schools Guideline](#)'. Cedar College is committed to creating a safer online environment by:

- Utilising Enterprise Grade hardware and software that enables:
 - Internet Usage Reporting, providing student search information to Coordinators;
 - A cyber welfare system alerting leadership staff to events such as bullying, self-harm, drug use and sexual harassment. (Saasyan);
 - A secure web filtering program that incorporates a strict internet access criterion, that works in conjunction with Google Safe Search.
- Providing a Year 7, Year 10 and New Students Laptop Use & Care induction and revision program.

Cedar College has developed Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technologies for Staff/Students Policies, a Social Media Policy and a Student Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. These documents also address online safety. The Child Protection Curriculum that students complete also addresses elements of online safety, and the strategies that students can put in place to remain safe online.

Policy Review

Cedar College's Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be reviewed and updated every 3 years. The Child Protection Policy and Procedures will also be reviewed and updated when the school:

- Expands the services it offers to children and young people;
- Undergoes a substantial change to the responsible or managing authority; or
- Experiences an event or incident where children or young people were or could have been at risk of harm.

When changes are made to the Child Protection Policy, Cedar College will relodge its Compliance Statement with the SA Department of Human Services.

Legislative Context

[Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)

[Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016](#)

[Statutes Amendment \(Child Sexual Abuse\) Act 2021](#)

[Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 \(SA\)](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984 \(SA\)](#)

[Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)

[Teacher Registration and Standards Act 2004 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011\(SA\)](#)

[Education Act 2013 \(Cth\)](#)

[Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 \(including National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018\)](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)

Relevant Conventions

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[The United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child](#)

Relevant Standards and Frameworks

[Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

[National Quality Framework](#)

[Safe & Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 - 2031](#)

[Child Safe Organisations National Principles](#)

[Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)

[Homestay Standards](#)

Relevant Cross Sector Guidelines

[Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people](#)

[Managing allegations of sexual misconduct in SA education and care settings](#)

[Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people](#)

[Suicide Postvention Guidelines](#)

Document Information

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