Child Safe Policy

Adventist® Education
Australian Capital Territory

Seventh-day Adventist schools (South NSW) Ltd Child Safe Policy implements and is to be read and understood in conjunction with the ASA/ADSAFE The Child Safe Framework and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

This Child Safe Policy has been approved by the Board on 2021. It is to be reviewed on 2023.

The Child Safe Policy is published on our School's public website and provided to new Staff, and to Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors at induction. It is also communicated through other mediums such as annual report, newsletters and at reception.

Purpose

Our Child Safe Policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the School to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse, neglect or other harm.

It is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of our approach to the School as a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the School's entire Child Safe Program. The Child Safe Policy provides the framework for:

1

the **development** of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the School

2

the **creation** of a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child safe culture

3

compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and child safe in the ACT

4

the **promotion** and open discussion of child safe issues within the School

SCOPE

The School/College's Child Safe Policy applies to all adults in the School/College community, including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and other family members. This Policy applies in all School/College environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site School/College grounds (e.g. camps and excursions).

Statement of Commitment to Child Safe and Wellbeing

All children and young people who come to Seventh-day Adventist schools (South NSW) Ltd have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

At Seventh-day Adventist schools (South NSW) Ltd, we have a zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

The School's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety has been designed to reflect the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The School regards its Child safe 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 maintaining a child safe culture.

Child Safe Standards

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) were developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission in response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Principles are comprised of 10 Principles that were informed by, but go further than, the 10 Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission. They are:

The Child Safe Framework

The School's Child Safe Program is also based on the Seventh-day Adventist schools (South NSW) Ltd The Child Safe Framework. This framework includes a set of Child Safe Standards that express the School's own overarching commitment to the Child Safe values and principles that guide the development of our Child Safe Program. Our framework builds on the National Principles. The The Child Safe Framework includes:

Standard 1: Committed Leadership, Governance and Culture
Standard 2: Children are Safe, Informed and Participate
Standard 3: Partnering with Families, Carers and Communities
Standard 4: Equity is Promoted and Diversity Respected

Standard 5: Robust Human Resource Management
Standard 6: Effective Complaints Handling
Standard 7: Ongoing Education and Training
Standard 8: Safe Physical and Online Environments
Standard 9: Regular Review and Continuous Improvement
Standard 10: Policies and Procedures Support Child Safe
Standard 11: Adsafe Protocols and Requirements

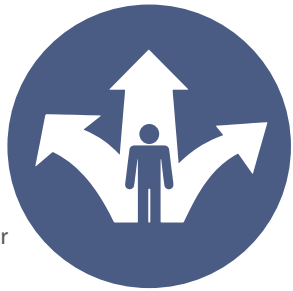
Children and Young People's Rights to Safety, Information and Participation

Seventh-day Adventist schools (South NSW) Ltd is a child safe and child-centred organisation. Our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our organisation and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the School



The School recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure families and relevant communities know about the School operations and policies, including its Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments. We build cultural safety at the School through partnerships with relevant communities.

Valuing Diversity in the School/College Community

Our School values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices.
To achieve this, we:

- Support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- Support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- Welcome students with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- Support students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- Seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- Ensure all Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- Have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- Commit to ensuring our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities

Our Child Safe Program

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (NSW) is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safe 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/College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Safe Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from abuse or other harm, and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the School/College. It includes:

1. Child Safe Codes of Conduct
2. clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse or other harm
3. clear procedures for reporting child safe incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm
4. strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safe matters
5. procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Leadership Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
6. procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to DCJ, Reportable Conduct, and Reporting to Police
7. pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
8. strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability
9. Child safe training
10. information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
11. guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
12. policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the The National Child Safe Framework and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations)
13. a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Seventh-day Adventist schools (South NSW) Ltd induction process, all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete induction in our Child safe policies, practices and procedures. All Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing Child safe training.

Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are supported and supervised by the School/College's Child Safe Advocates and Leadership Team to ensure that they are compliant with the School/College's approach to child safe.

Reporting Child Safe Incidents or Concerns to the School/College

Our Child Safe Program provides detailed guidance for Board of Directors members, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safe incidents or concerns internally at the School/College. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safe incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

Students at the School are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safe incidents or concerns about or at the School. These include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safe organisations.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safe concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the School may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact the School's Child Safe Advocate by phoning 62863989 or the Principal. If the concern relates to the Principal, then contact the Executive Director of Education of the relevant Adventist Schools' Company.

Students, parents/carers, family members and other community members can also raise child safe incidents or concerns through the School's Guidelines for Handling Complaints & Appeals, also available as a public facing document.

Any person can also contact the Senior Child Safe Advocate, the Principal or the CEO/Executive Director of Education of the relevant Adventist Schools' Company if they have concerns regarding the School's leadership in relation to child safety. Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

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

Responsibilities for Child Safe at the School

Child protection and safety is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students. Specific responsibilities include:

The School's Child Safe Advocates

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Safe Advocates. Our Child Safe Advocates receive additional specialised training with respect to child safe and protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safe concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing Child Safety within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (SNSW) Ltd has appointed a Child Safe Advocate. The Child Safe Advocate for Canberra Christian School is contactable by phone on 62863989 or by emailing *childsafeadvocate@ccs.act.edu.au*

The Child Safe Advocate has additional Child safe responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all Child Safe concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the School's response to Child Safe incidents in consultation with the Principal, the Leadership Team and the School Company Board.

The School Company Board (referred to as the 'Board')

The Board of Directors is responsible for approving our Child Safe Program and ensuring that the School/ College has appropriate resources to effectively implement the The National Child Safe Framework and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission, and our Child Safe Program.

The Board's Child Safe Champion

One member of the Board is appointed or identified as a Child Safe Champion. The Child Safe Champion is responsible for ensuring that a child safe culture is prioritised, modelled and championed at the Board level of the School Company.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for approving our Child Safe Program and ensuring that the School/College has appropriate resources to effectively implement the The National Child Safe Framework and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission, and our Child Safe Program.

The Principal

The Senior Child Safe Advocate (Principal) is responsible, and will be accountable, for the operational management of the School, and the Child Safe Program. The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Safe Program is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School.

The Leadership Team

Each member of the Leadership Team is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's Child Safe Program to be effectively implemented within the School, and to support the Principal in the practical application of the School's Child safe strategies, policies, procedures and work systems.

Staff

All Staff are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Safe Program and understand their legal obligations with respect

to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and Working with Children Checks. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safe incidents and concerns with one of the School/College's Child Safe Advocates.

Volunteers

All Volunteers at the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

All Volunteers are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse, neglect and other harm.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse, neglect and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safe concerns with one of the School's Child Safe Advocates.

Contractors

All Contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

All Contractors engaged by the School are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse, neglect and other harm. The School may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

Direct Contact and Regular Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and School cleaners. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

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 School premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in all School environments. All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct.

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (SNSW) Ltd may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Safe Human Resources Management

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (SNSW) Ltd applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff and Direct and Regular Volunteers. Our recruitment procedures comply with the School's Child Safe Human Resources Management and ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. All Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are required to maintain a valid Working with Vulnerable People Registration.

The School ensures that the Leadership Team, Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors undergo Child safe induction, and ongoing education and training as part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from harm.

Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors are subject to regular supervision and performance monitoring while engaging with students.

The School ensures that professional development programs for Staff include Child safe education and training programs.

Child Safe Risk Management

The School recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

Record Keeping

The School has a Child Safe Record Keeping policy and is committed to best practice record keeping.

In accordance with our policy, and as required by another public facing document called Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the School are recorded using the Reportable Conduct Scheme - 7-Day Notification Form, available here.

In maintaining records of child safe incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

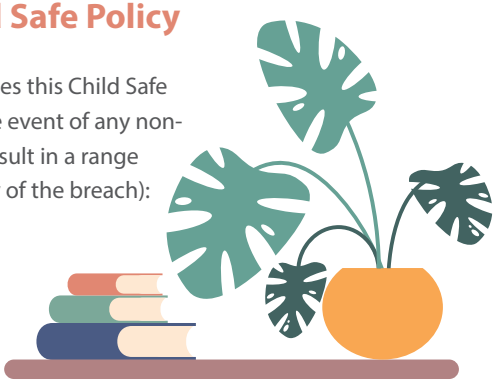
Policy and Program Review

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (SNSW) is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safe Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

The School is committed to actively seeking, actioning, and incorporating into this Policy, feedback from students, families, the wider School community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, and will communicate any adjustments or amendments widely throughout the School community.

Non-Compliance with Our Child Safe Policy

Seventh-day Adventist Schools (SNSW) Ltd enforces this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):



- Remedial education
- Counselling
- Increased supervision
- The restriction of duties
- Suspension
- In the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement