Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Adventist® Education
Australian Capital Territory

Overview of Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns

Child safety incidents or concerns can take many forms. Unfortunately, the nature of child abuse, neglect and other harm is complex. Abuse, neglect or other harm may occur over time and potential indicators of abuse, neglect or other harm are often difficult to detect. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, other family member, staff member, Volunteer, Contractor, another adult or even another child or young person.

The legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse, neglect or other harm can vary depending on the circumstances of the child safety incident or concern.

The different definitions of child abuse, neglect or other harm and their key indicators are set out in detail in Definitions and Key Indicators of Abuse, Neglect and Other Harm. Together, they are all referred to as 'child safety incidents or concerns' for the purposes of our Child Safe Program.

All of the School's procedures for reporting and responding to child safety incidents or concerns are designed and implemented taking into account the diverse characteristics of the School community.

Internal Reporting by Students, Parents/Carers and the Community

There are no limits on how or to whom students at the School can disclose any child safety incident or concern or make a complaint about a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor. Another public facing document called Child Safe Complaints Management policy provides multiple, child-focused pathways, including a pathway for anonymous disclosure, to enable all students to raise child safety incidents or concerns in the way with which they are most comfortable.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns about a student at the School are asked to follow the procedures set out in our documents called Child Safe Policy or in our Guidelines for Handling Complaints & Appeals, which are available on our public website.

Child safety incidents or concerns involving the conduct of a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor that are raised by a parent/carer or family or community member will be addressed in accordance with our Guidelines for Handling Complaints & Appeals, in conjunction with our Child Safe Program, regardless of how that concern is raised.

Internal and External Reporting by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

The policies and procedures in this section of our Child Safe Program set out how Staff, Volunteers and Contractors should respond to child safety incidents or concerns. These include procedures for responding to incidents or disclosures of child abuse, neglect or other harm, or suspected child abuse, neglect or other harm, and simple and accessible procedures for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to report a child safety incident or concern internally.

These policies and procedures make clear that reporting internally to or consulting with a Child Safety Advocate does not change any obligation under legislation to report to an external authority.

The School's Response to Internal Reports

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all allegations or disclosures of abuse, neglect or other harm, that are reported internally to the School, including by:

- all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds being reported externally to Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS), the ACT Ombudsman or the Police, depending on the issues raised
- the School fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or a student with a disability
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the School's response to it.