LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

Child Safe Environments Policy

Purpose

This policy describes Mid North Christian College's Child Safe Environment practices. Mid North Christian College acknowledges that every child has the right to be safe from harm at all times. Child protection is paramount at our College. The purpose of this Child Safe Environments Policy document is to:

- Demonstrate the commitment of Mid North Christian College to the welfare of children and young people;
- Provide strategies to prevent child hard or risk of harm and to protect children from harm in the course of our work;
- Provide Mid North Christian College employees and contractors with clear guidelines as to what steps must be taken when child harm or risk of harm is suspected; and
- Protect Mid North Christian College employees and contractors from unfair practices and processes.

This policy outlines the policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities that are enacted in the College to establish and build an environment which is child-safe and child-friendly, where children and young people are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Background

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

Mid North Christian 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.

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

This policy outlines the responsibilities and legal obligations of everyone at Mid North Christian College to safeguard children and young people.

We do this by:

- providing safe, respectful and engaging environments where children and young people have a voice and can develop positive life skills and values
- recognising when children and young people's safety and wellbeing is compromised and responding to concerns, including making a mandatory notification where required
- understanding the needs of children and young people who have experienced harm and provide additional support.

Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People

Safety of children and young people is the paramount consideration for Mid North Christian College, thus we aim to always maintain a safe culture and environment. We value, respect, and encourage all children and young people in or out of our care, and always ensure that the protection and safety of children and young people is our first priority. The College has does not tolerate bullying and harassment. All children are precious in the sight of God. The Bible indicates that the nurture of children is a high priority in the community with specific responsibility being given to parents.

Everyone working at Mid North Christian College is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about suspected harm or risk of harm, but also to providing and promoting safety and wellbeing. The College is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are embraced, regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social, economic or cultural background, and equity is upheld.

This policy complies with the child safe environments provisions of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*, and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Information about services that can assist children and young people (such as the Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800, Youth Helpline on 1300 13 1719, and Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636) is displayed in areas accessed by children and young people in the College.

Mid North Christian College is committed to supporting mandatory notifiers to report and respond to children and young people at risk of harm and ensuring that safe environments for children and young people are maintained.

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 College 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 College's curriculum;
- when a mandatory report has been made, assisting staff to complete site documentation, and then signing the mandatory notification record and ensuring this is stored correctly;

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

- 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 as required, and that third parties have completed Working with Children Checks where required.

Staff

All staff of Mid North Christian College are responsible for the following:

- reporting any suspected harm or risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78;
- 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 a senior leader);
- 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 adults.

Communication

Section 114(5) of the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* requires that an organisation that provides child-related work must provide a copy of the organisation's child safe environments policies and procedures for inspection, on request, to anyone to whom the organisation provides, or is to provide, a service. The *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* (s 6(1)(i)) includes education services for children as child-related work.

Mid North Christian College makes its Child Safe Environments policy and procedures available to employees on its staff intranet site. The documents are explained to every new staff member during induction and are reviewed periodically throughout each year during staff meetings. All staff are required to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will accept and act on the policy.

The College provides the documents to new families as part of their welcome package and makes them available to anyone associated with the College on request. It is also accessible on the College website.

Participation of Families, Children and Young People

Principle 2 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations requires that children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.

Mid North Christian College encourages children and young people to participate and provide feedback. This is achieved by building strong relationships with the students in our College's care, asking lots of questions during classes, creating a culture where every opinion is valued, and having a feedback box at Reception and near Student Services, where students and families can communicate with us anonymously if they so wish.

During lessons, students are encouraged to contribute to their learning. Mid North Christian College values the contribution children and young people make and understands that when children and young people take ownership of their learning, they are likely to be more engaged and comfortable.

Children, young people and their families are encouraged to raise concerns and complaints; it is always best for the College to become aware of grievances as early as possible to provide a timely resolution. In the first instance, concerns

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

and complaints should be directed to the person to whom the grievance relates. If the grievance is not resolved, the matter should be escalated to that person's line manager, and then to the Principal, if necessary.

Families, children and young people are invited to provide feedback about their experiences with Mid North Christian College. There is a community survey sent out to families annually and there is a feedback box and form in Reception.

Children and young people are encouraged to represent the College community and themselves either in the Student Representative Council in Primary or as a Student Leader in Secondary.

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

Mid North Christian College has developed a Child Safety 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* and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The aim is to provide guidance to staff and volunteers 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. It also applies to all volunteers, service users, third parties and contractors, and any breaches can result in cessation of engagement with the College. This is read and signed on an annual basis. (See Appendix A)

Compulsory behaviour

- Staff and volunteers must comply with the College's Child Safe Environment Policy;
- Staff and volunteers must behave as positive role models 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 harm or risk of harm 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 or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct 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;
- 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

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

  - 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 at our school, 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 College's Privacy Policy.

Unacceptable behaviour

- Failure to act when an allegation of harm or risk of harm 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 your role. This does not include class cards or bereavement cards;
- Discussing personal lifestyle details or your opinions, 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;
- Inviting/allowing/encouraging children and young people to attend your home;

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

- Attending children and young people's homes or their social gatherings without notifying the Principal via email and/or completing the appropriate action plan;
- 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;
- Undressing using facilities allocated to children and young people, or in their presence;
- Tutoring (outside the school'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 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; and
- Filing/recording students for the use of behaviour training/modification without obtaining prior permission from the Principal and parents.

Recruitment, Selection, Screening and Background Checks

Mid North Christian 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. Mid North Christian 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, Mid North Christian College will also conduct background checks and risk assessments. This will involve:

- undertaking face-to-face interviews;
- confirming qualifications; and
- requesting and obtaining reference checks (may not be deemed necessary for volunteers).

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

It may also include:

- conducting criminal history assessments; and/or
- undertaking other background checks (for example, psychological testing, or on the job observation).

Supervision, Training and Support for Employees and Volunteers

Mid North Christian College actively provides ongoing support to staff and volunteers about their role in maintaining a child safe environment. This is achieved by providing supervision, support and training:

- Regular sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing.
- An induction that includes new employees and volunteers receiving a copy of this policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and a thorough explanation of their content.
- All staff must read and understand the Mandatory Notification Information Booklet produced by the Department of Human Services.
    - https://dhs.sa.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF
- Regular performance appraisals that include discussions about how child safety strategies are being implemented in the classroom or workspace.
- Child safety is a standing item on staff meeting agendas, with training and updates provided by the Principal on a regular basis, including where to find up-to-date information concerning child safety and wellbeing on the internet.
- Professional development opportunities to build knowledge and skills regarding the wellbeing and development of children and young people is a priority for the College.
- All staff must complete their initial Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) training prior to commencing employment with the College and then complete their updates at least every three years. Proof of completed training is held on file by the College.
- All staff must also complete the Protective Practices Guidelines online training annually.

Risk Management

To help maintain a safe environment for children and young people, Mid North Christian College will review its risks regularly and implement strategies to minimise and manage these risks. (See Appendix B)

Mandatory Reporting

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 harm or risk of harm under the legislation. 000 should always be called in an emergency.

All serious concerns of suspected harm or risk of harm 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;

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

- a description of the injury, harm or risk of harm (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.

Mid North Christian College will maintain records of all mandated reports made are securely stored separately from the student's school records.

After a report has been made, ways in which students, staff, volunteers and families are supported include:

- providing counselling from the Wellbeing Officer
- referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services; and
- continuing to provide a service to the child or young person and their family and monitoring their circumstances.

It is a requirement that employees and volunteers inform the Principal of any mandatory notifications made. This will ensure that the Principal can put in place 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 Mid North Christian 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 Mid North Christian College staff, volunteers and contractors understand their legal obligations.

Billeting

Additional child protection considerations are made in situations involving billeting. The term billeting refers to any temporary assignment of accommodation. In the College context, this usually covers local and short-term lodgements of students, as well as a wider variety of activities such as school sport. Mid North Christian College acknowledges that, in certain circumstances, the need may arise to billet visiting students, particularly for the Aviation program.

The College is committed to ensuring that Billeting hosts:

- Understand and adhere to the Volunteer Agreement and Child Safety Code of Conduct outlined in this policy;
- Have a current Working with Children Check;
- Have completed Mandatory Notification training; and
- Have a current Senior First Aid certificate.

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

Vulnerable Students

Mid North Christian College acknowledges that there are vulnerable students who may be at a higher risk of experiencing harm or risk of harm 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. Mid North Christian College will ensure that:

- College 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 harm or risk of harm 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

Mid North Christian College recognises the importance of addressing matters regarding the two themes of 'we all have the right to be safe' and 'we can help ourselves to be safe by talking to people we trust', which are addressed in the KS: CPC. Although the College does not implement this specific curriculum, the key aspects of child safety and respectful relationships are addressed throughout our Health and other curriculum areas, in different grade levels and with a variety of learning programs and activities. The four key aspects of Right to be Safe, Relationships, Recognising and Reporting Abuse, and Protective Strategies are identified in the College's Health Scope and Sequence document. This will be reviewed as curriculum is produced for updated versions of the Australian Curriculum.

Online Safety

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

The College is committed to following the requirements outlined in the 'Responding to Online Safety Incidents in South Australian Schools Guideline'. Mid North is committed to creating a safer online environment by providing learning about cyber-safety and cyberbullying as part of Health lessons through The Resilience Project, Inform and Empower Cyber Safety and Digital Wellbeing Incursions F-6, and the Primary Health RIC resources. The College also uses classroom resources produced by eSafety Education from Years F-10.

Mid North Christian College has also developed Digital Citizenship Policy, Use of Social Media Policy, IT User Agreements for Primary and Secondary Students, Protective Practices for Online Learning Guidelines and a Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy that address online safety, behaviour and protocols.

Policy Review

Mid North Christian College's Child Safe Environment Policy will be reviewed once every three years. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.

Other instances where this policy may be reviewed included when:

- New or added risks are identified for children and young people, which may require a change in the policy or procedures;
- A critical incident occurs where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement with the College;

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

- Concerns are raised by anyone involved in the College about child safety or welfare in the College; and
- Awareness or compliance to the child safe policy and/or procedures is low.

When changes are made to the Child Safe Environment Policy, Mid North Christian College will relodge its Compliance Statement with the SA Department of Human Services.

Related Policies and Procedures:

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Staff Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Privacy Policy

Behaviour Management Policy/Procedure

Protective Behaviours Guidelines 2025

Use of Social Media Policy

Digital Citizenship Policy

Protective Practices for Online Learning Guidelines

Grievance Policy

Grievance Procedure

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

LOCATION
43 Port Davis Road,
Locked Bag 2, Port Pirie
South Australia 5540

CONTACT
Phone 08 8632 4240
accounts@midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
midnorthcc.sa.edu.au
ABN 19 489 959 315

Relevant Cross Sector Guidelines

Protective Practices Guidelines 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

END OF POLICY

Authorisations

Policy Reviewer: Principal Rachel Richardson and College Leadership Team

Approval by: Board

Board Approval required: Yes

New or Revised Policy: Revised

Approved date of Policy: 31/8/23

Next Review date: End of 2028

Last reviewed and updated: RR 13/4/26