

Child Protection

Record Keeping Policy



Introduction

Effective child protection record keeping is one of the College's key strategies in the management of its child protection obligations, including the fulfilment of our duty of care.

It is through such record keeping that the College can ensure that, should there ever be a need for evidence of the College's child safe culture or precautions and preventative measures taken in response to the risk of child abuse, the College has well-documented and easily-accessible records.

Documenting a suspicion or belief of abuse

Where a staff member, Leadership Team member, Direct Contact Volunteer or other member of the College community forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a student is in need of protection, written and dated notes of their observations and concerns should be recorded to assist in a referral/report of child abuse.

All verbal and written communications regarding child protection matters (including notes of observations, student disclosures, meetings and telephone calls) must be properly documented. The documented records should include dates and times and enough detail to record key conversations, especially those relating to the student's disclosure.

The records of child protection must be stored securely.

How to Record Observations, Disclosures or Allegations of Abuse

The College requires all members of the College community, including Leadership Team members, staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers to use the **Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template form** to record all observations, beliefs, suspicions, disclosures or allegations of abuse.

The Template is provided by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection for all Victorian schools and is located on their Websites.

The 'Process of Review' section of the Template must be completed between 4-6 weeks after an incident, suspicion or disclosure of abuse in conjunction with the College's Principal, the **Senior Child Protection Officer** or a Member of the Leadership Team.

All completed Template reporting forms are to be given to the College's Principal, a **Child Protection Officer** or a Member of the Leadership Team. The College maintains records of all child abuse observations, disclosures, allegations, incidents and subsequent investigations in electronic form indefinitely.

Working with Children Check Documentation

It is the responsibility of the Business Manager to verify the status of all non-teaching staff, volunteers, contractors and members of religious orders with Children Checks (WWC Checks).

In line with the College's risk-based approach to child safety and protection, in all college activities where parent volunteers are volunteering, including off-site activities, overnight excursions, camps, field trips and other events, the College requires that these parent volunteers undergo a Working with Children Check clearance as a matter of best practice.

Lavalla Catholic College maintains records (electronic and hard copy format) of child-related workers including:

- Full name;
- WWC Check Application Receipt Number;
- WWC Check Card Number;
- Date and outcome of WWC Check clearance;
- Notices sent by the Department of Justice; and
- Expiry date.

Records must be readily available if required for audit and monitoring purposes.

Recording Child Protection Actions

Section 91 of the Wrongs Act imposes a duty of care on schools to take reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child under its care, supervision or authority, by an individual associated with the school. If the school is involved in a proceeding under the Wrongs Act, the school is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove, on the balance of probabilities, that it took reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse.

Whether or not a school took reasonable precautions will be assessed by a court in accordance with considerations set out in the Wrongs Act and case law. The effective implementation of the College's risk management strategies is an example of taking reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child.

It is critical that the College maintains accurate and comprehensive records of these policies, procedures, work systems and strategies should the courts ever call on such evidence in relation to a claim against the College for damage in respect of child abuse.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Protection Policy
- Child Protection – Code of Conduct
- Child Protection – The Obligation to Act to Protect Policy
- Child Protection – The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence Policy
- Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Child Protection – Grooming Policy
- Child Protection – Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Child Protection – Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy
- Working With Children Checks Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy

Policy & Program Review

Lavalla Catholic College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.