



# CHILD SAFE COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT



Adventist Education  
*Tasmania*



A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, or service provided, or with the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision at the School.

**A complaint can be made by anyone including a student, former student, parent/carer, other family member, staff member, Volunteer, Contractor or member of the wider community.**

A complaint therefore includes any disclosure, allegation, suspicion, concern or internal report of:

a breach of the School’s Child Safe Codes of Conduct	a child safety incident or concern alleged to have occurred, be occurring or be at risk of occurring at school or a School event
Reportable Conduct	other staff misconduct (such as a procedural breach of the Child Safe Program).

For the purposes of this Policy, we call these “child safe-related complaints” and we refer to School Staff, Volunteers or Contractors as “Staff” or “staff members”.

A child safe-related complaint also includes any complaint about the School’s response to or management of a child safety incident or concern, including complaints alleging non-compliance with our procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns.

It is the Principal’s responsibility to ensure the efficient and effective organisation, management and administration of the School’s complaints handling processes.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Complaints Handling Guidelines.



# CHILD-FOCUSED COMPLAINTS HANDLING

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A child-focused complaints handling process is important for helping students and others at the School make complaints, whether about child protection and safety or otherwise. This Policy sets out how the School, as a child safe organisation, has and implements a child- focused complaints handling system.

This Child Safe Complaints Management Policy is communicated to and understood by students, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and parents/carers, and ensures that child safe-related complaints are handled in a timely, fair and transparent manner.

It is summarised in our public-facing Complaints Handling Guidelines and our public facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff. A child-friendly version of this Policy is also provided to students.

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# Making a Child Safe-Related Complaint

The School has developed complaints handling processes, to enable:

simple and appropriate avenues for students, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and the wider community to make a complaint, including child safe-related complaints

confidentiality and accessibility for all members of the School community.

Anyone can make a child safe-related complaint:



to the Principal



a Child Safety Advocate



a trusted staff member



in person, in writing or over the phone.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safe concerns about the School, its students or staff members are asked to follow the procedures set out in our Child Safe Policy and to contact one of the School's Child Safe Advocates by phoning the School or completing the online Child Safe Incident Report found on the School's website or if the concern relates to the Principal, the CEO/Executive Director of Education of Adventist Schools Tasmania.



## The Policies and Procedures in this Section

Students have multiple pathways to make complaints, including child safe-related complaints, at the School. These include:

- 1 disclosing child safety incidents or concerns, including abuse, grooming or other harm of themselves or of any other child or student aged 18 or over, to any staff member or a Child Safety Advocate. This might be done:



verbally



in writing



through electronic means (such as email)



indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)

- 2 using the School Anonymous Child Protection Mechanism, which is located on the school website to disclose child safety incidents or concerns, including abuse or other harm of themselves or of any other child or student aged 18 or over, anonymously
- 3 by contacting

Strong Families/ Safe kids	<a href="http://www.strongfamiliesafekids.tas.gov.au">www.strongfamiliesafekids.tas.gov.au</a>	1800 000 123
Interrelate	<a href="http://www.interrelate.org.au">www.interrelate.org.au</a>	1300473528 (02)88827800
HeadSpace	<a href="https://headspace.org.au">https://headspace.org.au</a>	(03) 90270100
Lifeline	<a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a>	131114 1800551800 Kids Helpline
ChildWise	<a href="http://www.childwise.org.au">www.childwise.org.au</a>	1300244539
Bravehearts	<a href="https://bravehearts.org.au">https://bravehearts.org.au</a>	(07) 5552 3000 1800 272 831

**Students, parents/carers, family members and other community members can also raise child safe- related complaints through the School's Complaints Handling Guidelines on the School's website.**

# Responding to a Child Safe-Related Complaint

## Support for Complainants

Whenever a complaint containing information about child safety incidents or concerns is received, the complainant is offered support and assistance under our Support following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure policy.

## Internal and External Reporting

All Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors must follow the School's procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns if any information contained in a complaint that is made to them raises a concern that a student may have been subject to, or may be at risk of, abuse or other harm at the School or a School event, or from a staff member. This includes in particular:

- Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally
- Mandatory Reporting to Strong Families Safe kids
- Voluntary Reporting to Strong Families Safe kids
- Reportable Conduct
- Reporting to Police

If a complaint is about the Principal, the complaint must be referred to the Board of Directors.



## Managing a Child Safe-Related Complaint

Complaints about child safety incidents and concerns occurring at or involving the School or its staff members, as well as complaints about non-compliance with our procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, are managed in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures in our Child Safe Program together with any relevant guidelines set out in our Complaints Handling Guidelines, regardless of how that concern was raised.

**Taken together, these policies set out roles, responsibilities and procedures for responding to different kinds of child safe-related complaints at or involving the School.**

For example, Reportable Conduct sets out procedures that will be followed for complaints about inappropriate conduct by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

Where the Child Safe Program's requirements differ from Complaints Handling Guidelines, the policies and procedures set out in this Child Safe Program take precedence over those in the Complaints Handling Guidelines. For example, there are differences with respect to who is responsible for managing child safe-related complaints, how investigations are conducted, and record keeping of and information sharing about child safe-related complaints.

## Reviews of Child Safe-Related Complaint Outcomes

Complainants or other persons who are involved in the matter (for example, a staff member whose behaviour is the subject of the complaint, a student who is the victim of the alleged behaviour or their parent/carer) and who are not satisfied with the management of a child safe-related complaint or its outcome may request an internal review of:

- the procedures undertaken
- findings made
- disciplinary actions proposed or taken
- other outcomes (including a decision not to make a finding or to take disciplinary or other action).



**Requests for internal reviews should be made to the Leadership Team ADCOM or School Company EDCOM.**



## Record Keeping about Child Safe-Related Complaints

Because of the confidentiality and privacy issues that arise with respect to child safety incidents and concerns, records of complaints that contain information about child safety incidents or concerns are not held within our general complaint handling record keeping system.

These complaints are recorded in a separate Child Safe Incidents and Complaints Register. These complaints are instead recorded as a child safety incident or concern, under our Child Safe Record Keeping policy.

## General Reviews of Child Safe Complaints Management

The School regularly reviews child safe-related complaints to ensure that any child safe-related feedback, comments and complaints from the School community members and relevant stakeholders are captured, analysed and acted upon where appropriate.

In particular, child safe-related complaints are regularly analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

**Our Child Safe Complaints Management Policy is also itself regularly reviewed as part of our reviews of the Child Safe Program.**

