



Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure

Purpose

To demonstrate our commitment to fostering an organisational culture where all staff, Board members, volunteers, students on placement, contractors, children and young people and parents and carers, feel able to raise child safeguarding concerns.

To define the roles and responsibilities of Hilliard Christian School staff, Board members, volunteers, students on placement and contractors, in protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and to enable them to:

1. Identify indicators of a child or young person who may be exposed to child harm, risk of harm or neglect.
2. Ensure that appropriate internal and external processes are followed when making a report of a child or young person who may need protection.
3. Ensure compliance with reporting obligations under law.

Background

1. Hilliard Christian School seeks to establish and maintain high-level professional standards in relation to all its activities and areas of responsibility. This includes all academic, student welfare, discipline, and management issues.
2. This document is in accord with the School's "Vision", "Mission" and "Philosophy" documents as published and in line with School Council Policy.
3. This document should be read in conjunction with the *Student Protection Policy*.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, education practicum students, students and other stakeholders at schools operated by Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Tasmania) Ltd and covers information about reporting allegations of:

- Inappropriate behaviour by a staff member causing harm to a child or group of children
- Inappropriate behaviour by a peer causing harm to a child or a group of children, and
- Harm or suspected harm of a student by any other person.

Responsibility

To the Board of Directors, Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Tasmania) Ltd.

Point of Contact

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Principal or Education Director and approved authority.

Understanding Child Abuse, Child Harm and Neglect

All relevant parties as prescribed in the scope of the procedure must understand the definitions of child abuse and be able to act on this knowledge to report to the relevant authority where required.

Child abuse describes an act(s) or omission which results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. This can be a single event or a series of traumatic events. Most instances of child abuse fall under the definition of cumulative harm (repeated acts of harm) and multidimensional harm (multiple types of child abuse). Child abuse can be perpetrated by parents, caregivers, other adults, and/or other children and young people. Where sexual abuse is perpetrated by children or young people, it is usually referred to as, 'sexually harmful behaviour'. Child abuse, including child harm and neglect, are commonly divided into the following sub-categories:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- grooming, and
- exposure to family violence.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health.

Exposure to Family Violence

Family violence as behaviour by a person towards a family member where the behaviour:

- is physically or sexually abusive
- is emotionally or psychologically abusive
- is economically abusive
- is threatening or coercive; or
- in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person.

A child can be a direct victim to any of these behaviours. Family violence also includes behaviour that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, any of these behaviours.

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Grooming

Grooming is predatory behaviour designed to prepare a child for sexual abuse. Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposefully create relationships with children and young people, their families and carers in order to establish the conditions necessary for them to abuse the child. For example:

- giving gifts or special attention to a child or their parent or carer (this can make a child feel special or indebted to an adult)
- controlling a child through threats, manipulation, force or use of authority (this can make a child fearful to report unwanted behaviour)
- making close physical contact, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling
- openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material and sexual acts (this in itself is classified as child sexual abuse but can also be a precursor to physical sexual assault).

Grooming includes online grooming. It occurs when an adult uses electronic communication (including social media) in a predatory fashion to try to lower a child's inhibitions, or heighten their curiosity regarding sex, with the aim of eventually meeting them in person for the purposes of sexual activity.

It is important to note that when instances of grooming occur, other members of the child's community are also 'groomed'. This allows perpetrators to establish trust and a connection with the child via their support networks, further enhancing the conditions for other forms of child abuse to occur.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs for life to the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, placed at risk, including:

- Food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Medical attention
- Supervision or care.

The law differentiates between three different levels of neglect:

- 'Minor' neglect is low-level neglect that is trivial or temporary
- 'Significant' neglect is medium-level neglect that causes harm to a child that is more than trivial or temporary
- 'Serious' neglect involves the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations.

Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, a principal must notify the Employee Conduct Branch if school staff, contractors or volunteers engage in neglectful conduct that is 'significant' or 'serious'. This covers significant neglect that occurs within the school environment, as well as significant neglect by staff, contractors or volunteers that happens outside the school.

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Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can consist of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. Examples of physical abuse may include beating, shaking, burning, assault with implements and female genital mutilation.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse/harm occurs when a person uses power, force, or authority to involve a child in any form of sexual activity. Behaviour sex offenders engage in may include:

- touching or fondling children
- sending obscene or suggestive phone calls/texts to children
- exhibitionism and or voyeurism in front of children
- exposing children to pornographic images
- penetration with penis, finger or other object into the mouth, anus, or vagina.

Child sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact and can also include non-contact offences, for example:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- sending sexual messages or emails to a child
- exposing a sexual body part to a child
- forcing a child to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to a child)
- having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation).

Child sexual abuse does not always involve force. It is important to note that sexual abuse includes both contact and non-contact behaviours.

Sexually harmful behaviour in children refers to harmful behaviour perpetrated by a child (17 years of age or younger) to another child. Harmful behaviours in children are often an indicator that they have experienced abuse or neglect. Where sexually harmful behaviour occurs, organisations have a duty of care to both children. Note that in children under 10 years of age, such behaviour is usually referred to as sexually problematic behaviour.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following table outlines the key responsibilities of all roles within the organisation in relation to the reporting of child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect.

Roles	Key Responsibilities
Principal and Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ensure the <i>Child Safe Reporting Procedure</i> is addressed at the strategic level.● Ensure the principal and delegates are aware of their Reportable Conduct obligations.● Receive, review, and respond to organisational incidents and outcomes (e.g., summary reports/aggregate recording of reports).

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure governance and operational level procedures are appropriate, relevant, understood and regularly reviewed, in line with the organisational process. ● Promote child safe practice across the organisation and ensure that employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of their child safe obligations. ● Support employees, volunteers, contractors and children, young people and families who have identified, responded, or reported child harm or neglect. ● Monitor, manage and continually improve Hilliard Christian School’s child safe reporting practices. ● Collate, review, and respond to organisational incidents and outcomes (e.g., summary reports). ● Respond to reports and administer external reporting requirements. ● Offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the alleged perpetrator. ● Ensure child friendly complaints mechanisms are in place. ● Champion child safe identifying, reporting, and responding to child abuse, child harm and neglect across the organisation and externally.
<p>Employees, volunteers and third-party providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the signs of child abuse, child harm and neglect and how to respond. ● Follow the Code of Conduct when engaging with children and young people. ● Follow appropriate reporting processes, including mandatory reporting processes, when a concern, allegation or disclosure of child abuse arises. ● Ensure the organisation is safe for children and young people. ● Support peers and children and young people who have identified, responded, or reported child abuse, child harm, risk of harm, and/or neglect. ● Contribute to development, implementation, and review processes. <p>Where a child is in immediate danger call 000</p>

Understanding our Legislative Context

This document is guided by key legislation in Tasmania which sets how organisations must embed child safety and respond to suspected child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect.

Hilliard Christian School has a duty of care and a legislated responsibility to promote the wellbeing, safety and protection of children and young persons, from all forms of abuse. Hilliard Christian School recognises the principles of the Tasmanian child protection legislation below:

- Education, Children & Young People and their Families TAS Act 1997
- Criminal Code Act TAS 924
- Family Violence Act TAS 2004
- Right to Information Act TAS 2009
- Mandatory Reporting Procedures, TAS 2022
- Working with Vulnerable People Act TAS 2013

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- Chart of Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.

Hilliard Christian School is committed to an organisational culture where all staff, Board members, volunteers, contractors and students on placement are equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond to child safety concerns in an appropriate and timely manner in accordance with mandatory and voluntary reporting obligations, and legislative requirements.

Mandatory and Voluntary Reporting Obligations

Tasmania has enacted legislation requiring mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse, child harm and neglect to the relevant authority. These obligations necessitate reports of a reasonable belief of physical or sexual child abuse, child harm, risk of harm or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Mandated reporters are required to make a report even if the Principal or their representative does not share their belief that a child is at risk or in need of protection.

Hilliard Christian School expects that everyone, regardless of their legal mandate, has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect and this approach is reflected in our reporting procedure.

Members of the Hilliard Christian School community such as volunteers, education practicum students, contractors or other stakeholders who form a reasonable beliefs of child physical or sexual abuse are also required to report their concerns to the Principal or Child Safety Officer as soon as practicable and Seventh-day Adventist Schools Tasmania on +61 3 6273 6277 [\[link\]](#)

The tables below set out key features of mandatory and voluntary reporting. The table identifies all relevant legislation, what needs to be reported, who is mandated to report, and who is a voluntary reporter.

Mandatory Reporting Obligations

When to report	Mandated reporters	Who is a child?
A mandated reporter must make a report to SFSK Advice and Referral Line They form the belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.	Registered medical practitioners, midwives, and nurses Registered teachers Principals Police People in religious ministries Counsellors and psychologists	A person under 18 years old

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<p>AND</p> <p>The parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.</p> <p>The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment.</p> <p>.</p>		
<p>The principal must make a report to the Commission for Children and Young People if they become aware of a reportable allegation against an employee, volunteer or contractor of the entity.</p>	<p>The head of an entity that is affected by the Reportable Conduct Scheme</p>	<p>A person under 18 years old</p>
<p>A mandatory reporter must make a report to the police if they form a reasonable belief that a physical or sexual offence has been committed in Tasmania against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years.</p>	<p>Any person 18 years or older</p>	<p>A person under 16 years old</p>

[Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line](#) on [1800 000 123](#).

Criminal Offences

Any complaint which involves an allegation of criminal conduct or creates a suspicion of criminal conduct, should be reported to the police. These concerns could involve physical abuse/harm or sexual abuse of a child and/or family violence, grooming, failure to report, and failure to protect. A matter under police investigation should not proceed with an internal investigation until after police clearance.

Child Protection Legislation

The duty to report a child safety concern to the relevant child protection authority applies to a suspicion or belief that child abuse or child harm is likely to occur in the future, as well as child abuse or child harm or neglect that may have already happened.

For further information on child protection legislation and reporting, refer to the Mandatory & Voluntary reporting requirements tables.

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While the head of the organisation is legally responsible to report to the external authority, there is also an expectation that any person within an organisation can notify the external authority of a reportable allegation.

Reportable conduct cases will then be investigated by Hilliard Christian School, with oversight from the external authority. The Reportable Conduct Scheme and their prescribed processes do not replace the need to report concerns, allegations, and disclosures to police when there are indicators that a crime may have been committed and/or to child protection authorities where there are protective concerns for children and young people.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme seek to improve how organisations such as Hilliard Christian School respond to allegations of child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect.

- The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires the principal to report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) within a set period, if they become aware of an allegation of child abuse, child harm, risk of harm, neglect, or child related misconduct being made against an **employee, contractor, or volunteer**.
- Reportable Conduct includes:
 - sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
 - sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
 - physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child.
 - any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
 - significant neglect of a child.
- While the principal is legally responsible to report to the external authority, there is also an expectation that any person within an organisation can notify the SFSK of a reportable allegation.
- Reportable conduct cases will then be investigated by Hilliard Christian School, with oversight from the external authority including the Police and SFSK..
- Reportable Conduct Schemes and their prescribed processes do not replace the need to report concerns, allegations, and disclosures to the Police when there are indicators that a crime may have been committed, and/or to child protection authorities where there are protective concerns for children and young people.
- Any employee or volunteer who forms a reasonable belief of child abuse will inform the principal and Seventh-day Adventist Schools Tasmania +61 3 6272 6277

Reporting Requirements

Hilliard Christian School is committed to fostering an organisational culture where all staff, Board members, volunteers, contractors and students on placement are equipped with the skills and knowledge to be able to raise child safety concerns. The reporting procedure assists all personnel to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection.
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed.
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection; and
- comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse under criminal law.

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Hilliard Christian School approaches its reporting responsibilities through a child-focused lens, prioritising the rights of children and young people. The following principles govern this approach:

- A child making a disclosure is always to be believed;
- The best interests of children and young people are paramount;
- Our complaints handling and reporting systems are accessible and recognise the diverse needs of children and young people, and their families; and
- Complaints are dealt with thoroughly and promptly.

Reporting Obligations

When a staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant internal/external authority. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming 'reasonable grounds'.

Any person who 'believes', on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection must report their concerns, initially to their principal as soon as possible. They do not require proof that child abuse, child harm, neglect or risk of harm is evident. Belief on 'reasonable grounds' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

If the child is at immediate risk, call 000.

The duty to report a child safety concern to Strong Families Strong Kids applies to a reasonable belief that child abuse is likely to occur in the future, as well as child abuse that may have already happened.

As long as reports are made in good faith:

- it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter.
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

You may have a 'reasonable excuse' for not reporting information about child sexual abuse to police if, for example:

- you fear for your safety, or the safety of another person, or
- you believe the information has already been reported to the police.

If you are charged with the failure to disclose offence, a court or jury may consider whether it was reasonable for you not to report to police in the circumstances.

You will not be guilty of an offence if you have a reasonable excuse for not reporting.

Identifying a Potential Child Safe Concern

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Child safeguarding concerns may arise in a range of ways, for example through direct disclosure, observation or information received from others. Hilliard Christian School staff, Board members, volunteers, contractors and students on placement must remain open and aware of the various ways concerns may arise.

The types of complaints or concerning behaviours that require reporting may include:

- Suspicions or beliefs that children have suffered or are at risk of suffering abuse, harm or neglect
- Inappropriate relationships developing between children/young people and personnel
- Observations of concerning changes in behaviour
- Feelings of discomfort about a relationship between a child/young person and staff, Board members, volunteers, students on placement and contractors.
- Any suspected or actual breach of this Child Safe Reporting Policy, Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, legislation or related policy, procedure or practice related to the safety of children.

(Nb: For detailed information on indicators of child harm and neglect please refer to the Hilliard Christian School **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**).

Child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and/or neglect may occur in the context of Hilliard Christian School activity or occur external to our organisation, for example, outside of activities, or in a recreational environment. Hilliard Christian School expects all staff, Board members, volunteers, students on placement and contractors to be alert to child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect in all contexts and report concerns in accordance with this document.

Safety of At-Risk Groups

Hilliard Christian School recognises the diverse circumstances of children and young people and works in child centred ways that celebrate the strengths and individual characteristics of children and young people and embrace them regardless of their abilities, sex, gender identity, socioeconomic status and cultural background. Staff are educated and supported to recognise and respond effectively to children and young people with diverse needs, with particular focus on vulnerable groups including, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and same sex attracted, intersex, non- binary and gender diverse children.

Appropriate cultural awareness is required to understand that people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with the Police and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. Sensitivity to these issues and meeting people's needs, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member) may be required.

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child or young person, it is important to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal elder.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.

Substantial Risk

A person in authority is required to reduce or remove a known 'substantial' risk that an adult associated with the organisation may commit a sexual offence against a relevant child. It does not make it a criminal offence to fail to address every possible risk that a sexual offence may be committed against a child.

There are a number of factors that may assist in determining whether a risk is a substantial risk. These include:

- the likelihood or probability that the child will become the victim of a sexual offence.
- the nature of the relationship between a child and the adult who may pose a risk to the child.
- the background of the adult who may pose a risk to the child, including any past or alleged misconduct.
- any vulnerabilities particular to a child which may increase the likelihood that they may become the victim of a sexual offence.
- any other relevant fact which may indicate a substantial risk of a sexual offence being committed against a child.

When determining whether a risk is substantial, the courts will consider a variety of factors, which may include those listed above. The courts will consider all the facts and circumstances of the case objectively and will consider whether a reasonable person would have judged the risk of a sexual offence being committed against the child abuse as substantial. It is not necessary to prove that a sexual offence, such as indecent assault or rape, was committed.

A Child-focused Lens

Hilliard Christian School approaches our complaints handling system and reporting responsibilities through a child-focused lens, prioritising the rights of children and young people. The following principles govern this approach:

- A child making a disclosure is always to be believed.
- The best interests of children and young people are paramount.
- Our complaints handling and reporting systems are accessible and recognise the diverse needs of children and young people, and their families; and
- Complaints are dealt with thoroughly and promptly.

Responding to Sexually Harmful Behaviour in Children and Young People

Research indicates that a significant proportion of sexual abuse that occurs in the context of organisations is perpetrated by children and young people. Sexually harmful behaviour involves children and young people engaging another party in sexual activity that is either unwanted or where, due to the nature of the situation, the other party is not capable of giving consent (e.g., children who are younger or who have a cognitive impairment). Hilliard Christian School is committed to ensuring all personnel have access to education and support which prepares them to prevent and identify sexually harmful behaviours and respond to peer-to-peer abuse in a timely, child-focused and protective manner.

If a child or young person perpetrates abuse or harm, Hilliard Christian School owes a duty of care to both the perpetrator and victim. Hilliard Christian School recognises that a child or young person who

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demonstrates sexually harmful behaviours requires therapeutic intervention. They may also have suffered abuse and therefore may require protection.

Hilliard Christian School staff will consult the appropriate member of the School Senior Leadership Team to agree on the process for notifying parents/carers about the concern. In so doing, they will be guided by advice from relevant authorities, i.e., Strong Families, Safe Kids and the Police. Please refer to the Sexually Harmful Behaviours Reporting Procedure for more detail.

How to Report Child Abuse, Child Harm and/or Neglect

Once you have formed a reasonable belief that a child is at risk or in need of protection, you will need to take action and 'report'.

All staff, Board members, students on placement and contractors are expected to review relevant legislation in Appendix 1 (Criminal Offences) so they are aware of the circumstances under which they are mandated to report by law. The reporting process is detailed below:

- All reports will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child or young person.
- Where a Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement forms a belief that a child has suffered abuse, harm or neglect or is at risk of harm, they must notify their Principal within 24 hours.
- **Mandated reporters are required to make a report even if the Principal or their representative does not share their belief that a child is at risk or in need of protection.**
- If a child is deemed to be at immediate risk of harm, Hilliard Christian School staff members, Board members, volunteers, contractors or students on placement should contact emergency services on '000' immediately. The staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement is expected to contact their Principal in the first instance unless doing so would pose a potential conflict of interest or place the child at further risk, e.g., if the Principal is the subject of the concern.
- The involved staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement must complete a [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template](#).
- The involved staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement will work with their Principal to agree on the appropriate reporting avenues i.e., the relevant child protection/safeguarding authority and/or the Police. It is best practice for the recipient of the disclosure/identified concern, to make the report. Where child protection concerns relate to intra-familial risk, they must be reported to the Strong Families Strong Kids in the first instance.
- Where child safeguarding concerns involve a Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement or other alleged perpetrators (non-family based), they should be reported to the Police. All reports should be made without delay, i.e., on the same day the concern rose.
- Should the concern relate to risk posed by a Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement, the Principal/Chair of the Board will have overall responsibility for dealing with the matter and following the appropriate course of action.

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- Should a Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement wish to make a protected disclosure, they may do so directly to the Principal. Hilliard Christian School will ensure that appropriate support is provided to the child of concern, their family, as well as the involved Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement.

The table below provides a step-by-step guide to how to make a report.

Reporting Process

Step	Action	Who
	<p>Emergencies- In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact Triple Zero (000) or the local police station.</p> <p>When the report has been made, move to the next step. All other concerns or reports start at the next step.</p>	<p>The Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement who identified a potential child safe concern.</p>
1	<p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information:</p> <p>Details of the incident, disclosure, allegation, concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Date and time ● Location ● What happened? ● Who was involved? ● When/ where did it take place? ● Protective Action Taken? ● Other Relevant information 	<p>The Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement or contractor who identified a potential child safe concern</p>
2	<p>If you need help making a report or have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, please consult with the Principal/ Child Safe Officer.</p> <p>The staff member, Board member, student on placement or contractor together with their Manager/Child Safe Officer will make a decision regarding the need for reporting and to whom the report should be made.</p> <p>You must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● prohibit or discourage the reporting of an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school; ● state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation; 	<p>The Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement who identified a potential child safe concern, and Principal/Child Safe officer.</p>

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<p>3</p>	<p>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report using the <i>Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template</i>. This should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person. ● The details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns. ● The individual staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement involved with the child and young person. ● Details of any other agencies who may be involved with the child or young person, if known. <p>Your aim should be to provide as much information within the template as possible. These records will be helpful in making a report of the abuse to the relevant authorities.</p> <p>This information may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support their decisions.</p> <p>Hilliard Christian School staff will follow the Four Critical Actions every time we become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.</p> <p>If it is believed that a child is not subject to abuse, but significant concerns remain for the student’s wellbeing, the Principal/Child Protection Officer will take further action.</p>	<p>Principal/Child Safe Officer with information provided by the Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement who identified the potential child safety concern.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Make a report to the relevant agency as soon as practicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report concerns that are an immediate risk of harm by calling 000 or the local police station. ● Sexual offences must be reported to the Police. ● Allegations concerning a staff member, Board member, student on placement or contractor must be reported to the police. ● Report concerns about the safety of a child within their family to SFSK. 	<p>The Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement who identified the child safe concern with assistance from management if needed.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Update the <i>Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template</i> with:</p> <p>The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported/discussed.</p> <p>The name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report.</p>	<p>The Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement who made the report with assistance from the</p>

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		Principal/Child Safe officer if needed.
6	<p>Notify the relevant staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement of any report to Police, and/or SFSK.</p> <p>Allegations and all instances must be reported to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hilliard Christian School Principal/Child Safe Officer • The relevant authorities (as outlined above) • Log and store the <i>Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template</i> in a designated location. • Undertake a learning review of policies, procedures, and practice 	Principal/Child Safe Officer
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the report consult with Police and/or SFSK to determine the information that may be shared with parents/carers, and who should lead this contact (i.e. Police, SFSK or Hilliard Christian School representative). This could include advice: • Not to contact the parents/carers in circumstances where they are alleged to have engaged in the abuse. • To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible. 	The Hilliard Christian School staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor or student on placement who made the report with assistance from management if needed.
8	<p>Support should be provided to all parties including children and young people and their families, alleged perpetrator (if a staff member, Board member, volunteer, contractor, student on placement), witnesses and those involved in the reporting process.</p> <p>It is important that the person providing support to the Child does not attempt to provide support which is outside of the scope of their role.</p> <p>Actions that Hilliard Christian School will take, where deemed appropriate, to support students who are impacted by child abuse, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together and planning support • Engaging Allied Health and wellbeing professionals • Referring to non-school based supports • Providing developmentally and culturally appropriate support • Providing support for impacted school staff members • Supporting students in interviews conducted at school • Responding to subpoenas or court attendance 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding to complaints or concerns <p>In the context of sexually harmful behaviour, school staff have a Duty of Care to support all students who are impacted by the abuse – this will include the students who were subjected to the abuse, the students who perpetrated the abuse, and any students who witnessed or were otherwise impacted by the abuse.</p>	
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Appendix 3 (Relevant Reporting Body) identifies the relevant authorities and contact details if you suspect a child may be experiencing child abuse, harm, or neglect.

You do not need to be absolutely certain that abuse, harm, or neglect of a child has occurred to contact these authorities. If you suspect a child is at risk of child abuse, harm, or neglect, you may call the authority to discuss your concerns and they will decide whether an investigation is required.

Responding to disclosures

Child safeguarding concerns may arise in a range of ways, for example, through direct disclosure, observation or information received from others. Staff, volunteers and contractors must remain open and aware of the various ways concerns may arise. The types of complaints or concerning behaviours that require reporting may include:

- Suspicions or beliefs that children have suffered or are at risk of suffering abuse, harm or neglect.
- Inappropriate relationships developing between children/young people and adults, or between children of a significant age difference.
- Observations of concerning changes in behaviour
- Feelings of discomfort about a relationship between a child/young person and employee, contractor or volunteer.

Staff are in the privileged position of being able to notice behavioural signs of abuse which serve as signs of disclosure. Such persons are encouraged to talk with a child or young person when they are disclosing a concern. However, this is to be distinguished from an investigative interview process which must be run through a formal process. Disclosures should be enabled through an open approach which includes:

- management establishing honest two-way communication between themselves and others.
- management being respectful in all interactions with employees, contractors, volunteers and children and their families.
- Staff being open and honest with children and families about confidentiality limits.
- Staff educating and supporting personnel to understand their role and to respond to disclosures in a confident and supportive manner.

Disclosures of child abuse must be reported to external authorities.

Confidentiality

All staff, board members, volunteers, contractors and students on placement will ensure that where concerns arise, confidentiality is maintained as far as possible. Internal and external reporting must take

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place as per this reporting procedure, with internal communication about concerns occurring on a 'need to know' basis only. Therefore, only personnel directly involved in the management of the child's situation and responsible for meeting the reporting obligations are to be involved in discussions regarding the child's identity, or details of the suspected abuse. Exceptional circumstances apply including:

- There is a reasonable belief that a child has been harmed, has suffered neglect, or is at risk of harm necessitating an obligation to report to authorities such as the Police and SFSK Child Protection.
- The child or young person has consented to a secondary disclosure and has capacity to consent.

Parents and carers will be required to be informed about the allegation of abuse that has taken place and informed about the internal processes. Where parents and carers are the alleged perpetrators of abuse, Hilliard Christian School will seek advice from SFSK about how information is communicated and how to protect the safety of the child or young person. In the event of an alleged instance of child abuse, staff, volunteers and contractors are expected to seek advice from their line manager and the principal or delegate regarding the dissemination of personal information.

Record keeping

Timely, clear, and effective record keeping is an important part of ensuring Hilliard Christian School is a child safe organisation. Record keeping should include details of the child safety concern, including but not strictly limited to:

- The nature of the child safety concern and how it was managed
- If the child safety concern involved a reportable action or allegation – e.g., the Police, SFSK, ADSAFE, Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Witnesses
- Support persons for those involved in the management of the report
- Internal investigators and/or external investigators
- Outcomes of the reporting process including any problems that required addressing
- Support provided/continuing to be provided
- Actions taken and completed e.g., escalation, risk assessments and outcomes, policy change, system fault and correction
- Communication of the outcome with the complainant and subject if relevant, including options for review
- Actions that require ongoing review and/or follow-up e.g., ongoing risk assessment, continued support for child/young person/other parties.

Responding to Historical Allegations of Abuse

In all circumstances where historical abuse allegations are made which pertain to Hilliard Christian School, the school will cooperate fully with the Police and/or SFSK. Hilliard Christian School will also review its current policies and procedures in light of the findings of historical abuse investigations, to determine if there is learning that may strengthen protective approaches:

- Any allegation of historical abuse which pertains to Hilliard Christian School should be notified to the principal or their delegate within 24 hours of receipt.
- The principal will be responsible for overseeing the handling of the allegation, including confirming that it has been referred to the relevant authority i.e., the Police, SFSK and/or Reportable Conduct Scheme and that all relevant information held by Hilliard Christian School has been provided to relevant authorities.

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- At the conclusion of the Police investigation, the principal will determine whether it is appropriate to undertake an internal investigation, noting that an internal investigation would generally be warranted where the employee, contractor or volunteer implicated in the allegation is still involved with Hilliard Christian School. Hilliard Christian School will also seek advice from the Commission for Children and Young People regarding the circumstances of conducting an internal investigation.
- In all circumstances, Hilliard Christian School will undertake an internal review to determine if there is a need to amend any policies, procedures, or processes. Reviews will be focused upon the identification and application of learning to minimise future risk.

Implementation

Statement of Commitment and Principles

Hilliard Christian School is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is always maintained during their participation in learning and other activities run by its schools. Within Hilliard Christian School, a best practice approach to creating a safe environment includes procedures for responding to allegations and disclosures of reportable conduct of children and young people, based on the following principles:

- All children and young people have a right to safety and freedom from abuse of any kind.
- All adults working with children and young people have a responsibility to care for them, to promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any form of reportable conduct.
- When any action is taken to prevent or respond to any type of reportable conduct, the welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person are the primary concerns.
- The integrity of the family unit is respected but not to the detriment of the child or young person.
- The dignity of persons involved in situations where reportable conduct is suspected or disclosed, should be respected and they should be treated with fairness, sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- In the interests of justice, appropriate confidentiality should be maintained, with information that relates to suspected or disclosed abuse being provided only to those who have a right or a need to be informed.

Breach of Policy

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Child Safe Reporting Procedure, Hilliard Christian School will begin documenting the breach and educating staff members of their responsibilities. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the AST Education Director: Sandra Ferry sandraFerry@adventist.org.au. Where any other member of the school community is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this procedure, the school is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy and the Hilliard Christian School Code of Conduct and contact Adventist Schools Tasmania.

The roles and responsibilities contained in the Child Safe Reporting Procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

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Regular Review

This document will be reviewed at minimum every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. The review process will seek contribution and feedback from employees, volunteers, students and parents and carers. Changes may also be made to the policy following key legislative change or emerging best practice standards.

References

- [Appendix 1: Criminal Offences](#)
- [Appendix 2: Responding to allegations of child abuse – support plan](#)
- [Appendix 3: Relevant reporting body](#)

Tasmanian Government

Mandatory Reporting Procedure

Department of Education and Training

- [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module.](#)

Department of Justice and Regulations

- [Failure to disclose offence](#)
- [Failure to protect offence](#)
- [Grooming offence.](#)

Related Documents

- [Child Safe Risk Management Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Abuse Reporting Template](#)
- [Child Safety Officer](#)
- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safe Reporting Procedure](#)
- [Sexually Harmful Behaviours Reporting Procedure](#)

Document Information

Document Name	Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures
Approver	Seventh-day Adventist Schools TAS Ltd. Board of Directors
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Links	
Custodian	Principal