



St Paul Lutheran School

Child Safe Program

Child Safe Complaints Management

For the purposes of this policy, we refer to School Staff, Volunteers and Contractors as “Staff” or “staff members”.

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

Key Definitions

Complaint

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 or member of the wider community.

Child Safe-Related Complaint

For the purposes of this policy, a child safe-related complaint 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 by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor

- other staff misconduct (such as a procedural breach of the Child Safe Program)
- 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](#).

Child-Focused Complaints Handling

Section 114 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) requires all government, non-government and local government organisations that provide services for children to have appropriate policies and procedures to establish and maintain child safe environments. The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) set out the minimum requirements for establishing and maintaining child safe environments.

Principle 6 of the National Principles requires the School to have child-focused complaints handling processes and sets out specific requirements that must be met to meet that requirement.

A child-focused complaint handling process is important for helping students and others at the School make complaints, whether about child protection and safety or otherwise. This policy supports the creation of a culture for students and their families to have their complaints heard, considered and responded to, and a culture of transparency in our complaints management processes.

It sets out how the School, as a child safe organisation:

- has and implements a child-focused child safe complaint handling system
- manages child safe-related complaints.

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

This policy is summarised in our public facing [public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the Learning Community or its Staff Members](#). In our public-facing Complaints Handling Policy, we include details about how to make a child safe-related complaint.

A child-friendly version of this Policy is also provided to students.

Child-Focused Complaints Handling

The School's system for handling complaints that involve students (whether as complainant, victim, witness or person being complained about) is child-focused, and follows the National Office for Child Safety's [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#).

The School's system for handling complaints that involve students (whether as complainant, victim, witness or person being complained about) is culturally safe. We consult with relevant communities (the variety of communities that are relevant to the School, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort) about how to enable, support and respond to complaints in a culturally sensitive way.

Making a Child Safe-Related Complaint

The School has developed complaints handling processes, to enable:

- simple and appropriate avenues for students, Staff, 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.

These are:

1. **Anyone** can, at any time, make a child safe-related complaint to:

- the Principal
- a Child Safety Contact Officer
- a trusted staff member

in person, in writing or over the phone.

Non-child safe-related complaints should be made to the Complaints Handling Officer.

2. **Parents/carers, family members and other community members** who have child safe concerns about the School are asked to follow the procedures set out in our Child Safe Policy and to contact:

- the Principal, who is the School's Senior Child Safety Contact Officer, Leila Mattner, by phoning 08 8260 2655 or internal ext 102 or emailing lmattner@stpaulba.sa.edu.au; or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the Chair of the Board by boardchair@stpaulba.sa.edu.au.

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

- disclosing child safety incidents or concerns, including harm to themselves or any other child, young person, or student aged 18 or over, to any staff member. 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)
- disclosing child safety incidents or concerns, including harm to themselves or to any other child, young person, or student aged 18 or over, anonymously, using the School's anonymous I need help box for students, which is located on the corner table in the school office
- by contacting Insert Preferred External Child Advocacy Organisation (e.g. ChildWise; Bravehearts).

Responding to a Child Safe-Related Complaint

Support for Complainants

The School supports students, families and relevant Staff involved in a child safe-related complaint in age and culturally appropriate ways, as set out in our [Support Following a Child Safety Incident or Disclosure](#) policy.

Where the complaint relates to sexual abuse, a sexual offence or sexual misconduct that occurred before 1 July 2018, complainants must be informed about the [National Redress Scheme](#) for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. The process for applications involving the School can be found [here](#).

Internal and External Reporting

All Staff 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, harm at the School or a School event or from a staff member. This includes in particular:

- [Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting to DCP](#)
- [Voluntary Reporting to DCP](#)

- [Reporting to Police](#)
- [Reporting a Child Safe Incident or Concern Internally](#)
- [Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at or Involving the School or its Staff, Volunteers and Contractors](#)
- [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia](#)

Our internal reporting and managing child safety incidents or concerns at/involving the School policies require all Staff to report any child safe-related complaint that is made to them to a Child Safety Contact Officer or the Principal, after first making any required external reports. If a complaint is about the Principal, the complaint must instead be referred to the Chair of the Board.

How the School Manages Child Safe-Related Complaints

Child safe-related complaints are managed by the School as follows:

Child safe-related complaints that involve, or raise the possibility of a risk of, harm to a child are managed under the Child Safe Program.

The following child safe-related complaints must be managed pursuant to any relevant policies and procedures in this Child Safe Program:

1. complaints involving, or raising the possibility of a risk of, harm to a child or young person occurring at the School or a School event, or by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor
2. complaints alleging a breach of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct that involves, or raises the possibility of a risk of, harm to a child or young person by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor.

After reporting to CARL and, if necessary, to the Police in the first instance, these kinds of child safe-related complaints must subsequently be immediately referred to the Principal (or if the complaint involves the Principal, the Chair of the Board) to be managed pursuant to relevant policies and procedures in the Child Safe Program.

The Principal may, where appropriate, delegate management of these kinds of child safe-related complaints to a Child Safety Contact Officer.

Relevant policies and procedures for managing these kinds of child safe-related complaints include, but are not limited to, [Mandatory Reporting to DCP](#), [Reporting to Police](#), [Child Safety Incidents At or Involving the School or its Staff, Volunteers and Contractors](#), [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia](#), and [Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect](#).

Other child safe-related complaints that are managed under the Child Safe Program

The following child safe-related complaints must also be managed pursuant to any relevant policies and procedures in this Child Safe Program:

1. complaints about the School's investigation of and/or response to a specific incident of or concern about harm to a child
2. complaints that the School, when responding to a specific incident of, or concern about, harm to a child, has not correctly followed the School's own policies (for example, a complaint that we did not follow our Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia)
3. complaints that the School has not correctly followed legislative or regulatory requirements regarding child safety in relation to a specific incident of, or concern about, harm to a child or young person (for example, a complaint that we shared information about a child safety incident or concern with an external agency when not permitted by law to do so).

These kinds of child safe-related complaints must be immediately referred to the Principal (or if the complaint involves the Principal, the Chair of the Board) to be managed pursuant to relevant policies and procedures in the Child Safe Program.

The Principal may, where appropriate, delegate management of these kinds of child safe-related complaints to a Child Safety Contact Officer.

Relevant policies and procedures for managing these kinds of child safe-related complaints include, but are not limited to, [Disciplinary Actions \(Child Safe\)](#), [Child Safe Program Breach Management](#) and [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#).

Child safe-related complaints that may be managed under other School policies and procedures

The following child safe-related complaints may be managed pursuant to other relevant School policies:

1. complaints alleging a breach of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct that does not involve, and does not raise the possibility of a risk of, harm to a child or young person by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor (for example, a complaint that a staff member has expressed personal views on sexuality in the presence of students)

2. complaints alleging procedural breaches of the Child Safe Program by Staff that do not involve, and do not raise the possibility of a risk of, harm to a child or young person (for example, a complaint that a staff member has not renewed their WWCC)
3. general complaints about our Child Safe policies and procedures themselves (for example, a complaint that our policies and procedures do not accurately reflect the law or that they do not take into account the needs of a particular student or community cohort).

Although these kinds of child safe-related complaints may be managed pursuant to other relevant School policies, the Complaints Handling Officer or other person managing the complaint should – where appropriate – consult with a Child Safety Contact Officer as part of the investigation.

With respect to (3) above, given the high risk to the School of not having a compliant Child Safe Program, it is likely that the outcome of these kinds of complaints will need to be reported to the School's governing body.

Relevant policies and procedures for managing these kinds of child safe-related complaints include, but are not limited to, our Complaints Handling Policy.

Guidance and Resources for Managing Child Safe-Related Complaints

The Complaints Handling Policy provides guidance on complaints handling principles and a step-by-step guide to managing a complaint.

The National Office for Child Safety publishes a guide for complaints that involve children and young people: [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#).

Our [Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff, Volunteers and Contractors](#) and [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Teachers Registration Board of South Australia](#) policies set out procedures that will be followed for complaints about inappropriate conduct by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

Reviews of Child Safe-Related Complaint Outcomes

Complainants or other persons who are involved in the child safe-related complaint (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 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 Insert Name of Body Responsible for Internal Complaint Reviews.

Record Keeping about Child Safe-Related Complaints

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

Child safe-related complaints are instead recorded 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 or complaints from the School community members and relevant stakeholders are captured, analysed and acted on where appropriate.

In particular, the School regularly analyses child safe-related complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

The School also regularly reviews our Child Safe Complaints Management policy itself as part of our reviews of the Child Safe Program.

For more information, refer to [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#).