



# ACS

## CHILD SAFE POLICY

### Version 1

### 2022

Written By	Chief Executive Officer, Principal
Approved By	CEO
Date	27 April 2022
Relevant to	All Assyrian Christian Schools staff
Related Documents	<p>Child Protection Policy</p> <p>Complaints and Grievance Policy</p> <p>Discrimination, Harassment and Workplace Bullying Policy</p> <p>Privacy Policy</p> <p>Communications Policy</p> <p>Staff Code of Conduct Policy</p> <p>Work Health and Safety Policy</p> <p>Anti-Bullying Policy</p> <p>Staff Employment Policy</p> <p>Working With Children Checks</p> <p>NSW Child Safe Standards</p>
Legislation	<p>NSW Public Health (COVID-19 Vaccination of Education and Care Workers) Order 2021</p> <p>Public Health Act 2010 (NSW)</p> <p>The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW).</p> <p>The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.</p> <p>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2000</p> <p>Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998</p> <p>Commission for Children and Young People Regulation 2009</p> <p>The Children's Guardian Act 2019</p> <p>Education Act 1990 (NSW) as amended by the Education Amendment (non-Government Schools Registration) Act 2004 (NSW).</p> <p>Civil Liability Act 2002.</p> <p>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth).</p> <p>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW).</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).</p> <p>Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth).</p> <p>Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW).</p> <p>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth).</p> <p>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth).</p> <p>Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).</p> <p>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW).</p> <p>Relevant Industrial Awards and Agreements.</p>
Next Policy Review	August 2023

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# Child Safe Policy

## 1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy sets out staff responsibilities for child safety that staff must follow in relation to child protection matters. This policy applies to all staff members, which includes employees, contractors and volunteers.
- 1.2 Where the phrase 'child safeguarding', 'child safe' or 'child safety' is used in our Child Safety Program it refers to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, which includes but goes further than the protection of them from abuse and other harm.
- 1.3 Assyrian Christian Schools (ACS) maintains a child safe environment through educating children, employing and supporting the most suitable people to work with children, and implementing effective risk management strategies. Staff members who fail to adhere to this policy may be in breach of their terms of employment.
- 1.4 ACS ensure our community, including children and families, are informed about our approach to child safety and encourage them to report any concerns they may have for the safety and wellbeing of children. ACS commit to child safety and leaders champion a child safe culture by implementing the 10 Child Safe Standards as set by the Office of the Children's Guardian.
- 1.5 The purpose of this policy is to:
  - Articulate our strategies for maintaining a child safe environment and preventing harm to children
  - Ensure that board, staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child safety within our organisation

## 2. CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

- 2.1 ACS recognises the importance of children's active participation in creating and maintaining a child safe organisation. We support the active participation of children by:
  - Actively encouraging them to express their views, opinions and concerns
  - Listening to and respecting their ideas
  - Regular anonymous surveys
  - Encourage students to actively participate in workshops/projects eg RUOK Day, Anti-Bullying presentations
  - Asking for their feedback
  - Involve them when we make decisions about matters that directly affect them
  - Placing them at the centre of all that we do.

## 3. NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

- **Principle 1: Committed Leadership, Governance and Culture**  
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
- **Principle 2: Children and Young People are Safe, Informed and Participate in the Organisation**  
Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- **Principle 3: Families and Communities Involved in Safety Settings**  
Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
- **Principle 4: Equity Upheld and Diversity Respected**  
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- **Principle 5: Robust Recruitment and Screening**  
People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
- **Principle 6: Effective Complaints Management**  
Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused
- **Principle 7: Ongoing Education and Training**  
Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
- **Principle 8: Safe Physical and Online Environments**  
Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

- **Principle 9: Regular Improvement**  
Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved
- **Principle 10: Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures**  
Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

## 4. RECRUITMENT

- 4.1 ACS maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process for board members, staff, and volunteers to identify the safest and most suitable people who share our values and commitment to protect children.
- 4.2 Individuals are selected to work at ACS through panel interviews and after thorough referee checks have been conducted.
- 4.3 It is a requirement of all Board members, staff, contractors and volunteers working with and at ACS to hold and maintain a current Working With Children Check for the duration of their engagement.

## 5. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

- 5.1 Anyone, including children and their families, can make a complaint about a staff member, contractor or volunteer at ACS. Refer to the *Complaints Handling Policy* and *Child Protection Policy* for information on how to make a complaint. Copies of both policies are available on the website.
- 5.2 Staff, contractors and volunteers who work at ACS have a responsibility to be aware of indicators of child abuse and to report any concerns they may have for the safety and wellbeing of all children.
- 5.3 If a staff member, contractor or volunteer has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm they must report this to an Executive Staff member and they will inform the relevant authorities.
- 5.4 Any person within or outside of ACS may report their concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child to the Department of Communities and Justice (Child Protection Helpline 132 111).
- 5.5 All staff, volunteers and contractors must abide by the Staff Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

## 6. TRAINING, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION OF WORKERS

### 6.1 Training

- 6.1.1 All staff, at the beginning of every school year, receive Professional Learning and updates on Staff Code of Conduct, the Child Protection Policy, NSW Child Safe Standards and other related policies and procedures. This includes receiving copies of the policies mentioned.
- 6.1.2 If a staff member/volunteer commences after this time, they receive an induction in the above-mentioned policies. All staff members sign an acknowledgement of this professional learning and receipt of information.
- 6.1.3 The Executive Staff allow discussion and opportunities for staff to ask questions and clarify their understanding.
- 6.1.4 Child safety is a priority at Welfare meetings and staff are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies, procedures and practices in the workplace.

### 6.2 Supervision

- 6.2.1 All staff members' performance is monitored via regular supervisor check-ins through PDPs, observations and performance reviews.
- 6.2.2 Children and parents are also able to provide feedback to ACS throughout the year.

## 7. OTHER LEGISLATION, INDUSTRY STANDARDS OR INTERNAL POLICIES

### 7.1 Safe and Supportive Environments

- 7.1.1 Section 47 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW) sets out 13 requirements for registration for non-government schools in NSW. One of these requirements, under section 47(g) of the Act, is that “a safe and supportive environment is provided for students”.
- 7.1.2 The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has published the Registration Manual which provides information about the requirements for registered and accredited non-government schools under the Education Act 1990 (NSW).
- 7.1.3 The requirement for a safe and supportive environment for students at ACS is divided into two distinct categories:
  - compliance with child protection legislative requirements
  - policies and procedures for student welfare and safety
- 7.1.4 NESA has set out the responsibilities in relation to the legislative requirements for child protection in the Registration Manual.
- 7.1.5 This Policy and the Child Protection Policy sets out each requirement with how ACS comply with NESA requirements.

### 7.2 Key Legislation

- 7.2.1 There are four key pieces of child protection legislation in New South Wales:
  - the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (“**Care and Protection Act**”);
  - the *Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012* (“**WWC Act**”);
  - the *Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)* (“**Ombudsman Act**”); and
  - the *Crimes Act 1990* (“**Crimes Act**”).

### 7.3 Related Policies:

- 7.3.1 There are a number of other School policies that relate to child protection that staff members must be aware of and understand including (but not limited to):
  - **Code of Conduct** - sets out information about the standards of behaviour expected of all staff members;
  - **Work Health and Safety Statement** - identifies the obligations imposed by work health and safety legislation on the school and staff members;
  - **Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement** - summarises obligations in relation to unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying;
  - **Complaint Handling Procedures** – provides the steps taken by the school in addressing complaints; and
  - **Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures** - provides the steps taken by the school in addressing complaints
  - **Child Protection Policy** - This policy sets out staff responsibilities for child protection and processes that staff must follow in relation to child protection matters.
  - **NSW Child Safe Standards** - provides support for organisations working with children to create, maintain and improve their child safe practices.

## 8. COMMUNICATION

### 8.1 Communication with Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

- 8.1.1 Our policy will be discussed during the first Professional Learning session on the first day of the school year (Staff Development Day) and in all induction sessions for all new staff, contractors and volunteers. New staff will sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to employment (See Appendix 1).
- 8.1.2 Child Safety will be discussed regularly at staff meetings and ongoing professional development and mentoring will be provided for staff to help them understand and comply with the policy.

## 8.2 Communication with Children, Parents and Caregivers

- 8.2.1 The school will display key information from our policy in the administration office, teaching staffroom and buildings to ensure children understand their rights and how to speak up if something makes them feel unsafe.
- 8.2.2 Parents and caregivers will be informed to access the Child Safety Policy and Child Protection Policy.
- 8.2.3 Our policy will be publicly accessible on our website.
- 8.2.4 As advised by the OCG, parents will receive a copy of the Parent's Guide to Child Protection Issues.

8.3 ACS is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety Program. The program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

8.4 ACS is committed to actively seeking, actioning, and incorporating into this Policy, feedback from students, families, the wider school community, staff, volunteers and contractors, and will communicate any adjustments or amendments widely throughout ACS community.

## 9. CHILD SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 ACS recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

9.2 ACS has developed a Risk Management Policy to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all ACS environments.

9.3 In maintaining records of child safety incidents or concerns, ACS maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

## 10. RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 Child protection and safety is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the ACS community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students.

10.2 The Board - The Board is responsible for approving our Child Safety Program and ensuring that the Insert School/College has appropriate resources to effectively implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission, and our Child Safety Policy.

10.3 The Principal - The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the school, and the Child Safety Program. The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Safety Program is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the school.

10.4 The Executive Team - Each member of the Executive Team is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's Child Safety Program to be effectively implemented within the school, and to support the Principal in the practical application of the Insert School's child safety strategies, policies, procedures and work systems.

10.5 Staff - All Staff are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Safety Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and Working with Children Checks. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with a member of the Executive.

10.6 Volunteers - All Volunteers at the school are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the school environment. All Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Codes of Conduct and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm.

10.7 Contractors - All Contractors engaged by the school are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the school environment. All Contractors engaged by the school are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm. The school may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the

Contractor. Direct Contact and Regular Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches, and cleaners. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the school, but have an agreement with the school to use the school's facilities.

10.8 External Education Providers - An External Education Provider is any organisation that the school has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the school. The delivery of such a course may take place on school premises or elsewhere.

10.9 Non-Compliance with Our Child Safe Policy - ACS enforces this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, ACS will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

## 11. APPENDIX 1: CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

As an employee, contractor or volunteer, I am responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in this workplace.

### I will not:

- Subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, social isolation, immobilisation, sexual suggestion, offence or misconduct.
- Direct a child to perform in a sexually provocative or unsafe manner.
- Communicate with a child in ways that are likely to humiliate, frighten or distress the child.
- Use tobacco products or possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as grooming/favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.

### I will:

- Treat children with respect and be a positive role model in my conduct with them.
- Communicate with the children in an age appropriate and realistic manner.
- Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between myself and a child.
- Only have physical contact with a child in ways which are appropriate to my professional or agreed role and responsibilities.
- Be willing to listen and respond appropriately to a child's views and concerns.
- Respond quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child or related to a child.
- Abide by my reporting obligations in relation to the employer's Incident Register.
- Abide by the mandatory Code of Practice as part of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015.

**I agree to abide by this Child Safe Code of Conduct.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_