



Koinonia Christian Academy Inc.

Child Protection Procedures

1 General

Koinonia Christian Academy (the School) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for children to develop academically, spiritually, emotionally and socially based on the principles of God's Word.

All adults have a responsibility to care for children and to protect them from any kind of abuse or neglect. The school is responsible to provide a safe environment for children and to provide an education that fosters their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity. During their time at school, the School is entrusted by parents with the care of their children, who are precious in the sight of God.

The following procedures are to be used in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy to help build a safe and supportive environment for children.

2 Staff Employment

The School Board in conjunction with the Principal will;

- clearly state the requirements of the Working With Children Check in advertising any positions at the school;
- request references from any prospective employees;
- contact the referees prior to any decision of employment is made;
- carry out a Working With Children Check verification prior to employing any prospective employees;
- conduct a formal interview with prospective employees part of which will cover Child Protection issues;
- request a signed staff agreement part of which covers requirements of Child Protection Legislation.

The Principal will;

- provide training to any new staff member that covers their legislative obligations under the Acts relating to child protection in New South Wales, during the employees induction period (see section 4 of these procedures);

- keep evidence of the child protection training undertaken by new staff members including who the trainer was, what was covered in the training, the date of the training and who attended the training in the form of a signed content and attendance sheet;
- keep a copy of certificates gained from external training in the area of child protection undertaken by new staff members;
- keep a copy of signed staff agreements;
- keep a current Working With Children Check Verification Register;
- file all documented evidence in the Admin Office.

3 Volunteers

All volunteers working at the School must have been known by the Board members for a period of not less than six months.

All volunteers working at the School must have a current Volunteer Working With Children Check unless they qualify for an exemption.

Exemptions include:

- Under 18s
- Visiting NSW for a short time
- Close relatives volunteering at their children's usual school and extra-curricular activities. There are three specific instances when close relatives **do** need a Check when they are volunteering at school or activities:
 1. providing personal care for a child with disability
 2. participating in a formal mentoring program
 3. at an overnight camp for kids.

If you are in doubt about your status please contact the Principal.

The Principal will;

- approve any volunteers working at the school;
- carry out a Working With Children Check verification prior to a volunteer working at the school unless they are exempt;
- provide training to any new volunteer worker that covers their legislative obligations under the Acts relating to child protection in New South Wales during the volunteers induction period (see section 4 of these procedures);

- keep evidence of the child protection training undertaken by volunteers including who the trainer was, what was covered in the training, the date of the training and who attended the training in the form of a signed content and attendance sheet;
- keep a copy of certificates gained from external training in the area of child protection undertaken by volunteers;
- keep a current Working With Children Check Verification Register which includes any relevant volunteers;
- keep a copy of a volunteer's signed Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement;
- file all documented evidence in the Admin Office.

4 Information and Training

Staff will be informed of their legal responsibilities and obligations related to child protection, mandatory reporting and other relevant school expectations annually in the following ways;

- ongoing staff members and volunteers will be informed through training at the first staff meeting of each year;
- new staff members and volunteers who commence at the beginning of the year will be informed through training at the first staff meeting of each year or throughout their induction period;
- new staff members and volunteers who start during the year will be informed through training in their induction period;
- contractors will be informed through training at induction.
- Relief or casual teachers will be informed through training at the first staff meeting of each year or followed up by the Principal prior to commencing duties.

Staff members and volunteers will be informed of the following;

- legal and moral responsibilities related to child protection, mandatory reporting, Biblical principles and other relevant standards of behaviour relating to child protection;
- requirements to notify reportable conduct in compliance with the Children's Guardian Act 2019;
- obligations under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 which prohibits persons with convictions for serious sexual offences from working in positions of child-related employment that primarily involves direct contact with children where that contact is not directly supervised;
- obligations related to mandatory reporting and processes set in place if action is required;
- other relevant school expectations.

The Principal will;

- provide training and circulate information to all staff, volunteers and contractors that covers their legislative obligations under the acts relating to child protection in New South Wales including:
 - a) The *Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (Children’s Guardian Act)*;
 - b) The *Children and Young Person (Care and Protection) Act 1998*;
 - c) The *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*;
 - d) The Crimes Act 1900 (Crimes Act)
- provide all staff, volunteers and contractors with a copy of the school’s Child Protection Policy to read with an accompanying Acknowledgement to sign;
- keep evidence of internal child protection training undertaken by staff, volunteers and contractors including who the trainer was, what was covered in the training, the date of the training and who attended the training in the form of a signed content and attendance sheet;
- keep a copy of signed Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement forms;
- keep a copy of any certificates gained from external training in the area of child protection undertaken by staff and volunteers;
- keep a Child Protection Training Register of all Child Protection related training both internal and external to easily identify staff, volunteers or contractors who have not been annually informed of their child protection obligations;
- follow up with any staff or volunteers absent from the first staff meeting of the year, within 4 weeks, to complete their training;
- file all documented evidence in the Admin Office.

5 **Screening** (this relates to section 4 of the School’s Child Protection Policy)

The Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 requires that persons engaged in **child-related work** [this includes all paid staff, (whether full time, part time, casual or relief), volunteers, contractors or other service providers] **must have** current Working With Children Check clearances unless they are in an exemption category.

The Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation also specifies school cleaners (whether paid by the School or contracted) and a school run bus service **is** child related work.

Persons in an exemption category and workers such as tradespersons who may incidentally come into contact with children but are not working with the children **do not** need a Working With Children Check.

A visiting speaker, adjudicator, performer, assessor or other similar visitor at a school if the work of the person at that place is for a one-off occasion and is carried out in the presence of one or more other supervising staff **does not** need a Working With Children Check.

Exemptions include:

- Under 18s
- Visiting NSW for a short time
- Close relatives volunteering at their children's usual school and extra-curricular activities. There are three specific instances when close relatives **do** need a Check when they are volunteering at school or activities:
 1. providing personal care for a child with disability
 2. participating in a formal mentoring program
 3. at an overnight camp for kids.

If you are in doubt about your status, please contact the Principal.

With regard to relevant contractors and other service providers the Principal will;

- request the contractors or service providers name, date of birth and Working With Children Check number for verification purposes;
- carry out a Working with Children Check Clearance verification, which complies with the legislative requirements of the State of NSW, for contractors and other service providers prior to their commencement of work;
- keep a current Working With Children Check Verification Register along with a printed copy of all clearances on file in the Admin Office;

With regard to paid staff and eligible volunteers the Principal will;

- request the workers or eligible volunteers name, date of birth and Working With Children Check number for verification purposes;
- carry out a Working with Children Check Clearance verification, which complies with the legislative requirements of the State of NSW, for all paid staff and eligible volunteers prior to their commencement of work and at each subsequent 5 yearly renewal if they are still engaged by the School;
- keep a current Working With Children Check Verification Register along with a printed copy of all clearances on file in the Admin Office;

For all the above WWCC verifications the Principal will;

- review WWCC verifications at the start of each year and periodically throughout the year for current employees, eligible volunteers, contractors or other service providers and notify an employee, eligible volunteer, contractor or service provider if their WWCC is nearing renewal;
- prevent an employee, eligible volunteer, contractor or service provider to work if their WWCC is expired or not cleared;
- notify the Office of the Children’s Guardian of any persons who will not be employed in child-related work (whether paid or unpaid) as a result of such checks.

Note – It is the responsibility of the child-related worker to ensure that when they are eligible to apply for a Check or when their Check is up for renewal that they do so.

6 General Procedures to Promote a Safe & Supportive Environment

All personal counseling is to be carried out within sight of another staff member, parent or guardian of the child.

Staff members will respect a child’s feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact of any kind.

Adults and children are expected to respect each other’s privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Staff members will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No staff member will be alone in a room with a child while either is changing.

Staff members have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at School activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

All children are to be supervised during School hours until they have been dismissed into the care of their parents/carers.

In choosing games, activities or sports, staff members consider the levels of safety; physical contact and intimacy required and exercise caution.

Staff members should be careful of children who actively seek physical attention.

Staff members should obtain permission slips for special outings, and also general permission for staff members/volunteers to provide transport.

Staff members should be alert for strangers.

During excursions and outings staff members should check toilet areas / change rooms for safety prior to students using those facilities.

7 Mandatory Reporting (this relates to section 5 of the School’s Child Protection Policy)

Should there be reasonable grounds to suspect risk of significant harm then;

Staff will:

- notify the Principal/Teacher delegate as soon as possible; or

- if there is an immediate danger to the child or young person and the Principal/Teacher delegate is not contactable you should speak to the Police and/or the Child Protection Helpline directly and then advise the Principal or next most senior member of staff at the School as soon as possible;
- Not investigate the matter yourself!
- Keep the matter confidential.

The Principal/Teacher delegate will:

- Use and follow the procedures in the Mandatory Reporting Guide (MRG) using the online version at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
- If the above website is not working contact the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Child Protection Helpline on 132 111
- If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been abused or is suffering abuse on School property or during a School activity, notify the Department of Communities and Justice, the NSW Police, and the School's insurer without any undue delay.
- Keep a record of any reports made to the DCJ Child Protection Helpline and any related documentation, including the MRG outcome report and written records of actions taken in following up the concerns
- File all records securely and confidentially in the Admin Office

Note – Within the School, it is deemed that mandatory reporting has taken place if the Principal has been notified. Full accountability then rests with the Principal to be the mandatory reporter. The Principal will become the liaison person with the Department of Communities and Justice and the NSW Police.

8 Reportable Conduct (this relates to section 6 of the School's Child Protection Policy)

8.1 Actions

All staff members are;

- to follow the process for reporting of reportable conduct allegations or convictions as set out in section 6.2.1 of the School's Child Protection Policy.

The School's appropriate authority (Principal or Vice President of the Board) will;

- follow the process as set out in section 6.3 of the School's Child Protection Policy when taking initial steps and investigating an allegation of reportable conduct;
- follow the process of risk management throughout an investigation of a reportable conduct allegation as set out in section 6.4 of the School's Child Protection Policy;
- make a finding and a decision as to any action required to be taken in relation to the ESOA, the child(ren) involved and any other parties.as in section 6.4.3 of the School's Child Protection Policy.

8.2 Disciplinary Action

The School Board may;

- take disciplinary action against the ESOA using the procedures in section 6.4.5 of the School's Child Protection Policy.

8.3 Confidentiality (see section 6.4.6 of the Schools Child Protection Policy)

The Principal or Vice President of the Board will;

- remind all parties involved of their responsibility to maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation process;
- file all records about allegations of reportable conduct against employees in a secure cabinet in the Admin Office;
- these records will be accessible by the Principal or with the Principal's express authority.

8.4 Reporting

At the conclusion of the investigation the Principal or Vice President of the Board will;

- make notifications to the parties involved, including relevant authorities as necessary, as per the School's Child Protection Policy Section 6;
- Send the final report to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

8.5 Complaints by Parents, Carers or Community Members (this relates to Section 6.2.2 of the School's Child Protection Policy)

The Principal/Vice President of the Board will;

- deal with any complaints received via the School's Complaints and Grievance Policy unless it is a matter of reportable conduct;
- deal with reportable conduct complaints via the procedures outlined in the School's Child Protection Policy.

9 Related Documents

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedures
- *The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *The Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*
- *The Children's Guardian Act 2019 (Children's Guardian Act)*
- <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>