



POLICY 01.10.00-E

Child Safeguarding

St Edmund's College (the School) Child Safeguarding Policy implements, and is to be read and understood in conjunction with:

- EREA Child Safeguarding Standard Framework
- Child Protection Policy
- EREA Commitment Statement to Child Safety
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by the Catholic Professional Standards Ltd.

This Child Safeguarding Policy has been approved by EREA.

This Policy is published on the School's public website and provided to new Staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors at induction. It is also communicated through other mediums such as online training / intranet / hard copies for casual staff and volunteers, face to face training in Child Protection for all staff / staff meetings. The EREA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is also available on the School's public website.

Purpose

This Policy is written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the School to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that the School has developed to keep the School's students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

It is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of the School's approach as a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the School's entire Child Safeguarding Program.

The Child Safeguarding Policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the School;
- the creation of a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child safe culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the School; and compliance with all laws, regulations and standards

The Scope

The School's Safeguarding Policy applies to all adults in the School community, including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and other family members. This Policy applies to all School environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g. camps and excursions).

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people who come to the School have a right to feel and be safe. The School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. The School is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The School has a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and is committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The School regards its child safeguarding responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Child Safeguarding Standards

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, which set out the overarching standards that guide the development and regular review of the School's work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and other harm.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) expand on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, specifically for Catholic settings. They set out 10 overarching standards that guide the development of a child safe culture for Catholic entities. Compliance with the NCSS is mandatory for all Catholic entities.

The NCSS are:

- Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 2 – Children are safe, informed and participate
- Standard 3 – Partnering with families, carers and communities
- Standard 4 – Equity is promoted and diversity is respected
- Standard 5 – Robust human resource management
- Standard 6 – Effective complaints management
- Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training
- Standard 8 – Safe physical and online environments
- Standard 9 – Continuous improvement
- Standard 10 – Policies and procedures support child safety.

The EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework

The School's Child Safeguarding Program is also based on and implements the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework. This Framework includes a set of Child Safeguarding Standards that express the School's own overarching commitment to the child safe values and principles that guide the development of the School's Child Safeguarding Program. The Framework builds on the NCSS.

The EREA Child Safeguarding Standards are:

- Standard 1 – Committed leadership, governance and culture
Child Safeguarding is embedded in the School's leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 2 – Children are safe, informed and participate
Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- Standard 3 – Partnering with families, carers and communities
Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
- Standard 4 – Equity is promoted and diversity is respected
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
- Standard 5 – Robust human resource management
People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice
- Standard 6 – Effective complaints management
Processes for raising child safety concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children and young people, families, carers, relevant communities and staff
- Standard 7 – Ongoing education and training
Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through information, ongoing education and training.
- Standard 8 – Safe physical and online environments
Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- Standard 9 – Continuous improvement

Implementation of the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards and of the School's Child Safeguarding policies and procedures is regularly reviewed and improved.

Standard 10 – Policies and procedures support child safety.

Policies and procedures document how the School is safe for children and young people.

Standard 11 – EREA Protocols and Requirements

EREA protocols and requirements support ongoing compliance with and reporting against the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards.

Children and Young People's Rights to Safety, Information and Participation

The School is a child safe and child-centred organisation. The School environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

The School actively seeks to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.

The School builds cultural safety through partnerships with relevant communities.

Valuing Diversity in the School Community

The School values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, the School:

- supports the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- supports the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcomes students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- seeks to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensures staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- has a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commits to ensuring the School facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

Child Safeguarding Program

The School is committed to the effective implementation of the Child Safeguarding Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. The School adopts a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of the School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

The School's Child Safeguarding Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from abuse or other harm, and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the School. It includes:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse or other harm
- clear procedures for reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Executive, staff, volunteers and contractors
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to DCJ, Reportable Conduct and Reporting to Police
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe

- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with a disability
- child safeguarding training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As part of the School's induction process, all staff, as well as direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors are required to complete induction in the School's safeguarding training.

Staff, direct contact and regular volunteers, and direct contact and regular contractors are supported and supervised by the School's Child Safeguarding Officers and Executive to ensure they are compliant with the School's approach to child safety.

Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns to the School

The School's Child Safeguarding Program provides detailed guidance for staff, volunteers and contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally at the School. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

Students at the School are provided with information about, and encouraged to use, multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the School. These include informal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the School may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact:

- the School Senior Child Safeguarding Officer – **the deputy principal**, or
- **the Principal**, or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the EREA Regional Director.

Students, parents/carers, family members and other community members can also raise child safety incidents or concerns through the School's **Complaints Handling Policy**.

Any person can also contact the Senior Safeguarding Officer, the Principal or EREA Regional Director if they have concerns regarding the School's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know" basis.

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Responsibilities for Child Safeguarding at the School

Child Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students. Specific responsibilities include:

The School's Safeguarding Officers – A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Safeguarding Officers. The Safeguarding Officers receive additional training with respect to child safety and protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child safeguarding within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child incidents.

Contact details for St Edmund's College Child Safeguarding Officers are set out below:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email address
Michael Farrell	Principal	02 9487 1044	farrell@erses.nsw.edu.au
Rebecca Kirwan	Deputy Principal	02 9487 1044	kirwan@stedmunds.nsw.edu.au
Vanessa Dillon	Head of Wellbeing	02 9487 1044	dillon@stedmunds.nsw.edu.au
Annie Strat	Compliance Officer	02 9487 1044	strat@erses.nsw.edu.au

The Senior Child Safeguarding Officer has additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal, the Executive and the EREA Regional Director.

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) is responsible for approving the School's Child Safeguarding Program and ensuring the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by the Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, and the School's Child Safeguarding Program.

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

The EREA Regional Director supports and advises the Principal in relation to the relevant child protection legislation and the implementation of the School's Child Safeguarding Program.

The School Board – Under the EREA governance structure, the Board is responsible for working collaboratively with the Principal to ensure consistency and faithfulness to the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition and the Touchstones of Liberating Education, Gospel Spirituality, Inclusive Community, and Justice and Solidarity. As part of this role, the Board has responsibility for approving major School policies that are consistent with EREA policies.

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

Staff members – all staff are required to comply with the School's Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, be familiar with the Child Safeguarding Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and Working with Children Checks (WWCC). 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 one of the School's Child Safeguarding Officers.

Volunteers – all volunteers at the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

All volunteers are required to comply with the School's Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Direct contact and regular volunteers are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety concerns with one of the School's Child Safeguarding Officers.

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 the School's Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe 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 School cleaners. This also includes music teachers and extra-curricular teachers and instructors engaged by students and their families directly, rather than by the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

External Education Providers 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.

An External Education Provider engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in all School environments. All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required to comply with the School's Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Safe Human Resources Management

The School applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and direct contact and regular visitors. The School's recruitment procedures comply with the Child Safe Human Resources Management and ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. All staff, direct contact and regular volunteers and direct contact contractors are required to maintain a valid WWCC.

The School ensures that the Executive, staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors undergo child safeguarding induction, and ongoing education and training as part of the School's commitment to safeguarding children and young people from harm.

Staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors are subject to regular supervision and performance monitoring whilst engaging with students.

The School ensures that professional development programs for staff include child safeguarding education and training programs.

Child Risk Management

The School recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and uses this information to inform the policies, procedures and activity planning.

The School has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all School environments.

Record Keeping

The School has a Child Safeguarding Record Keeping Policy and is committed to best practice record keeping. In accordance with the policy and as requested by the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the School, are recorded using the Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion or Child Abuse or Other Harm template.

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

Policy and Program Review

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

The School 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 the School community.

Non-compliance with the School’s Child Safeguarding Policy

The School reinforces the Child Safeguarding Policy and its Child Safe Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, the School 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
- restriction of duties
- suspension, or
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Responsible Officer	College Principal
Date of Next Review	March 2025
Related Policies, Procedures and Guides	01.01.01-E – Child Protection Policy 01.01.02-EREA – Statement of Commitment to Child Safety 01.03.00-E – Recommended Protocols for Internal Investigative and Disciplinary Procedures 01.10.04a-EREA – National Catholic Safeguarding Standards 01.10.02a-E – Child Safeguarding Program 01.10.02b-E – Child Safe Code of Conduct Statement 01.10.02c-E – Child Safe Student Code of Conduct Statement 01.10.04a-EREA – National Catholic Safeguarding Standards 01.10.04b-EREA – EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework 01.10.04c-EREA – EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework – Executive Summary 01.10.04d-CS – Responding to an incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse or Other Harm Template (CompliSpace) 05.05.00-E – Complaints and Disputes Policy 05.05.00-EREA – EREA Complaints Handling Policy Education Act 1990 (NSW) Children & Young Persons (Care & Protection) Act 1998 (NSW) Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW) Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 (NSW) Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW)