

Westside Christian College
Student Protection Policy
Information for Parents, Guardians and the College Community



Westside Christian College is committed to the complete protection of all its students from harm. This is our primary consideration. Students who are safe have the best possible chance to learn, to grow and to develop into the sound, functioning adults realising their potential our Heavenly Father created them to be.

Westside Christian College expects all people connected with the College, as staff, contractors or volunteers to uphold the values of the College and to adhere to the Code of Conduct in relation to their relationships and interactions with students and ensure these relationships and interactions are edifying and lawful.

All staff, contractors and volunteers associated with the College are required to undergo Student Protection Training and to be in possession of a current Blue Card or in the case of teachers, to be a current and registered teacher registered with the Queensland College of Teachers.

Westside Christian College will respond swiftly and lawfully to any disclosure of harm or to any reportable suspicion of harm in order to protect our students. The College will not put the safety of its students at risk for any reason – religion, culture, personal association or friendship. The College takes its responsibility towards students and their protection seriously.

Harm can be categorised in three broad areas – sexual harm, physical harm and other forms of harm. Harm, under the Child Protection Policy (1999) is defined as:

‘...any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional well-being, immaterial of how it is caused (physical, psychological, emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation). Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.’

The College responds to disclosures of harm or reportable suspicions of harm in the following ways:

1. Sexual Harm

A student discloses they are the victim of sexual harm to a staff member or a staff member has a reportable suspicion the student is the victim of sexual harm.



The staff member completes the form *Reporting Sexual Harm* and submits it to the Principal.



The Principal takes the report and refers it to the Queensland Police Department. If the perpetrator of harm is a teacher, the Principal will also inform the Queensland College of Teachers. The Principal will also report the matter to the Chairman of the College Board. All matters are treated under the strictest of confidence.

If the report of harm involves the Principal of the College, the report is to be made to the Director of Learning, who will, along with the Chairman of the Board, refer the matter to the Queensland Police Department.

2. Physical Harm

A student discloses they are the victim of physical harm to a staff member or a staff member has a reportable suspicion the student is the victim of physical harm.



The staff member completes the form *Reporting Physical Harm* and submits it to the Principal.



The Principal takes the report and refers it to the Department of Child Safety. If the perpetrator of harm is a teacher, the Principal will also inform the Queensland College of Teachers. The Principal will also report the matter to the Chairman of the College Board. All matters are treated under the strictest of confidence.

If the report of harm involves the Principal of the College, the report is to be made to the Director of Learning, who will, along with the Chairman of the Board, refer the matter to the Queensland Department of Child Safety.

3. Other forms of Harm

A student discloses they are the victim of other forms of harm (including emotional, psychological, self-harm, bullying) to a staff member or a staff member has a reportable suspicion the student is the victim of other forms of harm.



The staff member completes the form *Reporting Other Forms of Harm* and submits it to the relevant Head of School responsible for the student.



The relevant Head of School discusses the matter with the Principal and creates a plan of action to assist and support the student. This may involve enlisting the assistance of Year Level and Team Co-ordinators, Chaplains, staff trusted by the student, parents and various outside professional agencies. Each case is based on merit on the needs of the student and the level of severity and type of harm. Depending on the individual case, the Principal may also report the matter to the Chairman of the College Board. All matters are treated under the strictest of confidence

Parents wishing to read the full College policy document are invited to contact the College via phone (07) 3437 9000 or email admin@wcc.qld.edu.au

Parents wishing to clarify information found in the policy or the College procedures are invited to contact the Principal via his assistant, Mrs Sheralyn Anderson on (07) 3437 9000 or sanderson@wcc.qld.edu.au

Frequently Asked Questions

Westside Christian College recognises that parents and the College community may have some questions surrounding the Student Protection Policy and College procedures. For specific questions, which are not satisfied here, please contact the Principal's Assistant, Mrs Sheralyn Anderson, via email: sanderson@wcc.qld.edu.au

What is the difference between a child and a student? Is there a difference between child protection and student protection?

Essentially, student protection and child protection are the same thing – however we are now at a point in society where many of our senior students will be 18 years old before they graduate. While these senior students may legally be adults, they are our students and may not be in a position where they need our protection.

Will my child be supported if they disclose harm to a staff member?

Yes. Depending on the type of harm disclosed and the individual needs of your child, the College will do all in its power to support them and protect them during and after this time.

Whom do I tell if I discover or suspect a staff member is harming my child?

If you discover your child is being harmed sexually or physically by a staff member, you contact the Principal of the College immediately, who will complete your report and then, in line with the policy, report it to the relevant agency.

Whom do I tell if I believe one of my child's friends is undergoing self-harm or is the victim of harm other than sexual or physical abuse?

Please contact the relevant Head of School who will be able to listen to your concerns and then take measures to investigate the situation. Your child, and your child's friend, will be emotionally supported during this time.

Will the College contact me if my child has made a report of harm?

If your child has made a report of sexual or physical harm or if a reportable suspicion of sexual or physical harm has been made, the College **will not** contact you. This is the role of the Queensland Police Department or Child Safety Services. If your child has disclosed other forms of harm, the relevant Head of School will contact you to discuss this with you.

What do I do if I become aware of a child being sexually or physically harmed in my church, sporting or personal life? Whom do I tell?

Child safety should be the priority of everyone. Churches and other organisations should have their protection and welfare policies easily accessible to their members. If you do find yourself aware of a child needing protection from harm, you can contact the Queensland Police Department or Child Safety services. The details are below:

Queensland Police Service:	Life-threatening emergency only:	000
	Policelink:	13 14 44
	Sexual Crimes Investigation Unit:	(07) 3364 6430

Department of Child Safety Services: 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 999 – 24 hours, 7 days a week

Child Safety Services Enquiries Unit: 1800 811 810