



## VISION

Dominican School in partnership with families, is a community which creates opportunities for encountering life to the full – in all its personal, religious, ecological, and cultural richness.

At Dominican School we create a welcoming Christ-centred community bound by the Dominican Charism – VERITAS.

Our students engage with a progressive and inclusive curriculum underpinned by contemporary teaching and learning practices.

Students and families are welcomed, valued, accepted, and supported within a safe environment committed to ecological sustainability.

## RATIONALE

This policy seeks to give guidance to the Dominican School Community in all aspects of Duty of Care in Schools. The policy reflects the complexity of contemporary legal issues and an appreciation of the increasing legal responsibilities of school Principals and their staff. It also sets out the stance of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) with regard to Duty of Care.

Safety is a basic human right and is a pre-requisite for a Catholic school to be able to carry out its mission to educate.

Children are dependent, vulnerable and require adults to assure their safety. They are vulnerable to exploitation and victimisation by those who are more powerful. Safety and protection from all forms of abuse are fundamental rights of all children.

Catholic schools operate in a wider community context, where legal requirements exist, and they have an obligation to:

- Value and protect children
- Provide an environment where children feel safe and secure
- Intervene on behalf of children
- Actively work towards empowering children
- Ensure the principles of care, protection and safety are implemented

Under WHS regulations, Catholic Schools have the responsibility to provide a safe working environment for all staff, visitors, parents and contractors.

Duty of Care refers to the relationship that exists between members of staff and students. It means that schools owe a duty of care to students to take all reasonable measures to protect their safety and welfare.

The safety and wellbeing of the child must be the paramount consideration in every situation.

It is SACCS policy to ensure that all Catholic School Principals, teachers and other staff take reasonable steps to reduce risk including the:

- Provision of safe and suitable premises
- Provision of an adequate system of supervision
- Implementation of policies, procedures and practices to ensure a child-safe environment
- Responsibility for ensuring one's own safety and that of others in the workplace
- Implementation of strategies to prevent bullying and harassment
- Provision of medical assistance to sick or injured students
- Identification and mitigation of risk

## **Guide to responsibilities**

### **1. School Board**

- To comply with the requirements of SACCS & CESA Policies
- To comply with the requirements of the relevant WHS legislation
- To represent parents in determining appropriate procedures and guidelines

### **2. Principal**

- To ensure that the school meets the SACCS & CESA requirements through the provision and maintenance of child protection policy, practices, procedures and programmes
- To ensure appropriate professional development for staff
- To educate school communities about their legal responsibilities and school practices
- To support the SACCS & CESA policies

### **3. Teachers**

- To be educated in the areas of Child Protection & Responding to Abuse & Neglect
- To provide protection and abuse prevention curriculum for children
- To actively support practices and processes as per this policy
- To be trained in the area of 'Responding to a child about abuse or neglect'. Staff are to complete a refresher course every three years
- To complete a mandatory notification if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child/ young person has been or is being abused or neglected in the course of their work
- To make every effort to provide a safe and secure environment where students can be safe and feel safe
- To intervene on behalf of students as appropriate and actively work towards empowering students

### **4. Parents**

- To be familiar with and support the practices and procedures of this policy
- To inform the school of any potential issues affecting child safety (e.g. Custody Orders, collecting children early)

### **5. Students**

- To be supported to learn responsibility for their own health and personal wellbeing as well as that of others
- To be encouraged to work with staff to enhance learning activities in a proactive manner

## Supervision

It is acknowledged that staff members owe a duty of care to all students by taking all reasonable measures to protect their safety and welfare while on or off campus, even when not on 'official' yard or other duty as referred to in the school's Yard Duty Procedures for staff. This duty of care extends to excursions and camps.

## Related Documents

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with, and is additional to, any other relevant South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS) or CEO policy, procedure or support document including:

- SACCS Duty of Care Policy (2020)
- SACCS Duty of Care Procedure (2020)
- Reporting Harm of Children and Young People Policy and Procedure (2020)
- Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- SACCS Camps, Excursions, Sporting and Adventure Activities Policy (2020)
- SACCS Camps, Excursions, Sporting and Adventure Activities Procedure (2020)
- Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young People: Guidelines for Staff Working or Volunteering in Education or Care Settings 2017 (2nd Edition, revised 2019)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Regulations
- South Australian Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011

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Ratified by School Board	November 2024
Last Reviewed	November 2024
Next Review	November 2027