Mary MacKillop Memorial School

“This is what God asks of you only this
To act justly,
To love tenderly,
And walk humbly with your God”

Micah 6:8

Child Protection Policy
MISSION STATEMENT

At Mary MacKillop Memorial School we, the parents, students and staff are committed to continuing the vision of our founders, Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods. We value and endeavour to provide an education of excellence and care in a family environment, being accessible to all while upholding the Catholic tradition based on the philosophy “In Omnibus Caritas” … In all things love and kindness.

PREAMBLE

Mary MacKillop Memorial School seeks to work in partnership with parents/caregivers in the educational process of their children, based on the spirit and charism of Mary MacKillop.

An integral part of this process is providing an environment where each community member is recognized as a unique individual with rights and responsibilities.

Our Christian heritage provides the basis for our philosophy and process.

As a school community, we recognize and we acknowledge the great support and co-operation already given and which exists between staff, students and families.

Jesus said,” Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; For it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs”.  
(Matthew Ch 19:13)

Message from His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the XXIV World Day of Peace:

Let us give children a future of peace! This is the confident appeal which I make to men and women of good will, and I invite everyone to help children grow up in an environment of authentic peace. This is their right, and it is our duty. (1st January 1996).

INTRODUCTION

• “Children and young people are our present and our future. They have the right to grow and to develop their full potential physically, emotionally and spiritually. That potential is their families’ and communities’ responsibility to nurture and fulfil.” (Excerpt from the Child Protection Council Charter, March 2005).

• The South Australian Catholic Child Protection Council (referred to throughout this Policy as the Child Protection Council) has been established to promote and oversee the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within our Church community, in partnership with their families.

• The provision of trusting and secure relationships is essential in enabling children and young people to thrive and become confident, compassionate and independent adults. Such
relationships are consistent with the vision and values of the Catholic Church and are achieved by families and significant adults, in turn, being supported and nurtured. In this way, a foundation of emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing and security is achieved for our children and young people. This is our community responsibility and the responsibility of the Church.

- This policy informs and directs all child protection guidelines and procedures at Mary MacKillop Memorial School.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- Children and young people have unique gifts and each requires different support to reach their potential.
- For a child or young person to grow towards their full potential, it is necessary to provide them with a spiritual, emotional and physical environment that is enriching and safe.
- Mary MacKillop Memorial School shares the responsibility for this with the young child or young person’s family and the broader community.

RATIONALE

- All personnel in schools are Mandated Notifiers. Mandated Notifiers include anyone who works with or cares for children in a paid or voluntary capacity by providing children with health, welfare, education, childcare or residential services. Such people are legally obliged to notify the appropriate Government authority in the course of their paid or voluntary work if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Although Mandated Notifiers have a legal responsibility to notify, everyone has a moral responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
- All school personnel (i.e. all teachers and all Education Support Officers and Volunteers), involved in or associated with the delivery of educational, health, welfare, child care or residential care services should participate in a training course for Mandated Notifiers of suspected child abuse and update their training every three years.
- Mary MacKillop Memorial School will review their guidelines and procedures every three years.

AIMS

At Mary MacKillop Memorial School, we aim:

- To listen to children and to develop meaningful and respectful relationships, which protect the dignity of the child or young person.
- To provide a safe school environment which ensures that children are protected.
- To ensure school personnel understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations, responsibilities and correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect.
- To support school personnel directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification.
• To ensure that policies and organizational procedures provide children with a safe school environment (This will be done in consultation with the School Board and the parent community).

• To promote models of behaviour between school personnel and children based on mutual respect and consideration.

• To ensure that student management practice respects the dignity of children.

• To provide training and development for school personnel in Child Protection and Abuse Prevention Curriculum.

• To initiate and support the implementation of Child Protection and Abuse Prevention Curriculum at the classroom level to ensure that all children have access to these programs throughout their school years.

• To monitor and evaluate Child Protection and Abuse Prevention Curriculum.

• To provide families with information about and opportunities to participate in the protection and abuse prevention curriculum.

• To ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

ALL MARY MACKILLOP MEMORIAL SCHOOL STAFF HAVE A LEGAL AND PASTORAL OBLIGATION:

• To listen to and treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children in their care.

• To notify the appropriate authority (2009 Child, Family and Youth Services) if, in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

• To provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.

• To participate in training and development opportunities, which provide knowledge and skills in Mandatory notification at least every three years.

• To teach children skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety.

• To assist children to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognize the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.

• To be guided by The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Child Protection Policy to further develop policies, practices and procedures for students of Mary MacKillop Memorial School to:
  - ensure a safe environment for children at Mary MacKillop Memorial School.
  - support children to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths.
  - respect the diverse and special needs of children.
  - are sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour which may be indicative of abuse.
• Provide training and development opportunities for all school staff to:
  - ensure they understand their obligations and responsibilities as mandated notifiers and
develop appropriate procedures at their work site.
  - provide the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for children
and enable them to continually build on this.
  - assist them in their role as advocates, particularly on behalf of very young children.
• Develop partnerships between home, school and the wider community to:
  - promote safe environments for children wherever they are, based on effective
communication.
  - promote community understanding of personal safety programs.
  - acknowledge and provide for diversity e.g. cultural, special needs.
• Develop mandatory reporting systems which are clear and understood by all school personnel
so that they:
  - are provided with clear information relevant to their employment.
  - establish support mechanisms at each site.
  - are able to participate in training and development i.e. Mandatory Notification Training and
refresher courses and Induction Programs.
• Provide Child Protection Programs which support children to:
  - develop knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and maintain personal safety (i.e.
Religious Education Family Life Education, Program Achieve, and Society and the
Environment.)

POLICY GUIDELINES
• The Children’s Protection Act (SA) 1993 and its Regulations are the relevant legislative
documents relating to the issue of child abuse.
  - Schools are required to observe the agreed practices laid out in ‘Child Protection:
  - When School Principals, Deputy Principals, Teachers, Education Support Officers and other
School Personnel, including volunteers, have suspicions of child abuse; these procedures are
to help them carry out their obligations under the Act.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE
Children’s Protection Act
• Under Section 11 (1) & (2) of the Children’s Protection Act 1993 Principals, Teachers and
other School Personnel (including volunteers) are obliged by law to notify the appropriate
Government authority if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child (i.e. person under
eighteen years of age) has been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.
Recognition of Abuse
The term 'abuse' refers to sexual, physical, emotional, psychological abuse and neglect.

The following definitions are used by Child, Family and Youth Services in determining whether child abuse has occurred.

Physical Abuse:
Any non accidental act inflicted upon a child, which results in physical injury to the child.

Sexual Abuse:
Any sexual behaviour imposed on a child including but not limited to sexual touching and violation, viewing sexually explicit material/ acts, text/SMS messages of a sexual nature, sexual innuendo and sexual jokes, songs or rhymes.

Emotional Abuse:
A chronic attitude or behaviour directed at a child, or a creation of an emotional environment, which is detrimental to, or impairs the child's psychological and/or physical development.

Neglect:
Neglect refers to any serious omission or commission by a person that jeopardizes or impairs the child's psychological, intellectual or physical development.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS
It is important to note that it is the role of the appropriate Government authority to determine whether abuse occurred – NOT SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

The Law requires school personnel to report reasonable suspicions of abuse. School personnel have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse and to contact the appropriate Government authority when:

• a child tells you when he or she has been abused;
• a child tells them he or she knows someone who has been abused (a child could possibly be referring to himself or herself);
• someone else tells them (e.g. sibling, relative, friend, neighbour, or acquaintance of the child) that a child has been abused;
• their own observations of the child's physical condition and/or behaviour lead them to suspect that the child has been abused;
• other circumstances lead them to suspect that a child has been abused.

If in doubt, school personnel are advised to consult the Child Abuse Report Line as soon as possible (Ph 131478).
• Notifying suspected abuse can be the first step in helping both the abused child and the adult causing the abuse.
• There is no civil or criminal liability for notifying in good faith a suspicion of abuse.
• There is a significant fine for failure to report.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES
1. To consult and make a notification, phone the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 131478 as soon as possible.
2. This is a 24 hour, 7 day a week line and can be rung from anywhere in the state for the cost of a local call.
3. The calls will be received by the Central Intake Team workers during business hours. At all other times the line is operated by Crisis Care staff.
4. Under Section 11(3) of the Children’s Protection Act, 1993, the school personnel making notification will be required to provide the Department with “a statement of the observations, information and opinions upon which the suspicion is based”. This can be done verbally.
5. When making a notification, school personnel must advise:
• The Principal of the notification (all Child Protection issues surrounding sexual abuse are reported to the Principal Consultant at the Catholic Education Office).
• the child/young person’s name, age and address.
• the reason for suspecting that the injury to, or behaviour of, or the condition of the child/young person is the result of abuse or neglect the notifier’s assessment of immediate danger to the child or young person (information may be sought about the whereabouts of the alleged abuser/s).
• what arrangements, if any, exist for the care and protection of the child/young person.
• what involvement, if any, other agencies have in dealing with the abuse or neglect issues.
• the notifier’s description of the injury, the behaviour or condition observed.
• the current whereabouts of the child/young person.  *(The notifier is not required to have all of the above information in order to make a notification).*
• The onus to notify CARL rests with the person who suspects abuse.
• Following the ‘The Appropriate Child Protection Authority’ (2010 Families SA) investigation a number of interventions may occur, including, for example:
  - counselling for the family and/or individual.
  - referral to other agencies.
  - emergency foster care to relieve the immediate stress on the family and remove the risk to the child the service of a parent aide (trained volunteer).
  - practical assistance (e.g. help with housing, finance, child care).
  - an assessment that the student is safe and hence no further action.
• In all cases of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse, or serious neglect, the Police and the ‘The Appropriate Child Protection Authority’ consult to determine the respective roles of the two departments.
• ‘The Appropriate Child Protection Authority’ gives priority to child protection matters.

**RESOURCES**

• SACCS Child Protection Policy.
• Child Protection Interagency Guidelines.
• Interview of Students.
• Towards Healing.
• National Safe Schools Frame Work.
• Mary MacKillop Memorial Personal Responsibility Policy.

**Implementation** 2004

**Reviewed & Ratified by Mary MacKillop Memorial School Board on 22/07/08**

**Policy Review Date** 2010