

1. Rationale

From the moment they join the Mazenod community, students should learn of their value as human persons. Every aspect of the school's life should reflect a Christian pastoral dimension. The pastoral dimension of a Catholic school needs to include the mutual care and support staff demonstrate both towards each other and for their students.

Some schools have full-time pastoral care staff. Others may have staff in counselling roles, contributing in a special way to the wellbeing and development of students with particular needs. While appreciating the contribution of these people, we stress that every staff member shares responsibility for the pastoral dimension of the Catholic school in accordance with the Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools. We call on all staff to develop the kinds of relationships that will help them respond proactively to their students' pastoral needs (WA Bishops Mandate, 37).

Catholic schools are entrusted, in partnership with parents/guardians/caregivers who are the primary educators of their children, with the total education of the child. Catholic school staff therefore have a duty of care to students during school operating hours and at other times when a staff/student relationship exists. Staff discharge this duty by taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student.

Mazenod College is committed to child protection strategies and procedures to ensure the care, safety and protection of all students.

2. Definition

- 2.1. **Curriculum** includes all the learning experiences provided for the students and young children, including the planned and unplanned experiences which promote learning and development.
- 2.2. **Child Abuse** refers to the long term and/or short-term maltreatment of a person under the age of 18 years of age. It is the result of action or inaction which results in harm or injury to a child. It may involve ongoing, repeated or persistent abuse, or arise from a single incident. Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law and are defined by the Department of Communities:

Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or caregiver.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and developmental level, and includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
- the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

Emotional abuse includes: psychological abuse; and being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.

Neglect is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic or chronic. Greater detail on the definitions of child abuse may be found in the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.

- 2.3. **Child Protection** refers to prevention and response to abuse against children. This includes the policies, preventative measures and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. In context it applies particularly to the duty of Catholic Education and individuals associated with Catholic Education, towards children in their care.
- 2.4. **Historic Allegations** refers to any information alleging child abuse where the child is a former student of any Catholic school.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all Mazenod staff both paid and unpaid staff (including boarding staff, practicum students, trainees, interns or volunteers), governing body members, contractors and external providers. It also applies to all adults in the College community, including parents / guardians and other family members.

4. Principles

In the best interests of the child, the child protection strategies and procedures to be followed are based on the following principles:

- 4.1. All staff in Catholic schools have a responsibility to care for children and to promote their safety and wellbeing.
- 4.2. All children have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety. This should be done in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.
- 4.3. The College is a student-centred organisation. Students have a right to be heard in decisions that affect them.
- 4.4. The dignity of the person shall be maintained and respected in all dealings regarding allegations of child abuse.
- 4.5. Principals are required to ensure that all staff are aware of and comply with legislation and policies with respect to child protection.
- 4.6. The confidentiality of all concerned in relation to an allegation of child abuse should be respected subject to the disclosures required to be made in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.

5. Statement of Commitment to Student Protection, Safety and Wellbeing

At Mazenod College, we hold the care, safety and well-being of students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our organisation. All students have a right to be safe and feel safe, and we commit to ensure and protect these rights in all aspects of our community and programs.

Mazenod College has a zero tolerance of child abuse, grooming and other harmful behaviours. All allegations and safety concerns will be responded to actively, sensitively, respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with our lawful obligations and complaints handling procedures.

Mazenod enacts the Church's commitment to the dignity of the individual. All members of our College have a fundamental right to be treated with respect, and to learn and teach in a safe and supportive environment. We encourage students to contribute more broadly to the development of the kind of world envisaged by Christ, to form a commitment to the love, compassion and justice of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We promote justice, particularly to those who are culturally, physically, intellectually, financially or spiritually disadvantaged (Mandate for the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009).

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.
Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, par. 9

We commit to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations, and to maintaining a child safe culture.

We listen to the voices of students as we constantly strive to remain vigilant and make improvements. Our Student Protection Program is based on the CEWA Child Safe Framework, the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Safeguarding Policy - Children and Vulnerable Adults. The program is designed to maintain a child-safe environment and to embed an organisational culture of child safety within the College community.

Learn what you are in the eyes of God.

6. Procedures

- 6.1. All school staff who identify concerns regarding the sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child must respond according to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.
- 6.2. The Unsatisfactory Performance or Misconduct policy and procedure is to be followed when an allegation is directed against school employees. These include teachers, administrative staff, grounds staff or any other staff member.
- 6.3. It is expected that all concerns, allegations, suspicions and disclosures of abuse involving members of religious institutions (current or former), whether current or historical, are taken seriously and acted upon immediately. Mandatory reporting procedures apply. All allegations directed against any clergy or members of religious institutes must be discussed with the Director of Professional Standards and follow Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Abuse against personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia.
- 6.4. The Principal shall ensure that staff receive induction, in relation to the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia and Mandatory Reporting within the first 12 months of appointment.
- 6.5. The Principal shall ensure the school's pastoral care structures reflect the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia, and are reviewed annually thereafter.
- 6.6. The Principal shall ensure that the College adopts best practice in the recruitment and screening of staff, contractors and external providers. Best practice includes the requirements to maintain relevant qualifications and Working with Children Check.
- 6.7. The Principal shall ensure the school's pastoral care structures reflect the Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia.
- 6.8. Principals of Catholic schools are an approved 'class of persons' in accordance with the Act and are able to take mandatory reports regarding child sexual abuse. Principals of Catholic schools have a legal obligation upon receiving mandatory reports regarding child sexual abuse to forward these unaltered to the approved agency (currently the Department for Child Protection - DCP) as soon as possible (usually within 24 hours). Teachers also have the option at law to report directly to DCP. Teachers must inform the Principal unless the complaint is against the Principal.
- 6.9. Staff shall act in accordance with the relevant section of Child Protection Procedures for Catholic Schools in Western Australia in regard to any historic allegations of child abuse.
- 6.10. The College will implement a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. This information will then be used to inform policies, procedures and planning, and ensure the College meets its legal and regulatory obligations in regard to child protection.

1. Related Documents

Children and Community Services Act 2004 (as amended in 2008) (WA)
Staff Code of Conduct
Student Protection Procedures and Guidelines (internal document)
Student Protection Incidents or Concerns Reporting Procedure (parents and guardians)

2. Continuous improvement

This policy will be made available to staff via the Staff Handbook and through staff training.

In the event of an incident report, the College Leadership Team will analyse the cause and any potential systemic failures, ascertain whether the policy and procedures were adhered to, and improve processes where appropriate.

Mazenod may amend this policy at any time to ensure continuous improvement. The policy will be subject to review every three years or earlier if there has been a change in legislation or regulations.

3. Review History

Year	Reviewed by:	Amendments / Review
2018	CLT	Policy released
2020	CLT and Board	Amendments – Title change from Child Protection Policy to Student Protection Policy, definition updates, S5 included, and S7 and S8 updated.