



## CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

### CHILD PROTECTION AT A.B. PATERSON COLLEGE

A.B. Paterson College recognises that protecting students from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to maximising their personal and academic potential. For this reason, the welfare and best interests of the children within our College will always be a primary consideration.

We expect our students to show respect to our staff and volunteers and to comply with safe practices, and we expect all employees to ensure that their behaviour towards, and relationships with, students reflect proper standards of care for students, and are not unlawful. The College will respond diligently to a report of suspected or actual harm, or risk of harm to a student.

#### ***What does the College mean by harm?***

Legislation defines harm as:

Harm, caused to a student under 18 years, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the student's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
- Sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- Domestic or family violence.
- Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Under College policy, a *student* is any person, regardless of age, who is enrolled at the school, or attends the Early Childhood Centre.

#### ***How does the College protect students from harm?***

The College has a comprehensive Child Protection Policy, which covers the actions to be taken if a member of staff, or a parent of the school, becomes aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been done to a student of the College by other staff, people outside the College, or by other students.

#### ***What should you do if you become aware or reasonably suspect that harm has been caused to a student of the College by a member of staff, someone outside of the College or by other students?***

You should report your concerns to the Principal, or Assistant Principal, or to any other member of the Senior staff.



***What should you do if you are concerned that a member of staff has behaved inappropriately towards a student?***

You should report your concerns to the Principal, Assistant Principal, or any other member of the Senior staff.

***What will happen next?***

If you report your concerns to a member of staff other than the Principal, the member of staff will report it to the Principal immediately or, if the subject of the complaint is the Principal, then the Company Secretary will report to the Chairman of the College Board.

***What will the Principal or the Chairman of the College Board do?***

If the Principal or Chairman of the Board receives a report of harm or suspected harm, to a student of the school; and he/she becomes aware of the harm having been caused or reasonably suspects the harm to have been caused; then it will be reported to police immediately if the harm relates to sexual abuse; or to the Department of Child Safety, if appropriate; or it may be dealt with internally if the matter does not require mandatory reporting to an outside body.

***What happens about confidentiality?***

Your report will be treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Knowledge of it will be limited to the Principal and those directly involved. The Chairman of the College Board may also need to be informed. It is the College's policy that confidentiality between the College and parents will be respected as much as possible, and any concerns raised by parents will not rebound adversely on their children.

Each person, who has access to information regarding suspected or disclosed harm, has an obligation to observe appropriate confidentiality. However, the College is unable to promise absolute confidentiality, since the steps of the Policy will require disclosing, internally and externally, certain details involved in responding to the report. State authorities can compel people to give evidence about actions under the Policy and to produce documents. You would be fully informed if information you provided were to be passed on to a third party, where that is possible and appropriate.

Any action, which needed to be taken under staff disciplinary procedures as a result of an allegation not requiring police intervention, would be handled confidentially within the College.

***How will the College help your child?***

The Principal will ensure that the following things are done to reduce the chance of harm occurring:

- Ensure that each staff member understands and fulfills their obligations under the College's Child Protection Policy.
- Ensure that appropriate reference checks are completed for each staff member prior to employment.



- Ensure that each non-teaching staff member and volunteer who has contact with children, within current regulative guidelines, has a current positive suitability notice issued by the Commissioner for Children and Young People.
- Ensure all teaching staff have current registration through the Queensland College of Teachers, which undertakes police checks as part of teacher registration.

If the Principal receives a report of harm to your child, the Principal will support the child by:

- responding rapidly and diligently to the report;
- reassuring the student;
- protecting the child's confidentiality as much as possible;
- offering continuous support; and
- providing counselling if requested.

***What you should do if you require more information?***

The College's complete Child Protection Policy is available at the College administration and on the College website. Parents and students may have access to this policy at any time. You may also make an appointment to discuss the policy with the Principal if you wish to clarify any matters.