

Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy

Effective	December 2025
Review	July 2026
Owner	Principal
Approver	The Sycamore School Governing Body

Note: Supersedes *Child Protection Policy v1.8*. Further amendments will be required on commencement of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, 1 July 2027.

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about how The Sycamore School will respond to harm, or allegations of harm, to students under 18 years, and the appropriate conduct of the School's staff and students to comply with accreditation requirements. The Sycamore School adheres to the legislation requirements for Mandatory Reporting (section 13E).

2 Scope

- ☒ Parents/Guardians/Carers
- ☒ Students
- ☒ Staff which includes:
 - ☒ *Employees (full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term and casual)*
 - ☒ *Contractors/subcontractors and their employees*
 - ☒ *Directors*
 - ☒ *Apprentices/Trainees*
 - ☒ *Student teachers*
 - ☒ *Volunteers*
 - ☒ *Anyone undertaking work experience or vocational placement at the School*
 - ☒ *Employees of a labour hire company*

3 Definitions/Acronyms

Board Chair	The Board Chair of The Sycamore School Governing Body.
Adult	An adult includes all stakeholders such as staff, parents, carers, and volunteers aged 18 years and over.
Child	A child is an individual under 18 years.
Director	Director of The Sycamore School Governing Body.
Staff	Full-time, part-time. Permanent, fixed term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.
Harm	Harm, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. 1. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

	<p>2. Harm can be caused by— a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or b) sexual abuse or exploitation.</p> <p>3. Harm can be caused by— a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.</p> <p>[<i>Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)</i> s.9]</p>
Child In Need of Protection	<p>A child in need of protection is a child who— a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.</p> <p>[<i>Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)</i> s.10]</p>
Mandatory Reporting	<p>Mandatory reporting is the legal obligation under Section 13E of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)</i> to report any reasonable suspicion of harm or risk to a child's safety and wellbeing.</p>
Reportable suspicion	<p>A reportable suspicion about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and • may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.
Sexual Abuse	<p>Sexual abuse, in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances— (a) the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person. (b) the relevant person has less power than the other person. (c) there is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.</p> <p>[<i>Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)</i> s.364]</p>

4 Policy

4.1 The Sycamore School's Responsibility

The Sycamore School is responsible for ensuring the health safety and conduct of staff and students that:

- This policy is freely available to staff, parents, carers and students.
- staff, parents, carers and students are made aware of child protection, health, safety, conduct of staff and students processes.
- All staff are trained in child protection, health, safety, conduct of staff and students processes on commencement of employment or engagement with the School and then on an annual basis.

- All visiting service providers (including volunteers and external contractors such as tradespeople, guest speakers and work placement students) receive information regarding child protection, health, safety, and conduct of staff and students processes as part of their induction and training; and
- The processes are being implemented within the School.

The Sycamore School Governing Body Responsibilities

The School's governing body must ensure that:

- The School's staff, students and student's parents, carers are made aware of the processes; and
- The processes are readily accessible by staff, students, parents, carers; and
- Staff are trained annually in implementing the processes; and
- The School is implementing the processes.

Evidence of the above processes will be monitored by the Board through the Principal's report. Where appropriate, the Board may request evidence of implementation, such as staff training completion certificates, staff meeting agendas or minutes, school newsletters, or the results of a desktop audit of the School's website.

4.2 Health and Safety

The School has written processes in place to enable it to comply with the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld).

4.3 Responding to Reports of Harm

When the School receives any information alleging harm to a student (other than harm arising from physical or sexual abuse) it will deal with the situation compassionately and fairly so as to minimise any likely harm to the extent it reasonably can. This is set out in the School's Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy . Information relating to physical or sexual abuse is handled under obligations to report set out in this policy.

4.4 Conduct of Staff and Students

All staff will ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect proper standards of care for students. Staff, contractors and volunteers must not cause harm to students.

4.5 Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

If a student considers the behaviour of a staff member to be inappropriate, the student should report the behaviour to:

- The Principal; or
- The Deputy Principal; or

- The Social Worker.

The names and contact details of these staff members are listed on the School's website.

4.6 Dealing with Report of Inappropriate Behaviour

A staff member who receives a report of inappropriate behaviour must report it to the Principal. Where the Principal is the subject of the report of inappropriate behaviour, the staff member must inform the Board Chair. Reports will be dealt with under the School's Complaints Handling Policy.

4.7 Reporting Sexual Abuse or Likely Sexual Abuse

Sections 366 and 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld) states that if a staff member (the **first person**) becomes aware, or reasonably suspects, in the course of their employment at the School, that any of the following has been, or is likely to be, sexually abused by another person:

- A student under 18 years attending the School;
- A kindergarten aged child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the School;
- A person with a disability who:
 - Under section 420(2) of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld) is being provided with special education at the School; and
 - Is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the School;

Then the staff member must give a written report about the abuse or suspected abuse to the Principal or to a Director **immediately**.

The Principal or Director must **immediately** give a copy of the report to a police officer. The Sycamore School does not delegate this responsibility to anyone else.

If the first person who becomes aware or reasonably suspects likely sexual abuse is the Principal, the Principal must give a written report about the abuse, or suspected abuse:

- **Immediately** to a police officer; and
- Must also give a copy of the report to the Board Chair **immediately**.

A report under this section must include the following particulars (Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 s68:

- The name of the person giving the report (the first person).
- The student's name and sex;
- Details of the basis for the first person becoming aware, or reasonably suspecting, that the student has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused by another person.
- Details of the abuse or suspected abuse.
- Any of the following information of which the first person is aware:
 - the student's age.

- The identity of the person who has been sexually abused, or is suspected to be likely to sexually abuse, the student.
- The identity of anyone else who may have information about the abuse or suspected abuse.

4.8 Reporting Physical and Sexual Abuse

Under section 13E (1) of the *Child Protection Act 1999* Qld, if a doctor, a registered nurse, a teacher or an early childhood education and care professional (a **relevant person**) forms a **reportable suspicion** about a child in the course of their engagement as a relevant person, **they must make a written report**. The written report must be given to the Chief Executive of the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety (or another department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999*, responsible for Child Safety in Queensland). The relevant person should give a copy of the report to the Principal.

A *reportable suspicion* about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child:

- Has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and
- May not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm. (*Child Protection Act 1999 s13E(2)*)

A report under this section must include the following particulars (*Child Protection Regulation 2023 s4*):

- The basis on which the person has formed the reportable suspicion.
- The child's name, age and sex descriptor.
- Details of how to contact the child.
- Details of the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates.
- Particulars of the identity of the person suspected of causing the child to have suffered, suffer, or be at risk of suffering, the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates.
- Particulars of the identity of any other person who may be able to give information about the harm to which the reportable suspicion relates.

Upon receiving and actioning a report the principal must inform the mandatory reporter in writing that the report has been made to the chief executive of the department responsible for Child Safety in Queensland.

If the mandatory reporter believes the Principal has not made the report to the department responsible for Child Safety in Queensland, they must make the report themselves.

4.9 Responsibilities under Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld)

The *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld) includes two offences that relate to the failure to report a child sexual offence and the failure to protect a child against a child sexual offence. A child sexual offence

is an offence of a sexual nature by an adult against a child under 16 years or a person with an impairment of the mind.

4.9.1 Failure to Report

Under section 229BC of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld), all adults must report sexual offences against a child by another adult to police as soon as reasonably practicable after the belief is, or ought reasonably to have been, formed. Failure to make a report without a reasonable excuse, is a criminal offence. This offence applies to all adults inclusive of students 18 years or older, as well as parents/carers and volunteers at the school. A reasonable excuse not to make a report under the *Criminal Code Act 1899* includes that a report has already been made under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse) and the *Child Protection Act 1999* (reporting significant harm or risk of significant harm) as per this policy.

4.9.2 Failure to Protect

Under section 229BB of the Code, all adults in positions of power or responsibility within institutions to reduce or remove the risk of child sexual offences being committed must take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from a child sexual offence. A failure to protect is an offence.

5 Related Legislation

- *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld)
- *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld)
- *Criminal Code Act 1899* (sections 229BB and 229BC)
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017* (Qld)
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017* (Qld)
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (Qld)
- *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017* (Qld)
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld)
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulations 2020* (Qld)

6 Related Documents

- Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Report of Suspected Harm or Sexual Abuse form.

7 Procedures

7.1 Regional Intake Services

If there's reason to suspect a child in Queensland is experiencing harm, or is at risk of experiencing harm, contact a Child Safety Services' Regional Intake Service. Contact the local Regional Intake Service for South East (Logan, Gold Coast and Bayside) on 1300 679 849 during business hours (from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday).

Outside of these hours, contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on phone free call 1800 177 135 (Queensland only).

Trained child protection workers talk to you about your concerns for the child. They will record information you provide and gather other information that may be helpful in assessing the situation. The worker will then decide the best way of responding to the information you have provided.

When you contact a Regional Intake Service to report your concerns, your details will be confidential and your identity, if provided, will be protected by law.

Outside these hours contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135. In an emergency, if a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, call 000.

7.2 Training

The School will train its staff in processes relating to health, safety and conduct of staff and students on their induction and will refresh training annually. The School uses the Child Protection eLearning courses developed by Independent Schools Queensland.

7.3 Awareness of Processes

The School will inform staff, parents/carers and students of its processes relating to health, safety, conduct of staff and students in communications, including publishing information on the website, information provided at staff briefings, staff inductions, information sessions, enrolment interviews, newsletters and handbooks.

7.4 Accessibility of Processes

Processes relating to health, safety, and conduct of staff and students are accessible as follows.

- For staff, processes are accessible in the Policies & Procedures team SharePoint folder or on the School's website. Staff also receive this information at induction and are required to complete annual mandatory training; staff are required to provide evidence of the completion of training. Information about school policy and procedures is shared at staff meetings, including the review of handling complaints.

- For parents/carers and students, processes are accessible on the School's website and available by emailing administration admin@sycamore.qld.edu.au or by asking for a copy from administration.

7.5 Implementing the Processes

The School will ensure it is implementing processes relating to health, safety, and conduct of staff and students by auditing compliance with the processes annually.

7.6 Complaints

Suggestions of non-compliance with the School's processes may be submitted as complaints under the Complaints Handling Policy which accessible on the School's website.

8 Document History

Version	Description of modification	Modified by	Date
2.0	Revised using ISQ template (formerly titled Child Protection Policy)	Ronwyn Collier	15 December 2025
1.8	Annual Review. Alignment with ISQ template (last updated January 2025), inclusion of phrasing for 'health, safety, conduct of staff and students'	Ronwyn Collier	24 July 2025
1.7	Updated Branding and Fonts	Jemma Riding	18 October 2025
1.7	Reviewed Added in definition of "Child" Updated legislative references	Vanessa Lyle	16 April 2024
1.6	Transferred to new policy template Updated to include Responsibilities under the <i>Criminal Code Act 1899</i> (Qld) Added The Sycamore School's responsibilities Combined Reporting Sexual Abuse or Likely Sexual Abuse into one section as the sections refer to the same information and processes Added information on Regional Intake Services Clarified accessibility of processes	Sandra Stuckey	15 February 2023
1.5	Review date changed to 12 months	Sandra Stuckey	20 September 2021
1.4	No change	Sonya Marshall	February 2021
1.3	Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour – Social Worker added	Ronwyn Collier	16 August 2018
1.2	No change	Nigal De Maria	31 July 2017

Version	Description of modification	Modified by	Date
2.0	Revised using ISQ template (formerly titled Child Protection Policy)	Ronwyn Collier	15 December 2025
1.1	New policy	Nigal De Maria	13 July 2017