This Child Protection Policy stems from and operates in conjunction with the Catholic Diocese of Darwin Child Safety and Protection Policy and Procedure and the Marist Brothers, Province of Australia, Child Protection Policy: Keeping Children Safe

Preamble
The safety and protection of children and young people at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic College is the responsibility of everyone involved with them, whether as Principal, teacher, staff member, Brother, or volunteer. Each person at OLSH has a duty to be familiar with this policy and all other relevant legislative and professional requirements, to be ready to recognise both signs and risk of harm, and know how to respond appropriately.

The Gospel imperatives of truth, justice, compassion and reconciliation underpin this policy. It is founded on the conviction that the rights and dignity of children and young people need to be promoted and protected, that they are all to be treated equally with love and respect, and that their personal dignity is never to be compromised. Children and young people can be quite vulnerable to victimisation, exploitation and abuse.

The College is therefore committed to these principles:

- A primary responsibility is to create safe environments for children and young people and to protect them from any form of harm or abuse.
- All staff have a duty of care to support and protect children and young people.
- The safeguarding of children and the prevention of abuse require thorough education and training of all engaged in working with children and young people, either directly or indirectly.
- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation. Culture or other reasons notwithstanding, we must intervene on behalf of any child suspected of being abused.
- Any complainant is listened to attentively and offered a compassionate, prompt and just response when making an allegation of abuse.
- A responsibility of care extends not only to the young person who may have suffered harm but also to his or her family. Any person accused of abuse also deserves to be treated with justice and compassion.
- Truth and transparency should characterise all actions.

Responsibilities
The Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Team acts as the College's Professional Standards Committee as outlined in the Marist ‘Child Protection Policy: Keeping Children Safe’. The College’s Child Protection Officer is part of the College’s Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Team. It is the responsibility of the Professional Standards Committee:

- to ensure that all staff involved with children receive training in recognising the indicators of harm and neglect and know their responsibilities in relation to the mandatory reporting of harm to and exploitation and neglect of a child and young person
- to ensure that matters requiring mandatory reporting are reported in accordance with Northern Territory and Federal legislation and that appropriate records are maintained and the Principal informed
- to ensure that all staff and people involved with children at OLSH have a Working with Children Card
- to ensure that the College has a Child Protection Officer and that staff, students and families know who this person is and how to contact them
- to ensure that all staff, students and families at OLSH are informed about the College’s Child Protection Policy and issues related to child protection
Mandatory Reporting Requirements

All professionals working with children and/or families share in the responsibility of protecting children. The Care and Protection of Children Act provides the legislative framework for the protection and care of children and imposes a legal responsibility for every person in the Northern Territory to report child abuse and neglect and suspected cases of child sexual abuse.

This means that if a person believes, on reasonable grounds that:

'A child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation, or otherwise has been or is likely to be a victim of a sexual offence.'

They must report, as soon as possible after forming that belief, and provide any information on which that belief is based.

The College’s Mandatory Reporting Requirements outlines in more detail staff obligations and information regarding College procedures for the reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Critical Wellbeing

All staff at OLSH have a duty of care for students to ensure their safety and wellbeing while at school or engaged in school activities.

The College’s duty of care for students requires that the College maintain confidential documentation in regards to critical wellbeing issues. It is deemed essential for documentation of incidents and of strong suspicions with regards to the safety and well-being of students and staff to be managed in a way that is strictly confidential but that allows for the identification of patterns and possible indicators.

Any of the following may include behaviours that are noticed, threatened, disclosed or suspected:

- Self-injuring behaviours
- Suicidal thoughts and/or behaviours
- Written or art work showing preoccupation with thoughts of death or self-injury
- Strong expressions of self-dislike
- Unexplained physical injury - bruises, broken bones
- Unusually aggressive behaviours
- Unusually withdrawn behaviours or loss of physical/mental energy
- Chronic absenteeism / irregular attendance
- Evidence of neglect
- Dishevelled/unkempt appearance
- Changes in appetite - significant weight loss or gain
- Family violence
- Sexualised behaviours

Confidential Critical Wellbeing Reports

If a staff member determines that an incident, behaviour or strong suspicion does not warrant a mandatory report then they will complete a Confidential Critical Wellbeing Report and provide the original to the Head of Campus for filing in the students Confidential Blue File.

All critical wellbeing documentation is to be filed in individual student’s ‘Confidential Blue Files’. These files are to be located in the office of the Head of Campus and accessible only in the presence of the Head of Campus (or next most senior staff member acting on the Head of Campus' behalf).

These files will contain:

- Mandatory Notification Records - Original
- Confidential Critical Wellbeing Reports - Original
- Counselling Referral Forms - Copy
- Brief summary of contact with College Counsellor (if appropriate)
It is the responsibility of all staff:

- to provide the relevant documentation to the Head of Campus
- to discuss any patterns of concern with the Head of Campus
- to make a notification whenever they believe it is necessary

It is the responsibility of the Head of Campus:

- to securely maintain the Confidential Blue Files
- to monitor any patterns of concern
- to support and encourage staff to make a notification whenever necessary
- to inform the Principal of issues of ongoing critical concern

**Responding to Self-Injury or Suicidal Behaviour**

If self-injuring behaviours or threats to self-injure or threats or attempts of suicide are noticed, disclosed, reported or suspected, staff have a duty of care to respond as soon as practical.

Mandatory notification is not necessarily required. However, if there are concerns about a young person, such as the severity of the self-harm, disclosure of a specific suicide plan or inadequate response from an adult caregiver then the staff member will ring the Department of Children and Families - Central Intake Team (1800 700 250) for advice or to make a notification.

**Definitions**

**Self-injury:** is any form of self-harming behaviour that involves causing injuries or pain to your own body, without conscious suicidal intent. It can take many forms. Behaviours can include cutting, scraping, picking, pricking, burning, punching or hitting self or hitting body against something, or taking an overdose of drugs (e.g. pills or substances likely to cause harm).

**Suicidal behaviours:** are acts of deliberately harming yourself with the intent to die.

Self-injury, threats and attempts of suicide are different in terms of immediate risk to a student. But sometimes it is very difficult to tell the difference and this is best handled by a health professional. Staff are not expected to work out the difference between self-injury and suicidal behaviours. This is a conversation best had with a counsellor or other health professional in a quiet, confidential setting.

Self-injury and suicidal behaviours are confronting and compassion for everyone involved is important. Responding may be the first step in interrupting self-injury or suicidal behaviour. If self-injury results in bleeding or apparent injury, prompt first aid must occur first. Emotional, psychological and therapeutic responses are secondary.

**Response Steps**

For self-injury, suicide threat or attempt noticed, alleged/informed, disclosed, or suspected, a response must occur on the same day. The following is a guide:

1. Apply first aid if required
2. Seek assistance/support from College Counsellor and/or ASIST trained staff member
3. Notify Head of Campus and devise an Action Plan. All Action Plans will always involve parent/guardian notification and may include notification to the Department of Children and Families - Central Intake Team
4. Complete Confidential Critical Wellbeing Report to be filed and maintained by the Head of Campus
5. The Head of Campus to inform the Principal

**Counselling and Support for Staff**

The Principal, College Chaplain, Heads of Campus and College Counsellors are available to discuss concerns about the emotional wellbeing of students and staff members. Staff members can also access free counsellors at CatholicCare through the Access Employee Assistance Program (phone: 8958 2400).