



Safeguarding Policy

Last Updated: June 2021

Key Points:

GSE has a zero tolerance of exploitation or abuse

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

GSE promotes the safety of children and vulnerable adults through the implementation of the policies and activities which prevent, respond to and report concerns regarding abuse

GSE implements the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

1 Why This Policy Exists

This policy outlines GSE's commitment to promoting child safety and for protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm and abuse.

GSE applies the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and is committed to ensuring cultural and behavioural norms that are consistent with these standards.

2 This Policy Applies to

This Policy applies to all GSE staff. This Policy relates to other safeguarding policies as follows:

What does the GSE stand for around safeguarding	Safeguarding Children and Adults Statement of Commitment
How do we embed this commitment across GSE	Safeguarding Policy
What does this mean for expectations on individuals within GSE	Code of Conduct: Safeguarding
If GSE staff observe a breach of safeguarding what should they do	Safeguarding Reporting Obligations Policy
If the organisation is made aware of a breach how does it respond	Complaints Handling: Safeguarding

3 Definitions Used in This Policy

When we use...	We Mean...
Child	A child or young person as defined in Child Protection legislation in the relevant jurisdiction
Vulnerable adult	<p>People aged 18 years and over who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) have care and support needs b) are being abused or neglected, or are at risk of abuse or neglect, and c) are unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs <p>This does not include adult members of staff but does include students at a school who are 18 years or over. Conduct involving adult members of staff is covered by the GSE Handbook</p>
Child safety	Matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse. It includes the creation of an environment where children and vulnerable adults are protected from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse
Staff	Members of Good Samaritan Education and all persons engaged in any activity of or under the authority of the Governing Council in the exercise of their appointed duties, including all staff of GSE Services
Category 2	Most GSE staff are engaged in activities that involve or may involve contact with children that would be described as incidental to their activity. eg Visiting a school for purposes of a meeting with the Board, Principal or senior school leaders; attendance at formal functions of the school i.e. children may be present or the staff may be at a function where parents bring their children
Programs and Activities	Includes but is not limited to school retreats or immersion programs
We, us, our	Refers to Good Samaritan Education (GSE)

4 Guiding Principles

GSE is responsible for the governance supervision of Good Samaritan Education Schools and works collaboratively with each school to ensure that GSE schools are safe and inclusive of children and vulnerable adults. The provision of inclusive education which

celebrates diversity and difference, and which protects the right of each student to a safe and supportive learning environment is a high priority in each GSE school.

4.1 Child Safety is embedded in GSE leadership, governance, and culture

4.2 Equity is promoted, and diversity respected

4.3 People working with children are suitable and supported

4.4 Processes to respond to complaints of abuse are respectful of the age and vulnerability of the victim and prioritise the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults

4.5 Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

4.5 Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

4.6 Implementation of safeguarding standards is continuously reviewed and improved

4.7 Policies and procedures document how GSE maintains safeguarding

5 Policy Commitments

GSE is a category two organisation under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Members of the GSE formation and mission team will from time to time be involved in direct contact with children and vulnerable adults through the conduct of student immersions, retreats, and formation days. Such activities are conducted at the request of GSE schools and in accordance with the school safeguarding practices. GSE personnel always comply with the GSE Code of Conduct.

Each Good Samaritan Education school has in place policies, protocols and procedures for child safety and protection, including risk management strategies and the reporting and management of complaints and allegations of harm to a student. Each school exercises its reporting responsibilities in accordance with the legislation of the state in which it operates.

Breaches by GSE staff, volunteers or contractors that occur at a school will be managed in accordance with school requirements. GSE will be informed to enable it to perform a risk assessment regarding the person and their role in GSE and to implement appropriate organisation responses.

5.1 Safeguarding is Embedded in Leadership, Governance and Culture

- GSE commits to safeguarding. We ensure all staff understand and adhere to the Code of Conduct: Safeguarding
- We commit to taking all necessary steps to ensure no harm to children and vulnerable adults, including conducting risk assessments of all GSE led programs and activities
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility at all levels of GSE and staff are empowered to provide input on safeguarding practices
- Governance arrangements are set by the Governing Council and applied across the GSE governance structures
- Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and vulnerable adults

- Staff and volunteers of GSE comply with the Code of Conduct: Safeguarding and other relevant policies that sets clear behavior standards towards children and vulnerable adults
- Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping

5.2 People Working with Children are Suitable and Supported to Reflect Safeguarding Values in Practice

- We are committed to child safe recruitment and employment practices, particularly for staff who will be in direct or indirect contact with children or vulnerable adults.
- Recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasise safeguarding
- Positions are assessed for the expected level of contact with children and appropriate safeguarding practices are implemented
- Relevant staff and volunteers have working with children checks
 - All Staff and volunteers receive and appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations
 - Supervision and people management has a child safety focus

5.3 Processes Are Put in Place to Respond to Safeguarding Complaints

- GSE has a policy which ensures that all mandatory reporting obligations are met including the management of disclosures, allegations or concerns of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, both historic and current
- GSE upholds a Code of Conduct which staff, volunteers and contractors agree to observe when working, volunteering, or providing services to GSE
- Processes are in place to identify and respond to breaches of Code of Conduct
- Complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met
- The GSE Complaints Handling Policy: Safeguarding, is publicly available on the GSE website

5.4 Staff Are Equipped with The Knowledge, Skills and Awareness to Keep Children Safe Through Continual Education and Training

- We are committed to building knowledge, understanding and awareness of safeguarding. Training will include safeguarding policy obligations including reporting requirements and processes
- Staff are required to participate in safeguarding training as part of their induction, as well as ongoing refresher training
- Relevant staff and volunteers are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures

5.5 Online and Physical Environments Minimise the Opportunity for Abuse to Occur

- The online environment is used in accordance with the GSE's code of conduct, the Staff Handbook and relevant policies
- Any third parties engaged by GSE to assist in activities where children or vulnerable adults are present, will be appropriately checked or supervised

5.6 Implementation of Child Standards is Continuously Reviewed and Improved

- GSE regularly reviews and improves safeguarding practices, incidents and complaints to implement continuous improvement
- Complaints and concerns are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement

5.7 Policies and Procedures Documents How GSE Implements Safeguarding

- Policies and procedures address all safeguarding elements
- Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand
- Stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures
- Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures
- Staff and volunteers understand and implement the policies and procedures

5.8 Breaches of Policy

Any person who holds a reasonable belief that this policy may have been breached is expected to raise this matter, in the first instance, with the Executive Director of GSE. If the matter relates to the Executive Director, it is to be referred directly to the Governing Council through the Chair of the Governing Council.

Following appropriate investigation, non-compliance with this policy may give rise to a range of outcomes including counselling, disciplinary action, and /or dismissal where appropriate. In some cases, non-compliance may also constitute civil or criminal offences and may result in civil action or criminal prosecution.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Governing Council is responsible for:

- The proper implementation of this policy and for ensuring that GSE personnel are fully aware of their legal and moral responsibilities and of the GSE organizational standards, policies and procedures regarding safeguarding
- The Governance Committee of the Governing Council is responsible for ensuring that all policies and practices in relation to safeguarding are regularly reviewed
- Ensuring that the Code of Conduct is followed by all staff
- Regular identification, monitoring, reporting and review of risks

6.2 Executive Director is responsible for:

- Advertisements, position descriptions, selection criteria, referee checks and interview questions articulate that children and vulnerable adult are respected and valued
- All recruitment of staff, volunteers and contractors includes screening and verification of working with children checks
- All induction processes for GSE staff include safeguarding training and education, and that safeguarding induction occurs as soon as possible after commencement
- The Code of Conduct is written in accessible language considering the needs of all children and vulnerable adults, particularly those from diverse backgrounds or those with a disability
- There is a clearly documented safeguarding risk management plan which considers actual and potential risks relating to children and vulnerable adults
- There are clear protocols for record keeping that are communicated and followed
- Concerns, incidents, allegations and investigations are managed and documented in accordance with the Safeguarding First Response and Reporting Obligations Policy
- Working with children check status is monitored and records maintained
- Ensuring that allegations are appropriately referred and investigated

6.3 The Director of Formation and Mission Integration is responsible for:

- Risk management plans are in place to assess, evaluate and oversee the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults participating in immersions, pilgrimages, spirituality days etc that are conducted by GSE

6.4 All Staff, Volunteers and Contractors is responsible for:

- Working in accordance with the GSE safeguarding policies and procedures
- Reporting suspected or known concerns about a child's safety

7 Related Documents

7.1 Safeguarding Reporting Obligations Policy

7.2 Complaints handling: Safeguarding Policy

7.3 Code of Conduct

7.4 Staff Handbook

7.5 Relevant Legislation:

- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- Child Protection (working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- *Ombudsman Act 1974* (NSW)
- Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
- *Child Employment Act 2006* (Qld)
- Child Protection and Education Legislation (Reporting of Abuse) Amendment Bill (Qld) 2017
- *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2017* (Qld)
- *Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014* (Qld)
- *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* (Qld)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012* (Vic)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic.)

8 Appendix List

Nil

Information About this Policy

Version	Approval Date	Summary of Changes
1.	4/8/2021	