



STUDENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish and promote a safe, inclusive and culturally responsive environment for all students, ensuring their safety and wellbeing are prioritised in every aspect of the College's operations. This policy provides written processes about how Matthew Flinders Anglican College ('the College') will implement and comply with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle as required under the *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 (Qld)*.

SCOPE

The College Community – students and staff including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements, members of the broader College community, including parents/guardians, and visitors.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON

Board of Directors

RELATED LEGISLATION/POLICIES

- *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*
- *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)*
- *QFCC Guidelines for implementing the Child Safe Standards in Queensland*
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Statement of Commitment to Student Safety and Wellbeing
- For further related policies refer to the end of section 10.

DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES

Child safe entity, as per s10 of the *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD*, is an entity—

- (a) that provides—
 - (i) services specifically for children; or
 - (ii) facilities specifically for use by children who are under the supervision of the entity; and
- (b) that is either—
 - (i) mentioned in schedule 1; or
 - (ii) prescribed by regulation.

(2) However, an individual is not a child safe entity unless the individual carries on a business as an entity mentioned in subsection (1), including, for example, as a sole trader or partner in a partnership under the *Partnership Act 1891*, section 5¹.

Child safe standards, as per s9 of the *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD*, are the following standards applying to an entity—

- (a) child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance and culture;
- (b) children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;
- (c) families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing;
- (d) equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice;
- (e) people working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice;

¹ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD* s10

- (f) processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused;
- (g) staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training;
- (h) physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed;
- (i) implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved;
- (j) policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children².

Student, is any child or young person of any age, enrolled or seeking enrolment at Matthew Flinders Anglican College.

Universal Principle, in implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards, a child safe entity must provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons (the Universal Principle)³.

QFFC, Queensland Family and Child Commission.

OBJECTIVES

Matthew Flinders Anglican College will implement and comply with the Child Safe Standards and understand they may be required to give an authorised officer of the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) information about the College's compliance. In implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards, the College will provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of students who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons (the Universal Principle). The College will have regard to Guidelines made by the QFCC in implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle⁴.

As per the Guidelines, this policy outlines the ways in which the College actions and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of students. Rules and expectations regarding student safe practices are outlined for staff, volunteers and community members with the aim of establishing a student safe environment⁵.

This policy will:

- Set out the College's expectations, practices, and approaches in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards, including the Universal Principle
- Be displayed for public access on the College's website and at the College's Central Administration
- Cover acceptable and unacceptable student to student, and student to adult interactions
- Describe the College's commitment to equity, inclusion and cultural safety and how the organisation recognises, responds and respects these factors.

PRINCIPLES

The implementation of, and compliance with, the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle by the College are to be based on the following fundamental principles:

- (a) Child safe entity's, including the College, are responsible for continuously improving the ways in which, in their operations—
 - (i) the safety of children is promoted; and
 - (ii) child abuse is prevented; and
 - (iii) allegations of child abuse are properly responded to⁶;
- (b) The Child Safe Standards are not a simple checklist. They encourage child safe entities to think about how their day-to-day work protects children's rights and safety⁷.

² *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s9*

³ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s11(2)*

⁴ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s11*

⁵ *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland*, QFCC, p94

⁶ *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 QLD s14*

⁷ *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland*, QFCC, p4

RESPONSIBILITIES

Matthew Flinders Anglican College is responsible for developing and implementing this Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy and related policies and procedures to ensure it fulfils its Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle obligations.

All governing body members, staff and volunteers at the College are responsible for acting in compliance with this policy and related policies and procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

1. Leadership and Culture

Student safety and wellbeing is embedded in Matthew Flinders Anglican College's leadership, governance and culture⁸.

Matthew Flinders Anglican College is committed to taking all reasonable steps to promote the safety and wellbeing of students enrolled at the College and their protection from foreseeable harm. We prioritise student safety and wellbeing in all aspects of our work and do not tolerate any form of child abuse or harm. We act in accordance with the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (QLD) and implement the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle to create a safe, inclusive, and accountable environment. We listen to students, value their views, and support them to participate in decisions that affect them.

Matthew Flinders Anglican College is committed to the safety and inclusion of all students, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds, students with disability, LGBTQIA+ students, and students who may be experiencing vulnerability. We also make a clear commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to providing an environment where their identities, cultures, and connections to Country are respected and upheld.

Risk Management

The College implements robust risk management processes to prevent, identify, and mitigate risks to students, and is committed to the monitoring of risk to the safety of students on an ongoing basis. The College will utilise various risk management tools including the College's Risk Management Framework, Risk Management Policy, Risk Management Processes, Risk Appetite Statement, Risk Registers, Work Health & Safety Policy and Critical Incident Policy and associated plans to assist it in this process and will keep appropriate records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to risks to students.

Code of Conduct

At Matthew Flinders Anglican College, we expect our staff and volunteers to conduct themselves as follows:

- College staff and volunteers are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety and wellbeing of our students. Staff must actively seek to prevent harm to students, and to support those who have been harmed.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Staff and volunteers should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student.
- When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience, staff and volunteers must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable. Staff must always advise the student of what they intend on doing and seek their consent.
- Staff must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student.
- Staff and volunteers must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student.
- Staff and volunteers must treat all students, colleagues and community members with respect, fairness and dignity, regardless of culture, race, ethnicity, language, religion, ability, gender, sexual orientation, or background.

⁸ *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD*, s9(a)

- Staff and volunteers must not engage in any form of racism, discrimination, harassment, or exclusionary behaviour. This includes verbal, written, online or behavioural actions that demean, stereotype or disadvantage an individual or group.
- Staff and volunteers must actively challenge racist or discriminatory behaviour when it occurs and follow College procedures for reporting such incidents.
- Staff and volunteers must promote a culturally safe, inclusive and respectful environment by valuing diversity, acknowledging cultural differences, and modelling culturally responsive behaviour at all times.

Information Sharing & Recordkeeping

Staff and volunteers understand their obligations in information-sharing and maintaining accurate, secure records about student harm and abuse concerns, disclosures, and responses.

2. Student Voice

Students are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously⁹.

The College is committed to championing the voices of children and young people, ensuring they have genuine agency in matters that affect them. We listen to students in age-appropriate and culturally appropriate ways and create safe, structured opportunities for them to express their views.

The College uses the curriculum and educational programs to actively promote positive peer relationships and reduce student isolation by embedding learning experiences that strengthen social skills, empathy and respectful behaviours. Through age-appropriate lessons and whole-College wellbeing programs, students are also provided with access to sexual abuse prevention education that builds their understanding of personal safety, protective behaviours and where to seek help. Together, these curriculum-based approaches support safer, more connected and more informed students.

The College ensures that all staff and volunteers are consistently attuned to indicators of harm and abuse and are equipped to recognise when a student may need support. Age-appropriate and trauma-informed processes are in place to help students communicate their concerns safely and confidently, and staff actively respond to these disclosures with care and professionalism in accordance with the College's Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy.

3. Family and Community

Families and the community are informed and involved in promoting student safety and wellbeing¹⁰.

The College recognises the vital role families and communities play in the safety, wellbeing, and education of students. We value strong, respectful, and collaborative partnerships with families and the broader College community.

We intentionally build inclusive relationships, particularly with First Nations families, local community members, and Elders. We honour Country and embed an Acknowledgement of Country in our practices to ensure students understand the importance of knowing and respecting the land on which we learn.

The College provides opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to the College community through the Parents and Friends Association, College Committees, and biennial surveys.

The College is dedicated to the work of reconciliation, and actions this commitment through its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

4. Equity and Diversity

Equity is upheld, and the diverse needs of students are respected in policy and in practice¹¹.

The College is committed to creating an inclusive, equitable environment where all students feel safe,

⁹ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(b)

¹⁰ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(c)

¹¹ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(d)

respected, and supported. We actively work to remove barriers to participation and ensure our practices reflect cultural safety for all students.

This commitment is actioned through the following:

- Respect and Inclusion Policy
- Students Disability Discrimination Policy
- Our Standards of Practice
- Code of Conduct - College Community
- Anti-Bullying Guidelines (Students)
- Gender Diversity Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy (Students)

5. People

People working with students are suitable and supported to reflect student safety and wellbeing values in practice¹².

The College is committed to recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff in such a way that limits risks to students. In particular, the College will:

- Ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to student from staff via:
 - Accurate position descriptions, including whether the successful applicant must be a teacher registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (who has been subject to relevant police and other safety checks), whether a Blue Card is necessary for the successful applicant, the responsibilities and supervision associated with the position, the nature and environment of the service provided to students, and the experience and qualifications required by the successful applicant.
 - Advertising the position with a clear statement about the College's commitment to safe and supportive work practices and identifying that candidates will be subject to a teacher registration check or Blue Card screening, a police check, referee checks, identification verification and the requirement to disclose any information relevant to the candidates' eligibility to engage in activities including students.
 - A selection process that includes assessing the application via an interview process, and referee and other checks (as identified above) based on the accurate position description.
 - A probationary period of employment, which allows the College to further assess the suitability of the new staff and to act as a check on the selection process.
- Ensure that its training and management procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to students from staff via:
 - Management processes that are consistent, fair and supportive.
 - Performance management processes to help staff to improve their performance in a positive manner.
 - Supportive processes for staff when they are experiencing challenges, such as mentoring, mediation, conflict resolution, coaching, additional training, and external support and counselling services.
 - An induction program which thoroughly addresses the College's policies and procedures, particularly its expectations regarding student risk management, and to assist staff to understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for students.
 - Training new and existing staff on an ongoing basis to enhance skills and knowledge and to reduce exposure to risks, as follows:
 - the College's policies and procedures
 - identifying, assessing and minimising risks to students
 - handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm to a student.
- Keeping a record of the training provided to staff.
- Exit interviews to assist the College to identify broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and wellbeing of students at the College.

¹² Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(e)

6. Complaints

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused¹³.

The College is committed to maintaining a student-focused approach to receiving and responding to complaints. Our Complaints Handling Policy outlines how concerns can be raised, the roles and responsibilities of staff, and the processes used to respond to different types of matters. We ensure that all complaints are taken seriously, addressed promptly and thoroughly, and managed in line with our reporting, privacy and employment law obligations.

Any concerns, disclosures or allegations relating to harm or abuse of a student are managed under the College's Reporting Concerns of Harm or Abuse Policy, which sets out our mandatory obligations to act protectively and report to the appropriate authorities.

7. Skills and Knowledge

Staff and volunteers of the College are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep students safe through ongoing education and training¹⁴.

The College will train its staff in processes relating to the health, safety and conduct of staff and students on their induction and will refresh training annually¹⁵.

The College will:

- Deliver compulsory annual Child Protection and Safeguarding Training to all staff, volunteers and contractors with the Human Resources Office maintaining detailed and auditable records.
- Offer specialist professional learning opportunities, including Cybersafety and digital wellbeing; Recognising grooming behaviours and professional boundary management; Trauma-informed practice and understanding the impact of harm; Inclusive practice, cultural safety and supporting diverse learners. Role-specific modules are provided for teachers, co-curricular staff, support staff, grounds and maintenance personnel, tutors, coaches, contractors and volunteers, ensuring training is tailored to context and responsibilities.
- Provide a structured induction framework to ensure all new staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities before commencing work with students.
- Regularly review and enhance its training program with processes to ensure training remains contemporary, effective and aligned with the College's commitment to child safety and wellbeing. This includes regular updates based on audit findings, incident reviews and changes to regulation or best practice; staff evaluation surveys and feedback loops to guide improvement; periodic review of resources, scenarios and learning materials to maintain relevance; maintenance of an online portal containing policies, resources, FAQs and training materials accessible at any time.

8. Physical and Online Environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for students to be harmed¹⁶.

The College proactively identifies and mitigates risks within both the physical and online environments, ensuring that safety measures do not compromise students' privacy or healthy development. Staff and students use online platforms in line with the College's code of conduct and related policies, supporting a safe, respectful and well-managed digital learning environment.

For further details about how the College manages risk see 1. Leadership and Governance above.

¹³ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(f)

¹⁴ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(g)

¹⁵ Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld) s.16(4)(c)

¹⁶ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(h)

9. Continuous Improvement

Implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved¹⁷.

The College is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement in student safety, wellbeing and cultural respect. We recognise that embedding the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle is a continuing journey that requires ongoing commitment, regular review and continual strengthening of our practices.

The College will:

- Review policies, procedures and practices regularly to ensure they remain effective, responsive and appropriate for the College community. This includes undertaking periodic audits, self-assessments and reflective practice to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- Analyse available data including complaints and concerns to identify causes and systemic issues and use these insights to inform continuous improvement of policies, procedures and practices.
- Conduct an annual self-assessment against the Child Safe Standards using the QFCC self-assessment tool or equivalent (ISQ Checklist for implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards, ISQ Readiness Survey or other).
- Develop and implement an improvement plan that has regard for the QFCC Guidelines.
- Measure and monitor outcomes by tracking meaningful indicators such as feedback from staff, students and families, incident reports, harm and abuse reports, training participation to understand current performance and areas requiring enhancement.
- Record, monitor and report to College governing body, the Senior Executive Team and others as appropriate regarding any breaches of this policy or related policies.
- Engage the College community in continuous improvement by seeking and listening to feedback, encouraging open dialogue, and partnering with students, families, staff, volunteers and community stakeholders to inform updates to policies and practices.
- Provide ongoing learning, training and development for staff and volunteers, including induction and refreshers, to ensure everyone understands their responsibilities for student safety and cultural safety and is equipped to respond effectively as new risks or needs arise.

10. Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures document how the College is safe for children¹⁸.

The College has embedded its Statement of Commitment to Student Safety and Wellbeing in all relevant policies and procedures. The College has made all relevant policies and procedures publicly available on its website www.mfac.edu.au, College intranet/parent portal (MyFlinders) and copies are available on request from Central Administration. Staff and volunteers are trained in implementing relevant policies and procedures regularly.

Consider including the following points, ensuring you can evidence this practice.

The College ensures that its policies and procedures are accessible, developmentally appropriate and easily understood by all students. The College provides student-friendly versions of key policies using clear language, visual supports and formats that reflect the diverse communication needs of our students. These include simplified curriculum resources.

The College regularly reviews these materials with student input to ensure they remain relevant, inclusive and effective in supporting students to understand their rights, know how to seek help, and participate confidently in matters affecting their safety and wellbeing.

The College is committed to ensuring its policies and procedures uphold cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities. Where possible, the College will actively engage local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, community representatives and cultural advisors in the review, development and implementation of relevant policies and procedures.

¹⁷ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(i)

¹⁸ Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 QLD, s9(j)

Related Matthew Flinders Anglican College policies and resources:

- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (Staff)
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (Students)
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Blue Card Register
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Complaints Management Policy*
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Enrolment Policy*
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Code of Conduct - College Community*
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Performance Management System
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Professional Development Procedure
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Recruitment of Staff Policy
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Reporting Concerns of Harm and Abuse Policy*
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Restricted Person Declaration Form
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Risk Management Framework
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Our Standards of Practice
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Statement of Commitment to Student Safety and Wellbeing*
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Behaviour Management Policy (Students)
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College Working with Children Check Policy*

*publicly available on the College website.

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This policy may be updated or revised from time-to-time. The College will not notify you each time the policy is changed. If you are unsure whether you are reading the most current version, you should contact the Principal's Office.