



# Protective Behaviours Policy

Policy Name: Protective Behaviours Policy

Id & version: BM: 22

Purpose: Outlines the Colleges role in protecting children.

Implementers: Principal

Scope: All Staff and Students

Owner: Peter Stone

Current Review: 24/02/2021

Authorised by: Peter Stone

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Next Review: February 2023

Concurrent Policies: Grooming Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Abuse, Duty of Care, Bullying Policy, Child Safe Framework

## **Preamble**

Hope Christian College considers its role in the protection of children of utmost importance and therefore takes a proactive approach in supporting families and children through promoting protective behaviours to ensure children's ongoing safety, wellbeing and protection through a whole school approach to Protective Behaviours.

## **Aims of the Program**

Protective behaviours education focuses on developing the skills of empowerment, communication, self-esteem, resilience, social skills and other life skills to prevent abuse, reduce violence and promote life-enriching rather than life-depleting experiences. It encourages students to:

- assert their right to feel safe
- listen to what their body tells them
- follow up by taking action to either solve problems on their own or to seek assistance from other people.

## **Rationale**

All adults have a responsibility to care for children and to protect them from any kind of abuse or neglect. The School is responsible to provide a safe environment for children and to provide an education which fosters their health, developmental needs, spiritual growth, self-respect and dignity. We are entrusted by parents with the care of their children.

This policy outlines the requirements in relation to child protection at Hope Christian College. It relates to risk of significant harm against students by staff, parents, other students, or by other persons outside the School.

Hope Christian College is committed to providing a caring, safe and accepting environment for students. This policy is an integral component of this process and reflects our commitment to complying with its obligations under W.A. Child Protection legislation and to educating its staff as to those obligations.

## **Relevant laws and other provisions**

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Mandatory reporting....Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 & Regulations 2005
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012
- NQS 2 – National Quality Standard focussing on Safeguarding and Promoting Children’s Health and Safety
- Non-attendance issues....School Education Act 1999
- Duty of care
- Code of ethics
- New staff induction policy
- Bullying Policy

## **Recruitment and Employment of Educators and Staff**

Hope Christian College will ensure all staff working with children provide a criminal record check or current assessment notice under the Working With Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004.

## **Staff Responsibilities and Training**

Hope Christian College requires all staff to participate in training on child protection organised by Protective Behaviours WA, or other relevant authorities as well as training in mandatory reporting. This training should cover:

- Protective Behaviours Program;
- Appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in relationships with children;
- The nature of child abuse and why some children are victimised;
- Signs and symptoms of child maltreatment;
- How to respond if a child discloses sexual abuse;
- How to observe and record children’s behaviour;
- Process of reporting child maltreatment to department for Child Protection;
- Child Protection authority’s role in child protection issues.
- Responsibilities of teaching staff as a Mandatory Reporter.

## **Program Implementation**

Protective Behaviours is an important part of Hope Christian College's Health Education. This program is based upon the "Personal, Social and Community Health" strand of Western Australia's Health and Physical Education curriculum. Protective behaviours education focuses on teaching students how to identify and avoid a range of potentially unsafe situations, including sexual abuse. Therefore, we will implement our Protective Behaviours Program in the following classes:

PP: Taught by the classroom teacher as a part of their Health Education program

Yr 1-10: Taught by the Physical Education teacher in Physical Education classes through-out the year.

## **Teaching Protective Behaviours**

Hope Christian College's Protective Behaviours Program is based on the curriculum support material "Holding Hands" from Protective Behaviours Western Australia. The following are key attributes in our Protective Behaviours Program:

### **Safe learning environment**

Protective Behaviours education is likely to generate strong feelings so it is important that the classroom environment reflects trust and confidence and that the teacher has the strategies and skills to reinforce student strengths, develop trust and build communication.

Establishing group guidelines or ground rules is critical to help provide a safe environment for students to express opinions. These include:

- only one person to speak at a time
- use appropriate language
- use third-person if you want to share a story (e.g. A person I know...)
- mutual respect
- everyone has a right to their own opinions
- it's okay to pass.

## Appropriate language

Age-appropriate education starts with teaching children the correct names for, and functions of, their body parts and how to care for, respect and protect their bodies. Students need to know and be able to name external parts of the body including the names for external sexual organs (penis, vagina, breasts and testicles).

In teaching about body parts (including the names for genitalia) use the correct terminology from the outset. This helps set the tone for discussion to follow about reproductive body parts and functions and allows students to develop comfort to use these words and to be able to confidently talk about their body. It is also helpful to describe the reproductive body parts as 'private' parts rather than 'rude' parts. Using anatomical language, such as penis and vagina, also improves a child's confidence to be able to report inappropriate touching, and prevents confusion that can arise from the use of nicknames.

## Protective Behaviours Themes

1. We all have the right to feel safe at all times.
2. We can talk with someone about anything no matter what it is.

## Key concepts

1. Early warning signs

Early warning signs incorporate physical responses of the body (e.g. goosebumps), emotional responses (e.g. feeling scared) and external indicators (e.g. time, location) at the outset of inappropriate or harmful events, including potentially abusive situations. When discussing early warning signs with students, it's important to know that not all children experience them and that some may have become desensitised through previous or current traumatic experiences, or have sensory disorders.

2. Safety messages
  - Encourage children to know they can decide who touches them.
  - Teach children they have a right to say "no" to unwanted touch.
  - Teach about privacy and help them identify the private parts of the body.
  - Teach about privacy and help identify the difference between private and public places.
  - Talk about the difference between 'safe' and 'unsafe' secrets.
  - Encourage them to tell someone if they are confused or upset or if they have concerns or questions.
  - Reinforce using the buddy system on outings.
  - Try to always know where their guardian is on all occasions

### 3. Language of safety

The language of safety includes verbal and non-verbal messages that create a safe environment. Teachers should model positive language that is free from bias, is respectful and promotes confidence.

Teach, practise and encourage students to use the statements below:

- "STOP - I don't like that"
- "I don't feel safe when you do that"
- "No, I don't want to"
- "When you do that I don't feel safe"

Use the following steps to ensure students feel comfortable using the language of safety:

1. Practise saying in your head.
2. Practise saying out aloud.
3. Practise saying to a friend.

### **Dealing with disclosures**

In the course of delivering sexual and relationships education, a teacher may become concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a particular student. It is a legal requirement that a mandatory report is submitted when a teacher forms a reasonable belief that a child has been sexually/physically or emotionally abused. This links with Hope Christian College's "Mandatory Reporting Policy"

### **Use of protective interruption**

Programs focusing on issues of relationships and sexuality inherently have the possibility of students disclosing personal issues. A useful strategy to prevent students saying something inappropriate is 'protective interruption'. This means interrupting students before they disclose and at the same time advising they can talk privately with the teacher after class.

## **Whole School Approach**

- **Parent Letter**: Though it's not necessary to obtain parental consent to conduct protective behaviours education, it is recommended that parents are informed and involved in the education and support process. Hope Christian College will send a letter home to parents and carers informing them with an overview of the learning sequence and possible sensitive material.
- **Staff Implementation**: Even though most of our staff do not teach protective behaviours, it is important everyone speaks the same language and has a vigilant attitude in protecting our students at all times. Therefore, it is important that all staff know the language a student would use when divulging concerning information, the language a staff member must use when speaking to the child about sensitive information and the warning signs a student might display.
- **Staff PD**: To ensure that staff are able to implement the above point, staff are required to have the following:
  - Mandatory Reporting Training.
  - Yearly Protective Behaviours Training by either Protective Behaviours WA or by the Head of Academia partnering with the Educator who teaches the Protective Behaviours program. This ensures that all staff follow the same approach in dealing with Protective Behaviours issues.

## **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed yearly as part of the school's review cycle.