Macquarie Grammar School
Child Protection Policy

1. Policy Title

Child Protection Policy

2. Purpose

To create and maintain a child-safe environment at Macquarie Grammar School by outlining our commitment, legal obligations, and reporting processes for the prevention and detection of child abuse and neglect, and to promote the wellbeing and safety of all students, especially overseas and younger students.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff (including full-time, part-time, casual, contractors, and volunteers), parents, and external providers engaged with Macquarie Grammar School, whether on or off campus and in all school-related contexts.

4. Policy Statement

Macquarie Grammar School is committed to:

- The safety, protection, and wellbeing of children and young people at all times.
- The prevention of child abuse.
- Fulfilling relevant legal, regulatory, and duty-of-care obligations under NSW and Commonwealth law, including the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW), Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW), and section 162 of the Education Act 1990 (NSW).
- Ensuring staff, volunteers, and visitors understand and accept their child protection responsibilities.
- Fostering a culture in which concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children are raised, responded to and recorded appropriately.

5. Definitions

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18 years.
- **Child Abuse:** Includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming conduct, neglect, and exposure to family violence.

- **Mandatory Reporter:** Staff with legal reporting duties under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW), including teachers, principals, counsellors, medical staff, and others.
- **Reasonable Grounds:** Fair and practical reason to suspect child abuse, based on signs or disclosures.

6. Standards of Behaviour

- Staff must maintain professional boundaries with students at all times and avoid any inappropriate relationships or conduct.
- All communication with students, including digital and social media communications, must be appropriate and meet school/community standards.
- Staff must not cause harm to students by any behaviour or inaction.

7. Reporting Child Abuse or Risk of Harm

- **All staff must immediately report suspected, disclosed, or observed child abuse or risk of harm** to the Principal, who is the Nominated Child Protection Officer.
- If the Principal is unavailable, or if the concern relates to the Principal, staff must report directly to the Director of Operations and Student Wellness or Chair of the School Board.
- **Mandatory reporters must make a report to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Child Protection Helpline (132 111)** if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child is at risk of significant harm.
- Where there are reasonable grounds to believe a criminal offence (including sexual or serious physical abuse) has been committed, the Principal must notify the Police as soon as practicable.
- Staff must not investigate allegations themselves, except to clarify basic facts.

8. Procedures for Responding to Allegations and Disclosures

- Listen and support the student without judgment or promise of secrecy.
- Record factual information: what was said, by whom, when, and your actions. Use the school's Child Protection Report Form.
- Report and hand any documentation immediately to the Principal (or delegate).
- The Principal assesses the concerns against thresholds for reporting to DCJ, Police, Office of the Children's Guardian, and/or NESA.
- The student's welfare and immediate safety should be prioritised, including arranging for support, supervision, or medical assistance as required.

- Maintain confidentiality and share information strictly on a 'need-to-know' basis in accordance with privacy laws, but remember child safety overrides privacy where a serious risk exists.
- The Principal will notify NESA if any reportable conduct involving an employee is made, and the Office of the Children's Guardian as required by law.

9. Allegations Against Staff, Volunteers, or External Providers

- All allegations of reportable conduct or breaches of child protection by staff, volunteers or external providers are investigated per legal and regulatory requirements (Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) 'Reportable Conduct Scheme').
- The staff member may be suspended or allocated alternative duties pending investigation outcomes.
- Procedural fairness and appropriate support are provided to all parties.

10. Record Keeping

- All records of allegations, actions taken, reports made, and outcomes must be confidentially maintained by the Principal or delegate for at least 7 years.
- Reports are not kept in the general student file but in a separate secure Child Protection Register.

11. Training and Awareness

- All school staff (including contractors and volunteers) are required to complete recognised initial child protection training before commencing duties with children, and annual refresher training.
- Child protection procedures are included in student and staff induction, parent information, and are available on request.

12. Implementation and Communication

- Policy is published on the school website and intranet, detailed in staff/student/parent handbooks/information, and regularly cited in school communications.
- Clear signage and flowcharts on child protection processes are posted in staff areas.

13. Policy Review

- This policy is reviewed at least every two years or immediately after significant incidents, regulatory or legislative changes.
- Records of review and amendments are kept on file.

14. Related Documents

- Child Protection Reporting Protocols and Forms

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Grievance Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy and Procedures
- Staff/Volunteer/Visitor Working With Children Check Policy
- Digital and Social Media Communication Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy

15. Key Contacts

- Principal/Child Protection Officer: Ms Ellena Papas – 02 8228 3022 or 0438 709 871
- Director of Operations and Student Wellness: Mrs Sheng Sun – 0406 117 505
- NSW DCJ Child Protection Helpline: 132 111
- NSW Police (Emergency): 000
- Office of the Children's Guardian (Reportable Conduct): 02 8219 3600

Appendix

1. Child Protection Reporting Flowchart

For all staff and volunteers

1. You observe, receive a disclosure, or suspect on reasonable grounds (based on signs, behaviours, or statements) that a child is at risk of harm (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, psychological, grooming, or exposure to violence).

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2. Support the student:

- Listen without judgment or promises of secrecy
- Respond calmly, with care and reassurance
- Do NOT investigate—record only what was said, seen, or heard

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  3. Record facts:
- Write down exact words, behaviour, time, place, names of involved parties, and what you observed
- Use the School's Child Protection Incident Report Form

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  4. Act immediately:
- **Inform the Principal (Child Protection Officer) without delay.**

- If the Principal is unavailable or is the subject of the concern, report to the Deputy Principal or Board Chair.

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5. Next steps — leadership actions:

Principal/Delegate will:

- Assess the information.
- If there is "risk of significant harm":
  - Mandatory report to **NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Child Protection Helpline 132 111**
- If criminal behaviour suspected (sexual abuse, serious assault, grooming):
  - Notify **NSW Police (000 for emergency or local command in non-urgent situations)**
- If concerning staff/volunteer ("reportable conduct"):
  - Notify NSW Office of the Children's Guardian within legislated timeline
- If not "significant harm" but need for early help/support:
  - Refer to school psychologist, wellbeing team, or external agency (with parent consent)
- **Record actions, file securely, and maintain updates**

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6. Ongoing support:

- Ensure safety and welfare of the student
- Arrange medical, psychological or welfare support
- Continue to document until the situation is resolved
- Maintain confidentiality (only those who need to know are informed)

In all cases of doubt, report to the Principal.
Child safety and wellbeing take precedence over privacy.
Failure to report may constitute a breach of policy, contractual obligations, or law.

2. Staff Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement Form

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND AGREEMENT

I, _____ (full name),
acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Macquarie Grammar School **Child Protection Policy**.

I agree to:

- Uphold my responsibilities as outlined in the Policy and relevant NSW and Commonwealth legislation.
- Immediately report any reasonable suspicion, disclosure, or evidence of child abuse, neglect, or risk of harm to the Principal, or, if the Principal is unavailable or implicated, to the Deputy Principal or Board Chair.
- Maintain strict confidentiality except for required reporting or communication with relevant authorities.
- Uphold the highest professional standards, boundaries, and duty of care with all students.
- Participate in required child protection induction and annual refresher training.

I understand that a breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including potential termination, and that Macquarie Grammar School will cooperate with all statutory authorities.

Signature: _____
Date: _____
Role: _____
Supervisor/Principal: _____

To be retained on the employee's personnel file.