



# Fairbridge College

## Child Safe Framework

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PP2000_16_P016_	1.0	New document	August 2017	Council Board
	2.0	Complete revision in line with the National Principles.	May 2020	Council

Document Owner	College Principal
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Frequency of Review	12 Months (May 2021)
Supporting Documents (internal)	Child Protection Policy Duty of Care Policy Staff Code of Conduct Disputes and Complaints Policy
Supporting Documents (external)	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019 Child Safe Organisations WA Guidelines <i>Guide to the Registration Standards and other Requirements for Non-Government Schools 2020</i>
Forms	
Legislative Requirements	Children and Community Services Act 2004 Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008 Criminal Code Act 1913 Criminal Code Amendment Section 204B (Cyber Predators) Bill 2005. School Education Act (1999) School Education Regulations (2000)
Work Instructions	
Other References that may be applicable to this Policy	

## Table of Contents

1	Purpose .....	3
2	Principles.....	3
3	Leadership, Governance and Culture of the School. ....	4
4	Child Empowerment and Participation .....	4
5	Involving Family and Community .....	4
6	Child Safe and Focused Policies and Procedures.....	5
7	Managing Staff and Volunteers .....	5
8	Safe Environments .....	6
9	Child Friendly Complaints Process and Reporting .....	6
10	Staff Training and Development .....	7
11	Review and Continuous Improvement .....	7

## 1 Purpose

This document outlines Fairbridge College's commitment to child safety and well-being. Its purpose is to support a consistent approach to child safety across the College

## 2 Principles

The *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* defines a 'child safe organisation' as one that deliberately and systematically:

- creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre of thought, values and actions;
- places emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of children;
- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people;
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm and,
- responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

Fairbridge College acknowledges the importance of child safe and well-being and embeds the *Child Safe Organisations WA Guidelines* as well as the following National Principles across all of its policies and procedures:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

### **3 Leadership, Governance and Culture of the School.**

The governing body of Fairbridge Western Australia, Inc., the Fairbridge College Council and the College leadership team all prioritise a child safe culture, with responsibility for the guidance, education and support for staff in understanding their individual responsibilities and obligations in maintaining the child safe culture of the School.

All school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in accordance with their legal obligations and in accordance with the *Child Safe Organisations WA Guidelines* and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*.

### **4 Child Empowerment and Participation**

At Fairbridge College, students are encouraged to have a voice and express their views. They are made aware of the many opportunities and avenues available for them to do this, including via the child-friendly complaints process.

The student code of conduct is named “Students Rights and Responsibilities” to reflect the College’s commitment to en

Fairbridge College is committed to providing a developmentally appropriate protective behaviours curriculum, developed by experts in child protection and covering what the boundaries are between appropriate and inappropriate interactions and when, how and who to tell when boundaries are crossed.

To this end, staff are trained in the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum and this is integrated into our Life Skills Program that every student is required to complete. This program helps students learn about their rights, including their right to safety and their right to be listened to.

Fairbridge College also invites outside agencies to present developmentally and culturally appropriate programs related to healthy and respectful relationships as well as developing resilience.

### **5 Involving Family and Community**

Clear lines of communication are established to enable families and other members of the College community to make contact with staff, members of the leadership team, College Council and of the Board of Governors.

Accessibility is enhanced through an open-door policy and the overall welcoming tone of the College. Families and the wider College community receive ongoing information across various platforms including SMS, email, term newsletters, and parent meetings. Families and members of the wider College community are also encouraged to express comments, opinions and ideas through a variety of media.

## **6 Child Safe and Focused Policies and Procedures.**

Fairbridge College has a child-friendly complaint handling policy, which clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report. Complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

The College's Child Protection Policies clearly outline the responsibilities and obligations, guidelines and processes for board members, staff, parents, students, volunteers and other members of the school community.

All members of the College community must comply with a code of conduct that sets out clear behavioural standards towards children. Further, staff and volunteers feel confident to raise any concerns or worries and know how they can do this.

## **7 Managing Staff and Volunteers**

Fairbridge College employs a recruitment process that:

- are robust to help ensure the best applicants are employed with each step of process done consistently and thoroughly;
- engage only those who are suitable to work with students;
- make every attempt to assess commitment to the Staff Code of Conduct on the part of the applicants;
- include induction to the College's policies and procedures for the prevention, detection and reporting of suspected and actual grooming, and abuse and mandatory reporting obligations.

Each job or category of jobs for College staff that involves child-related work has a clear statement that sets out:

- The job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
- The job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.

All applicants for jobs that involve child-related work for the College must be informed about the College's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).

In accordance with any applicable legal requirement (e.g. Working with Children Check, Federal Police Clearance), the College makes reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-related work:

- Working with Children Check;
- Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
- The person's history of work involving children; and

- References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

All new employees and volunteers undergo an induction which outlines the child safety policy and procedures of the organisation and how to meet their record keeping, information sharing and reporting responsibilities. This induction of the Code of Conduct as well as the College's child-friendly complaints procedure.

All employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand the commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (as per the Staff Code of Conduct). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through the appropriate channels, including Child Protection services, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Third-party contractors are encouraged to complete their work outside of school hours where at all possible. In the event this is not possible, they are required to sign-in and wear a badge. All staff are notified if there is a contractor on-site and asked to monitor their movement and interactions around the College.

## **8 Safe Environments**

All visitors are required to sign in at the office and wear a visitor's badge. There are staff on duty in the grounds before school, at recess time, lunch time and on bus duty after school. Classrooms all have windows in doors.

The Code of Conduct clearly directs individuals to be aware of professional boundaries when working one on one with individual students, or on the rare occasions they may need to transport a student in their car. Clear guidelines are expressed in our policies regarding contact between adults and children during different activities.

Parent permission is sought regarding the taking of photographs and using of students. There are clear guidelines and advice around cyber safety, on-line grooming and the acceptable use of electronic devices whilst at school. Further, there are clear guidelines for staff and volunteers about communication with children and young people via mobile phone or on-line.

## **9 Child Friendly Complaints Process and Reporting**

Fairbridge College has a clear and accessible process for students who wish to make a complaint or report abuse. This is posted around the school, presented to students during induction and regularly reviewed with students. The information uses age-appropriate language and a simple, clear format.

## **10 Training and Development**

Recruitment and induction processes for new staff include a strong focus on all aspects of child safety. Fairbridge College has in place training for staff/volunteers that identifies, assesses and minimises the risks of child abuse, and detects potential signs of child abuse. This includes yearly refreshers on all policies and procedures related to child safety.

There is a focus on professional learning on trauma-informed practice and student well-being, which is, in turn embedded in our organisational practices.

Information about mandatory reporting obligations and a review of the Code of Conduct is provided annually to the College Council and the Board of Governors.

## **11 Review and Continuous Improvement**

Policies and procedures including risk management plans are regularly reviewed and revised in order to continuously improve child safe practices. Additionally, complaints, concerns and safety incidents are also analysed to identify causes and systemic failures so as to inform continuous improvement.