



SCHOOL OF THE NATIVITY
Families living, *loving*, learning

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This statement is informed by the *SACCS Child Protection Policy 2000* and *Protective Practices For Staff In Their Interactions With Students – Guidelines for Schools, Preschools and Out of School Hours Care 2005*.

Families are an integral part of School of the Nativity, with the children in these families being the central focus.

Children are the least powerful people in society. They are vulnerable to exploitation and victimization by those who are more powerful. Safety and protection from all forms of abuse are fundamental rights for all children. The safety of students is of paramount importance at School of the Nativity.

The responsibilities of school personnel are:

- To treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children in their care.
- To notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 131478 if, in the course of their work, they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. Staff are invited to discuss child abuse concerns with the Principal; however the responsibility to report rests with the staff member.
- To provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children.
- To participate in training and development opportunities, which provide knowledge and skills in mandated notification. At School of the Nativity it is expected that all staff undertake mandated notification training every three years.
- To teach children skills and understandings which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety.
- To assist children to develop positive, responsible caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse.

Maintaining professional boundaries with students

Teaching and care professions are predicated on positive relationships and schools are places where all staff can have significant influence in students' lives. The relationship of an adult staff member and student is characterised by differing roles and an imbalance of power based on a number of factors including age, authority and gender.

The staff member is responsible for maintaining a professional role with the student. This means establishing clear professional boundaries with the students that serve to protect everyone from misunderstandings or a violation of the professional relationships.

The following examples will assist staff in establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries:

Boundary	Example of Violation
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate comments about a student's appearance including excessive flattering comments • Inappropriate conversation or enquiries of a sexual nature (eg questions about a student's sexuality) • Use of inappropriate pet names • Vilification or humiliation • Jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature • Obscene gestures and language • Facilitating access to pornographic or overtly sexual material • Failing to stop sexual harassment between students • Correspondence of a personal nature including letters, email, phone, SMS text (not including class postcards/bereavement cards etc)
Personal Disclosure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing personal details of lifestyle of self and others. It may be appropriate and necessary at times, however, to draw on relevant personal life experiences when teaching • Sharing of personal information about other staff or students
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwarranted, unwanted and/or inappropriate touching of a student personally or with objects (eg pencil or ruler) • Initiating or permitting inappropriate physical contact by a student eg massage, tickling games
Place (without school's authority)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting/allowing/encouraging students home • Attending students' homes or social gatherings for personal reasons • Being alone with a student outside of a staff members' responsibilities • Watching students in a change room when not in a supervisory role • Driving a student unaccompanied
Targeting individual students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring (outside education sectors' directives) • Personal gifts and special favours • Adopting a welfare role that is the responsibility of another staff member eg Counsellor, or doing so without the knowledge of key staff members

Good practice in managing professional boundaries

The following self-assessment questions may assist staff members in assessing their application of professional boundaries:

- Am I dealing in a different manner with a particular student than with others under the same circumstances?
- Is my dress/availability/language different from the normal with a particular student?
- Would I do or say this if a colleague was present?
- Would I condone my conduct if I observed it in another adult?
- Are the consequences of my actions likely to have negative outcomes for students?
- If I were a parent would I want an adult behaving this way towards my own children?