

## LORETO SCHOOL QUEENSWOOD

### PARENT FORUM 2019: CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Child Safeguarding Policy, as written and implemented by the Catholic Board of Education is an important policy and we are taking the opportunity tonight to share with you, our parents, the main purpose of this policy.

To clarify the purpose of this policy: The policy is to promote and protect the welfare and rights of our children. It attempts to ensure the provision of a safe environment for the children (this includes physical, emotional safety); with access to support; with staff trained on procedures to report if abuse is suspected/alleged or reported by a child. The policy is a tool we use, giving us a guideline in achieving our shared goal of protecting our children.

It aims to ensure that everyone involved in the running of the school, takes every possible measure to safeguard children and prevent harm.

This is a mandatory policy and all Catholic schools are to implement the policy; as we have at LSQ.

As the school psychologist, I am the representative here at Loreto to ensure the continuous implementation and application of this policy.

The whole policy document is available on the school communicator/school website to any parent who would like to view the document.

We go to every attempt to keep our children safe and it is a shared responsibility.

Our children are not growing up in the safest of environments. The crime statistics are sky high in our country, and with other concerns such as child trafficking, abuse (in all its forms) and the increasing necessity to protect our children from online predators – we need to be even more vigilant. Our children are our future and we need to protect, guide and nurture them.

We place ourselves in the role of caregiver whilst your children are in our care and we always try to work from an angle where the child's best interests is the central focus.

In terms of the responsibilities with regards to safeguarding our children, this entails all responsibilities when it comes to ensuring the children's physical wellbeing:

- maintaining the grounds and buildings;
- identifying and removing any potential hazards;
- securing the premises;
- securing the pool and surrounding area – all safety measures are strictly adhered to and no unsupervised access to the pool.

Naturally this tasks never stops and we urge our parents to report anything potential hazards to the office, in order for us to deal with it.

Further measures to ensure the physical safety of our learners, includes the proper supervision of the children at all times – inside as well as outside the classroom. This includes all measures such as duty rosters to ensure children are always appropriately supervised.

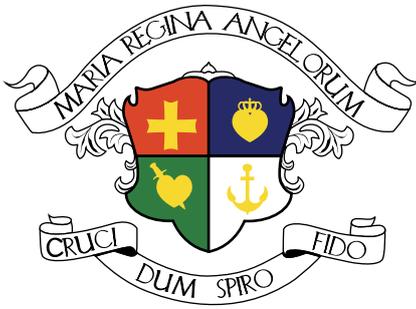
In the instance when there are accidents and something does happen or someone gets hurt, we have our procedures in place to handle the situation effectively.

- Further safety measures that are implemented includes:
- Recruitment procedures of new staff and policies;
  - Code of conduct for all staff and procedures for dealing with breaches of codes of conduct;
  - Policies regarding the use and access of technology at school;

Dealing with bullying incidents including procedures for the kids to report any bullying incidents. Urge your children to tell their teachers so the teacher can investigate and intervene if needed. We cannot address an issue if we are unaware of it; And lastly of course all our health, fire and safety certificates as required by the public health and education departments are also in place.

In terms of the emotional safeguarding of our learners, that is where I am more involved and where the CSP also attempts to provide us with clear guidelines.





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Together with Mr Pallozzi, my responsibilities include:  
training the staff appropriately;  
providing access and information;  
procedures in the event of incidents at school as well as reported or alleged/suspected abuse or neglect.

Regardless of any policy – every person has a legal responsibility to report incidents of abuse. The school follows legally compliant guidance on what to do when knowledge, suspicions, concerns, or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare.

Reporting is compulsory.

CHILDREN'S ACT NO83 OF  
2005 AS AMENDED 2010  
SECTION 110 (1) & (2)

Any Teacher who on reasonable grounds concludes that a child has been abused in a manner causing physical injury, sexually abused or deliberately neglected must report that conclusion in the prescribed form to designated child protection organisation, the Provincial DEpartment of Social Development or a police official .

A person who fails to report child abuse is guilty of an offence and may be charged.

What does the legislation say with regards to compulsory reporting:

Our school and all staff are committed to this cause as stated in the policy document and ...

- We recognise that each of us has a duty to notify the statutory authorities of suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that a child is being or has been abused.
- Therefore, all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that are required to be reported, will be reported via the designated child safeguarding person to the appropriate statutory authorities.

CRIMINAL LAW SEXUAL  
OFFENCES & RELATED  
MATTERS AMENDMENT ACT  
2007 SECTION 54 (1)(A)

A person who has knowledge that a sexual offense has been committed against a child, must report such knowledge immediately.

- This will be done irrespective of the status of the person who is suspected of having abused a child.
- To also just clearly state that it is no one's responsibility to investigate any incidents or allegations BUT only to report it – pass the information along. In this instance, as with our staff, parents are welcome, and we urge you to report anything suspicious to Mr Pallozzi or myself.

This responsibility extends to you as parent.

Obviously each case and circumstances around each incident is different and will be dealt with placing the child's best interests first. We need to adhere to what the law states.

This includes physical punishment of your children, by you as parent at home (we do NOT enforce any kind of physical punishment at school). We have incidents every so often of a child coming to school with visible bruises on their face, arms or legs where parents or guardians have crossed a line when disciplining their children. This is not the way to do it...it only shows that you have lost control. Physical punishment is not an effective form of punishment and you are damaging your relationship with your child. This can be classified as physical abuse and we will be contacting you. I am aware that it is a sensitive topic. Please make an appointment with me if you feel you need assistance in this regards, I am available should you wish to discuss this more.

As I have said, safeguarding our children is a shared responsibility so I would like to use the opportunity to go over your responsibilities as PARENT in helping us keep your children safe at school:

1. Please fetch your children on time. If your child does not attend aftercare – they need to be fetched after school or then after their extra-curricular activities. If this is a problem, please enrol them in the aftercare programme. We have children, often that are left standing outside the school premises for 2, 3 hours, sometimes every afternoon, before they are fetched. We have had children remaining at school until 7 in the evening – it is not safe and this can be classified as neglect. You are making your child an easy target for possible predators.

Thinking that you are leaving them and that they are safe with the security guards, is not responsible





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parenting. The security guards have their duties ensuring the safety of all our learners and the premises but they are not baby sitters. Our guards have strict instructions that no children are allowed inside the guardhouse as well – this is for their safety as well as your children.

2. Please communicate with your child's class teacher with regards to things happening at home. Sometimes someone is very ill or hospitalised at home; mommy or daddy or they are away – this affects the children's behaviour. The child may be acting out in class or behaving out of character. If the teacher is aware, she can react more sensitively to the child and we can understand the behaviour as well as support the child better.
3. Correct school uniform and a healthy lunch is also your responsibility as parent.
4. Access to technology and online supervision. You as parent HAVE to monitor your child's usage and access to the internet. This includes use of any online activity –youtube or when just browsing the internet to use; what content are they watching; whatsapp groups they belong to. Please take the phone away from them in the evenings and do not let them go to bed with them. Talk to your child about



participation in these online groups and online safety in general. They are given all these tools but they are not educated in how to use them responsibly. We have had incidents of bullying on these groups, inappropriate images and videos being sent around – you have to help us in this regard. There are so many children being exposed to pornography – and the effects are far reaching. There are horrific things to see on the internet and I have had many children come to me because they have watched some or other horror film or “real” video clip causing them nightmares and sleepless nights. Some watch these things when visiting older friends or family or when there are older siblings in the house. Some watch it with their parents because they sleep in bed with mom and mom watches a film on tv in bed thinking it is enough to tell the child to close their eyes and go to sleep – this is NOT okay and it is not responsible parenting.

Monitor the content your child is exposed to and monitor all online activity and phone usage.

In conclusion...

If you have any concerns I urge you to share your concern - communication is key. We don't want misunderstandings and we want our parents happy and more importantly we want our children happy. Establish a relationship of trust and respect with the teachers. Myself and Mr Pallozzi as well as the other HODs are here to assist and investigate if needed and come to a solution, together.

Let's work together to ensure all our children are kept safe and nurtured.

