



St Mary's School  
Waverley  
Founded 1888

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

St Mary's School aims to provide a safe and secure environment for all children and to promote a culture of safety.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- comply with statutory requirements on pupils' protection
- put measures in place to protect pupils from harm and to protect against abuse
- respond, without delay, to suspected current and historic acts of abuse and harm
- ensure accountability for the implementation of this policy

### Definition

Child safeguarding refers to protecting children from maltreatment and the prevention of impairments to children's health or development. It is the responsibility of the school to provide a safe environment and effective care, and to take action that enables the best outcome for pupils.

St Mary's School recognises:

#### **The South African Constitution**

*Every child has the right to a name and a nationality from birth; to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment; to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services; to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.*

#### **The South African Children's Act 2005**

*In all matters concerning the care, protection and well-being of a child, the standard that the child's best interest is of paramount importance must be applied.*

### Measures to protect pupils

- The care and protection of pupils at school is the responsibility of the whole community
- Referrals will be implemented to protect children should they be exposed to circumstances that distort their overall development
- The school follows a vetting process of employees, which includes police clearance, the child protection register, the sexual offences register and reference checks from former places of employment

### **Mandatory reporting**

- All types of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and deliberate neglect are grounds for reporting and the completion of Form 22
- All staff are legally bound to report matters of suspected child abuse
- The Open Door staff will provide guidance and support with respect to completing and submitting a Form 22
- Disclosures must be managed with care, sensitivity and confidentiality
- In the Senior School context, if a pupil requests the matter be kept confidential from their parents or guardians, the school should maintain such confidentiality; however, if there are compelling reasons that indicate it would be in the pupil's best interest to disclose, the pupil should be informed
- Confidentiality cannot be maintained in circumstances in which it is likely to endanger the life, safety or wellbeing of the pupil or any other person

### **Accountability**

- The head of school, headmistresses of the Junior and Senior Schools supported by the Open Door staff are responsible for implementing, managing and sustaining this policy
- They must ensure timely initiation and completion of internal processes
- They must advocate for participation in ongoing staff and pupil training that relates to the prevention and management of all forms of abuse and harassment

*This policy should be read in conjunction with the SACE Code of Conduct, the anti-bullying policy, and the social media policy.*