



### Overview

Protective Behaviours, a personal safety program, aims to promote resilience in children, young people, and adults, using empowerment strategies, clear communication, and awareness of “safe” behaviours. Ultimately the aim is to reduce violence in our community and prevent child abuse.

The Protective Behaviours program was originally developed as a child abuse prevention program. Today however, Protective Behaviours has a much broader application, not merely focusing on abuse prevention but addressing empowerment, communication, self-esteem, resilience, social skills and other life skills. By teaching and promoting these concepts, Protective Behaviours helps to prevent abuse, reduce violence and promote life-enriching rather than life-depleting experiences.

All children and young people have the right to:

- Be treated with respect and to be protected from harm
- Feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other young children and young people
- Understand as early as possible what is meant by feeling safe and being safe
- Receive the support of councillors or staff in their in their education or care setting who are responsible for their safety and well-being
- know what to do when feeling unsafe

Staff actively encourage children’s personal safety behaviours in all sorts of situations including:

- Being cautious and aware of strangers
- Stranger Danger programs
- Who to go for help if lost or feeling uncomfortable about an event or person
- adhering to policies relating to child safety

Child protection is a sensitive, challenging area for schools. Through the various Health and Physical Education, Health and Wellbeing programs and series of guest speakers, Christ Church Grammar School:

- Provides educational programs in child protection, such as those described later in this document
- Protects students from abuse and neglect and to assist in the recognition of suspected child abuse and neglect
- Provides ongoing support to students within the normal duties of School staff

Our Child Protection Curriculum aims to assist students to develop skills in:

- Recognising and responding to unsafe situations
- Seeking assistance effectively
- Establishing and maintaining non-coercive relationships and strengthening attitudes and values related to equality, respect and responsibility

All students can be taught to protect themselves from abuse. They are taught to network with trusted adults and be aware that there are people and services to help them within the School and wider community.

Through the programs, students learn:

- They have a right to feel and be safe
- They can recognise appropriate touching and inappropriate touching
- They have a right to say NO to a person who touches them inappropriately or threatens their safety
- They know that it is important to tell a trusted adult about such situations
- They know that help is available to them within their communities

There are three broad themes in the teaching and learning of a child protection program:

1. Recognising abuse – developing knowledge and skills, appropriate to age and stage about what constitutes abuse
2. Power in relationships – building confidence in relationships which are positive and caring, developing skills in establishing and maintaining positive relationships
3. Protective strategies – taking appropriate actions if students feel threatened, given the opportunity to analyse situations, to identify feelings and to explore alternative courses of action and their consequences

A Protective Behaviours Curriculum is implemented as part of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum in Pre-Primary through 12 and as part of the Health and Wellbeing Program in Years 1 through 10 at the School. Specific examples of Protective Behaviour Programs at the School include:

- Holding Hands and Safe 4 Kids Year 1 to Year 6
- Personal Safety & Protective Behaviours Year 7
- Harm minimisation, Personal Safety & Protective Behaviours Year 8
- Advanced Personal Safety, Rights & Responsibilities & Protective Behaviours Year 9
- Advanced Personal Safety & Risk-Taking Year 10
- Targeted Guest Speakers in Years 10, 11 and 12, e.g., Paul Dillon, Melinda Tankard Reist.

## Disclosure

If a student discloses or starts to disclose experiences of abuse, a strategy described as positive interrupting is put into place. This is done to protect the privacy of the student.

Positive Interrupting is done by:

- Acknowledging that the staff member has heard the student and stopped the conversation before disclosing any further
- Supporting and gently indicating that the student can talk more after the lesson or at a later time, closer to the time of disclosure is preferable
- Quietly arranging to see the student as soon as possible

When a disclosure is made, staff members should refer to the School's [Child Protection Policy](#) and for mandatory reporting instructions. If a student asks that this disclosure be kept a secret, the teacher must:

- Explain that all disclosures of this nature must be reported. All staff are required to report sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect where they have reasonable belief to suspect abuse
- Affirm the supportive role of School staff and be helpful to explain to the student that you need to seek help from another adult who is experienced in these matters

A staff member can help a student making a disclosure by:

- Listening and stating that there is belief in what the student is saying
- Emphasising that it was not the student's fault, no matter what happened
- Doing everything possible to provide support and comfort
- Not seeking further details beyond those which have been disclosed
- Not making promises which cannot be kept

It is important for Staff to consider seeking support as part of the natural debriefing process after experiencing a difficult experience.

There is a range of sources for advice and support for School staff dealing with issues surrounding child abuse.

These are:

- School counsellor
- The School's Employee Assistance Program
- School Chaplain
- Principal

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