



CHRIST'S COLLEGE
CANTERBURY

Child Protection Policy

Responsibility for Policy:	Deputy Principal
Approving Authority:	The Board of Governors
Applies to:	All staff and children
Last Review Date:	January 2021
Next Review Date:	January 2022

PURPOSE:

Ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children, including the prevention of child abuse or maltreatment, is a paramount goal of Christ's College.

Christ's College is committed to promoting and providing an environment for children which is free from any form of abuse. It also recognises the College will ensure that staff can identify the signs of abuse or neglect and are able to respond appropriately.

The interests of the child will be the paramount consideration when any action is taken in response to suspected abuse or neglect. The College commits to supporting the statutory agencies (Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Police) to investigate abuse and will report suspected cases and concerns to these agencies as per the process in this policy. Our Child Protection Coordinator will be responsible for the maintenance and annual review of this policy, in addition to carrying out the responsibilities outlined in this policy. Staff will not assume responsibility beyond the level of their experience and training. The College commits to ensuring staff have access to the training they need.

This policy is designed to be consistent with requirements detailed in section 18 of *Children's Act 2014*. It is consistent with Oranga Tamariki and Police guidelines.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all staff employed, Board members, contractors with, or people volunteering to, Christ's College.

Staff employed, contracted to, or people volunteering have varying levels of contact with children depending on their role. Staff may have:

- i. Regular, unsupervised access to children (core workers)
- ii. Contact with children where other adults are present (core workers)
- iii. Little or no contact with children (non-core workers)

DEFINITIONS:

- Child – any child or young person aged under 18 and who is not married or in a civil union.
- Child protection – activities carried out to ensure that children are safe in cases where there is suspected abuse or neglect or are at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Designated person for child protection – the manager/supervisor or designated person responsible for providing advice and support to staff where they have a concern about an individual child or who want advice about child protection policy.
- Disclosure – information given to a staff member by a child, parent or caregiver or a third party in relation to abuse or neglect.
- Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children – the agency responsible for investigating and responding to suspected abuse and neglect and for providing care and protection to children found to be in need.
- New Zealand Police – the agency responsible for responding to situations where a child is in immediate danger and for working with Oranga Tamariki in child protection work and investigating cases of abuse or neglect where an offence may have occurred.

Physical abuse – any acts that may result in the physical harm of a child or young person. It can be, but is not limited to: bruising, cutting, hitting, beating, biting, burning, causing abrasions, strangulation, suffocation, drowning, poisoning and fabricated or induced illness.

Sexual abuse – any acts that involve forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse can be, but is not limited to:

- Contact abuse: touching breasts, genital/anal fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetrative or non-penetrative contact with the anus or genitals, encouraging the child to perform such acts on the perpetrator or another, involvement of the child in activities for the purposes of pornography or prostitution.
- Non-contact abuse: exhibitionism, voyeurism, exposure to pornographic or sexual imagery, inappropriate photography or depictions of sexual or suggestive behaviours or comments.

Emotional abuse – any act or omission that results in adverse or impaired psychological, social, intellectual and emotional functioning or development. This can include:

- Patterns of isolation, degradation, constant criticism or negative comparison to others.
- Isolating, corrupting, exploiting or terrorising a child can also be emotional abuse.
- Exposure to family/whanāu or intimate partner violence.

Neglect – neglect is the most common form of abuse, and although the effects may not be as obvious as physical abuse, it is just as serious. Neglect can be:

- Physical (not providing the necessities of life, like a warm place, food and clothing).
- Emotional (not providing comfort, attention and love).
- Neglectful supervision (leaving children without someone safe looking after them).
- Medical neglect (not taking care of health needs).
- Educational neglect (allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol in education or inattention to education needs).

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES:

Training

We are committed to maintaining and increasing staff awareness of how to prevent, recognise and respond to abuse through appropriate training. As part of their induction, new staff are made aware of the policy on child protection.

Identifying child abuse and neglect

Our approach to identifying abuse or neglect is guided by the following principles:

- We understand that every situation is different and it's important to consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.
- We understand when we are concerned a child is showing signs of potential abuse or neglect, we should talk to the Student Protection Coordinator – we shouldn't act alone.
- While there are different definitions of abuse, the important thing is for us to consider overall wellbeing and the risk of harm to the child. It is not so important to be able to categorise the type of abuse or neglect.
- It is normal for us to feel uncertain. However, the important thing is that we should be able to recognise when something is wrong, especially if we notice a pattern forming or several signs that make us concerned.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of child abuse. There is a high rate of co-occurrence between IPV and the physical abuse of children.

We recognise the signs of potential abuse:

- Physical signs (e.g. unexplained injuries, burns, fractures, unusual or excessive itching, genital injuries, sexually transmitted diseases).
- Developmental delays (e.g. small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
- Emotional abuse/neglect (e.g. sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).
- Behavioural concerns (e.g. age-inappropriate sexual interest or play, fear of a certain person or place, eating disorders/substance abuse, disengagement/neediness, aggression).
- The child talking about things that indicate abuse (sometimes called an allegation or disclosure).

We are aware of the signs of potential neglect:

- Physical signs (e.g. looking rough and uncared for, dirty, without appropriate clothing, underweight).
- Developmental delays (e.g. small for their age, cognitive delays, falling behind in school, poor speech and social skills).
- Emotional abuse/neglect (e.g. sleep problems, low self-esteem, obsessive behaviour, inability to cope in social situations, sadness/loneliness and evidence of self-harm).
- Behavioural concerns (e.g. disengagement/ neediness, eating disorders/substance abuse, aggression).
- Neglectful supervision (e.g. out and about unsupervised, left alone, no safe home to return to).
- Medical neglect (e.g. persistent nappy rash or skin disorders or other untreated medical issues).

Every situation is different and staff will consider all available information about the child and their environment before reaching conclusions. For example, behavioural concerns may be the result of life events, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.

This organisation will always act on the recommendations of statutory agencies, including Oranga Tamariki and the Police. We will only inform families/whānau about suspected or actual abuse after we have discussed this with these agencies.

When we respond to suspected child abuse or any concerning behaviour, we write down our observations, impressions and communications in a confidential register. This is kept separate from our other records and access will be strictly controlled.

Staff involved in cases of suspected child abuse are entitled to have support. We will maintain knowledge of such individuals, agencies and organisations in the community that provide support.

Confidentiality and information sharing

We will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police before identifying information about an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the service manager or designated person. Staff should be aware that:

- Under sections 15 and 16 of the *Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989* any person who believes that a child has been or is likely to be, harmed physically, emotionally or sexually or ill-treated, abused, neglected or deprived may report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police and provided the report is made in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against them.
- When collecting personal information about individuals, it is important to be aware of the requirements of the privacy principles – i.e. the need to collect the information directly from the individual concerned and when doing so to be transparent about the purposes for collecting the information and how it will be used; who can see the information; where it is held; what is compulsory/voluntary information; and that people have a right to request access to and correction of their information.
- However, staff may disclose information under the *Privacy Act 2020/Health Information Privacy Code 2020* where there is good reason to do so – such as where there is a serious risk to individual health and safety (see privacy principle 11/Code rule 11). Disclosure about ill-treatment or neglect of a child/young person may also be made to the Police or Child, Youth and Family under sections 15 and 16 of the *Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989*.

Child safe practice guidelines

To avoid situations where staff may be alone with children, all staff should examine the opportunities or possible situations where staff may be alone with children. Wherever possible, an open door policy for all spaces should be used (excluding toilets). Staff should be aware of where all children are at all times. Visitors should be monitored at all times by staff and volunteers and outside instructors should be monitored by staff. If activities require one-to-one physical contact (i.e. classes in swimming, gymnastics etc), parents and caregivers should be advised. Where a child or young person requires assistance, if possible involve the parents/caregivers and outside agencies to assist. If this assistance is not available, ensure that the staff members are aware of the appropriate procedures when giving assistance. Staff should avoid being alone when transporting a child or young person, unless an emergency requires it. Except in an emergency, children and young people are not to be taken from College premises, or from the programme we provide, without written parental consent.

When disclosure of abuse or neglect is made:

- Listen to the child.
- Reassure the child.
- Ask open-ended prompts – e.g. “What happened next?”

If the child is visibly distressed, provide appropriate reassurance and re-engage in appropriate activities under supervision until they are able to participate in ordinary activities. If the child is not in immediate danger, re-involve the child in ordinary activities and explain what you are going to do next. Involve the Child Protection Coordinator as soon as possible.

APPOINTMENT OF STUDENT PROTECTION COORDINATOR

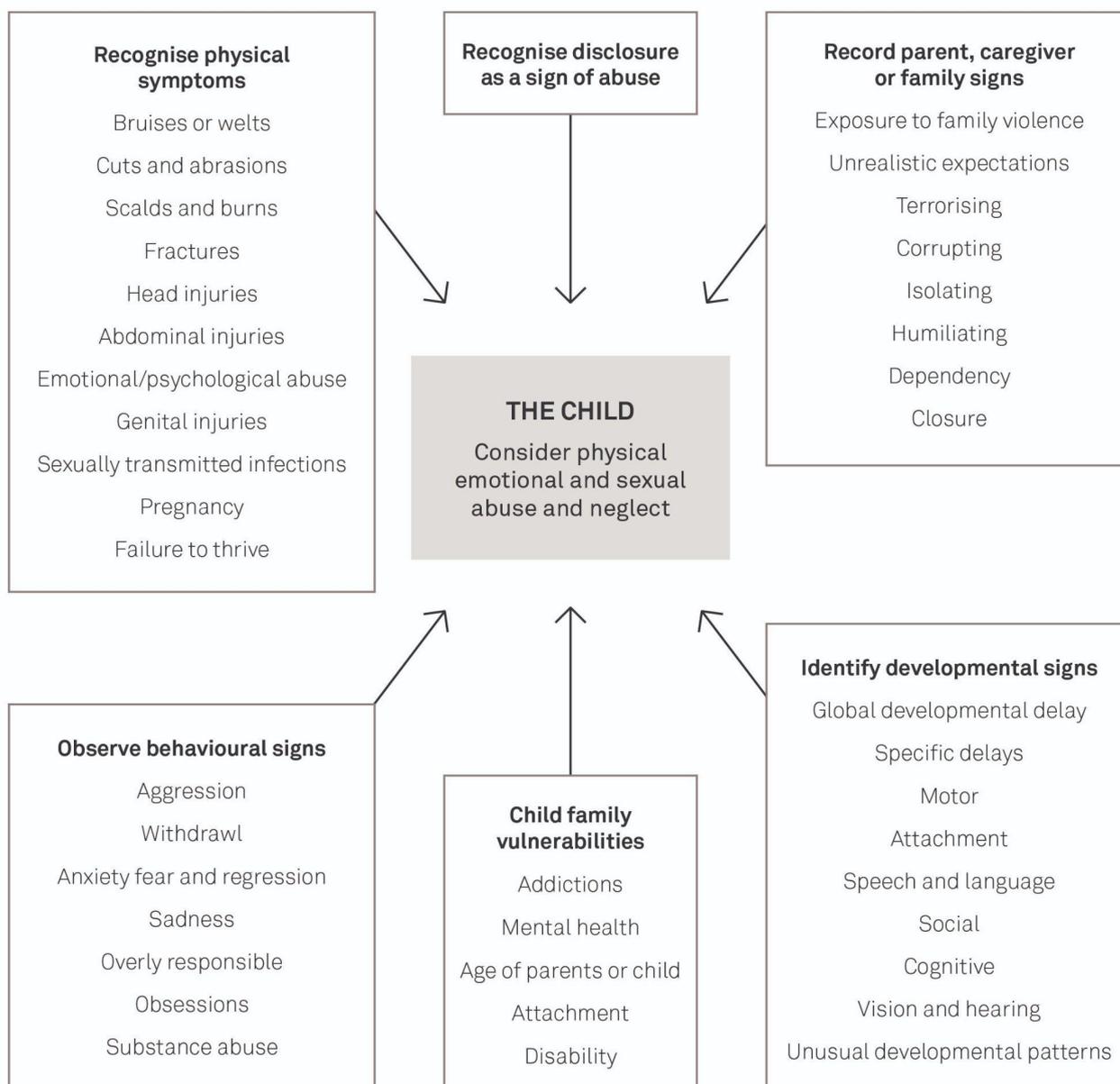
College will provide a Child Protection Coordinator whose responsibilities will include:

- Coordination of College’s response to any instances reported of abuse or neglect
- Providing support and guidance to staff regarding child issues
- Providing staff training in detection of abuse/neglect
- Auditing of current protection practices
- Three-yearly review of this Child Protection Policy

College’s current Child Protection Coordinator is the Deputy Principal, in their absence the Executive Principal. Any individual can report an alleged instance of abuse or neglect.

IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING OF ABUSE/NEGLECT

The factors below may indicate abuse or neglect:



Responding to instances where abuse or neglect is suspected

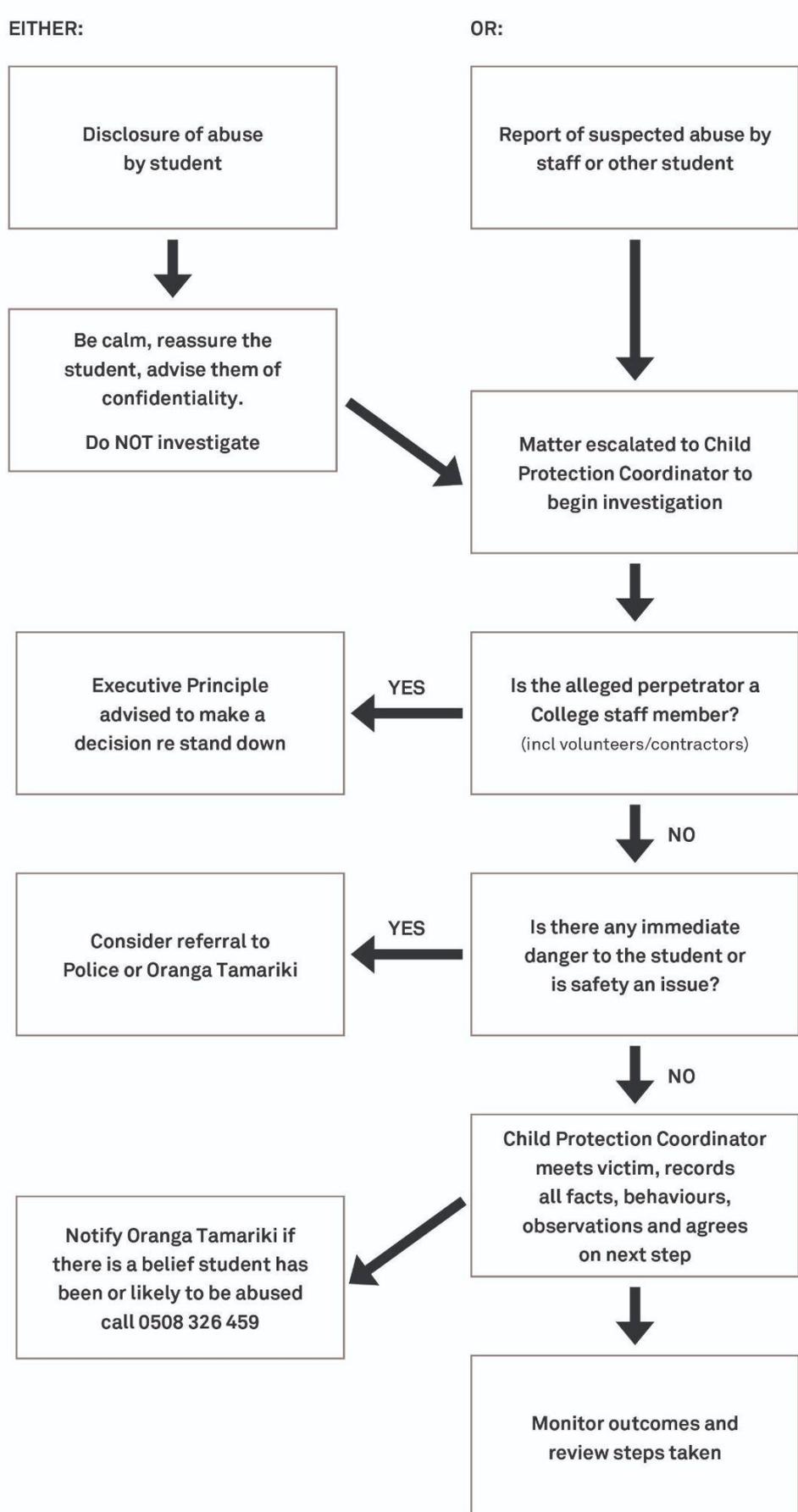
All staff have a responsibility to keep children safe and have a role in reporting concerns of potential or actual abuse. Any person may report suspected abuse to the Child Protection Coordinator. This includes, but is not limited to, staff, students, Board, contractors, visitors, wider College families and members of the general public.

1. An established process in a flow chart form is shown below – see *reporting process*.
2. All suspicions of, or reports of abuse and neglect will be referred to the College Child Protection Coordinator.
3. It is **not** the responsibility of staff to investigate any allegations of child abuse.
4. If there is strong primary evidence that abuse has been, or is occurring, the Child Protection Coordinator will take measures to protect the child. This may include involvement from the relevant Housemaster, Executive Team and/or Oranga Tamariki.
5. If the child is in immediate danger, the child Child Protection Coordinator will contact the Police immediately, and as soon as possible formally record the disclosure.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff

All matters involving allegations against staff need to be escalated to the management team. To ensure the child is kept safe, management may take steps to remove the staff member against whom an allegation has been made from the environment, subject to the requirements of the applicable individual or collective employment contract and relevant employment law. We commit not to use 'settlement agreements', where these are contrary to a culture of child protection. Some settlement agreements allow a member of staff to agree to resign provided that no disciplinary action is taken, and a future reference is agreed. Where the conduct at issue concerned the safety or wellbeing of a child, use of such agreements is contrary to a culture of child protection.

Reporting Process



NB: The actual response plan would be dependent on facts, conditions, and circumstances.

RECRUITMENT SAFETY CHECKING

Purpose, scope and principles

Our Child Protection Policy supports our staff to respond appropriately to potential child protection concerns, including suspected abuse or neglect. It is our organisation's commitment to protect children from abuse and to recognise the important roles all of our staff have in protecting children.

This policy provides a broad framework and expectations to protect children, including (but not limited to) staff behaviours in response to actual or suspected child abuse and neglect. It applies to all staff, including volunteers and part-time or temporary roles and contractors. It is intended to protect all children that staff may encounter, including siblings, the children of adults accessing services and any other children encountered by staff as they provide their service.

In addition to guiding staff to make referrals of suspected child abuse and neglect to the statutory agencies – i.e. Oranga Tamariki and the Police. This policy will also help our staff to identify and respond to the needs of the many vulnerable children whose wellbeing is of concern.

We recognise that in many of these cases, the involvement of statutory agencies would be inappropriate and potentially harmful to families/whānau. Throughout New Zealand, statutory and non-statutory agencies provide a network of mutually supportive services, and it is important for our organisation to work with these to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families/whānau in a manner proportionate to the level of need and risk. Contact details for agencies and services in our community are provided as an appendix to this policy.

To ensure that this organisation demonstrates continual improvement in child protection practice, we will work to maintain a good working relationship with child protection agencies and support our staff to protect children from abuse by consulting with experts with specialist knowledge and providing the necessary training options.

We also commit to explore opportunities to work with other providers, including from other sectors, to develop a network of child protection practice in our community.

This policy applies to all staff, including contractors and volunteers.

Workforce safety checks involve gathering a range of information about a person and evaluating this information to determine whether they pose any risk in being employed at Christ's College while working with children. All employees (part-time, full-time, relievers) appointed to positions which fit **i)** in the **scope** section of this policy will be conditional upon satisfactory safety checks. Safety checks of children's workers are required by the *Children's Act 2014* and Children's Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers Regulation 2015.

Employee safety checks include:

- identity verification
- police vetting
- reference checks
- employment verification checks
- checks with professional registration bodies or licensing authorities
- interviews
- a risk assessment that considers specific child safety related risk.

Employees that fit in categories **ii)** and **iii)** of the **scope** section will be police vetted as a minimum requirement.

It is a requirement that personal identity and qualifications are verified by College pre-employment.

Contractors

Vetting could already form part of Site Specific Safety Plan (SSSP) which requires that a contractor may already have been police vetted if the work is a major project.

Boards of trustees are responsible for controlling worker access at a school. The *Education Act 1989* requires police vetting of every contractor and subcontractor, including their employees, who "has, or is likely to have, unsupervised access to children at the school during normal school hours".

'Unsupervised access' means access to any child at the school during normal school hours when the worker is not supervised or observed by, or under the direction of:

- a registered teacher
- a school employee that has been acceptably police vetted within the last three years, or
- a child's parent.

'Likely' means more than a 50% chance (of unsupervised access to one or more children).

Volunteers

Volunteers don't need to be safety checked under the *Vulnerable Children Act 2014* or the *Education Act 1989*. The position of College is that casual volunteers won't be vetted or safety checked unless that person is to have unsupervised and/or overnight access to children.

Volunteers who have recurring contact with children should be processed through the vetting procedure. The vetting request should be submitted to Police as a non-VCA vet (i.e. one that is not required by the VCA legislation).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

College is committed to building competency of staff in relation to issues surrounding vulnerable children. This is supported by the provision of the following associated policies:

- Pastoral care
- Bullies
- Suicide policy

STAFF CONDUCT

Staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with pastoral values of Christ's College. It is recognised that relationships between adults and Children is not one between equals therefore there is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable children.

Adults are expected to ensure their unequal balance of power is not used for improper relationships or to create harm. There is the expectation that our staff maintain appropriate professional boundaries and shun interactions which could be viewed as questionable by others.

Staff should also refer to the [Digital Communications Policy](#) – Teaching Staff & Students & Parents, Social Media communications section for further guidance surrounding this.