

## Students with Disability Policy (Child Safety)

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School recognises the importance of promoting understanding and acceptance of diversity, including disability, to create and maintain a child safe environment.

The School has an obligation to students with disability to ensure that they are afforded the same level of educational and pastoral care as any other student at the School and considers how each policy and procedure the School establishes and implements may affect students with disability.

The School recognises that students with disability will not only require additional assistance to participate and engage in School activities in a safe and supportive manner, but also that there are specific child safety risks that arise in relation to students with disability.

Children and young people with disability are at a higher risk of abuse or other harm, such as harassment, bullying, humiliation and physical and sexual abuse, and are also often less likely to disclose abuse or other concerns about their safety. This is because of:

- low levels of expectation held about their capacity to identify and report concerns
- reliance on caregivers for personal requirements
- limited provision of developmentally appropriate sexual and relationship information
- difficulties with speech, communication or literacy
- social isolation.

### St Paul's Anglican Grammar School's Practices

The School is committed to ensuring that we fulfil our legal obligations including those related to discrimination and disability standards. Please refer to our Disability Discrimination Policy.

The School does not stereotype or make assumptions about students' abilities, but rather recognises that each student is different and experiences their disability and the world differently.

The School implements specific risk controls in relation to the safety of students with disability. These include:

- specific screening and training for staff/Volunteers that will have direct contact with students with a disability
- guidelines for staff and Volunteers working with students with a disability
- express, written permission from the parent/carer of a student with a disability where physical contact is required as part of their care
- alternative reporting avenues to suit the needs of students with a disability at the school.

Some of the strategies and initiatives that St Paul's Anglican Grammar School may implement to ensure and promote the safety of students with disability include:

- ensuring that our Child Safe Codes of Conduct clearly outline boundaries for Staff, Volunteers' and Contractors' interactions with students with a disability, including personal care assistance
- seeking and taking into account disability expert advice when developing and reviewing strategies for addressing child protection, child safety information and processes for students and families to raise child safety concerns
- empowering students with a disability by assisting them to build their self-confidence
- making sure the school environment does not pose access difficulties
- teaching all students about their bodies and their safety
- enabling and facilitating independence with dressing, toileting and personal care where possible

- actively engaging with students and their families about how they would like to be involved by:
  - providing an environment where they feel safe and valued
  - creating opportunities for families to voice concerns and to help define solutions
  - holding informal meetings to proactively seek and incorporate feedback on existing systems and policies
  - communicating directly with students with a disability about how safe they feel
- being inclusive and collaborative with families of students with a disability
- considering the additional risks created for students with communication difficulties by:
  - developing procedures at the school that ensure vigilance in identifying indicators of abuse or harm
  - ensuring that the school has the capacity to listen to and understand students, not matter how they communicate their thoughts, views or concerns
  - making efforts to facilitate communication in ways that minimise the barriers arising from a student's disability.

## Policy History and Schedule

### Version 1

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