

Sherwood State School P&C Association Student Protection Risk Management Strategy

A strategy for managing risks to children & young people.

This Strategy is effective from 27th April 2020 (and is to be reviewed annually in time for endorsement at the following AGM. This is an annual requirement of the P&C Association.

Disclaimer: This document has been compiled by P&Cs Qld to assist P&C Associations to comply with the legislative requirements of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011*. It is a guide only and should not be considered legal advice or a legal document. P&C Associations should seek the professional advice of Blue Card Services should they have any questions regarding Student Protection Risk Management.

Sherwood State School Parents and Citizens Association Student Protection Risk Management Strategy 2020

Purpose

This Student Protection Risk Management Strategy is developed to enable the P&C Association to comply with the legislative requirements specified in the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011* for the protection of children and young people from harm and the risk of harm.

Policy

Statement of Commitment

Sherwood State School P&C Association is committed to the safety and wellbeing of the students in the care of Sherwood State School and requires volunteers and P&C employees to model and encourage behaviour that upholds the dignity and safety of students. The P&C Association supports the Department of Education (the Department) Student Protection Procedure, Code of Conduct and Code of School Behaviour that apply to all departmental employees and includes volunteers and P&C employees.

[Department of Education Student Protection Procedure](#)

[Department of Education Code of School Behaviour](#)

All Volunteers and P&C employees must:

- Not cause harm to students in the care of the school
- Actively seek to prevent harm to a student in the care of the school
- Report suspected student harm to the principal (or to the Regional Director if it is suspected the principal is involved).
- Inform themselves about the content of this strategy.

Principles

In keeping with principles outlined in the Department's Student Protection Procedure the P&C Association asserts that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children are paramount and all children have a right to protection from harm.

Harm includes any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a student's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

Harm can be caused by amongst other things:

- Physical abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse or exploitation

Categories of Harm

For the purpose of this policy, harm to students is considered as being categorised as:

- Harm caused by a school employee or P&C employee
- Harm caused by another student
- Harm caused by a person not employed by the Department or the P&C Association including family members, strangers, parent helpers, volunteers, school visitors or unknown
- Self harm

Student Protection

- All volunteers and P&C employees receive some form of student protection training, as determined by the principal including provision of the Student Protection Fact Sheet (see Templates, page 10)
- The safety, wellbeing and best interests of the student are paramount *
- Every student has a right to protection from harm*
- Volunteers and P&C employees must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students is of the highest professional standards.
- Failure by a volunteer or P&C employee to act in accordance with the requirements of this policy will constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct and the principal will advise on appropriate action to be taken.

* Sections 5A & 5B *Child Protection Act 1999*

Accountabilities

All volunteers and P&C employees:

- Are not expected to be experts in the area of harm and should err on the side of caution in terms of reporting their suspicions, to enable those who are experts to investigate further.
- Who have any suspicion that a student is being harmed or is at risk of harm **MUST** report their concerns to the principal*.
- OSHC staff are to report their concerns to the OSHC Coordinator/OSHC Assistant Coordinator who will:
 - Complete the appropriate documentation in accordance with OSHC Policies and Procedures for the licensee (P&C President or Vice President (OSHC) to report to the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, and
 - Inform the principal.
- Are **NOT** to investigate any aspect of a suspicion of harm or risk of harm.
- Must apply for and be successful in obtaining a positive suitability notice from Blue Card Services if they are required to do so by law.
- Must immediately notify the principal in writing if they are charged with or convicted of an offence.
- Must undertake training in student protection procedures as determined appropriate by the principal.

* If you suspect the principal is responsible for causing harm to a student report this to the Regional Director, Schools at the local Departmental Regional Office.

Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct provides direction and guidance on responsibilities and the expected standards of behaviour while undertaking activities that reflect on the school and the P&C Association. The code places an obligation on all of us to take responsibility for our own actions.

A Code of Conduct for volunteers and P&C employees includes:

- Compliance with the Departmental Code of Conduct
- Personal privacy is of paramount importance. Information gathered or obtained as a result of the role as a volunteer or P&C employee MUST be considered confidential and is only to be passed on to the relevant school authority.
- Treating all people with Dignity, Courtesy, Honesty and Fairness at all times.
- Constructive criticism is healthy while personal attacks are destructive and to be avoided.
- Discrimination on racial, ethnic, or religious grounds is FORBIDDEN, as is any form of sexual discrimination and / or harassment.

The Standards of Behaviour Fact Sheet is provided under templates for distribution

Procedures

Recruitment

A volunteer, who is not a parent of a child of the school or exempt, MUST have a Blue Card before they start volunteering regardless of how often they come into contact with students.

Executive Committee members of a P&C Association that operate an Outside School Hours Care facility MUST have a Business Blue Card, or proof of a submitted application for a Blue Card.

All written advertisements for volunteer or paid employment will include information regarding Blue Card requirements.

A current Blue Card or proof of a submitted application for a blue card is an essential requirement for any applicant for any paid position.

Training

Volunteers and P&C employees access some form of training as determined by the principal, to meet the legislative requirements of Blue Card Services.

For example:

- School based Student Protection training through workshops and seminars provided by the Principal
- Student Protection Fact Sheet (see Templates, page 10)
- Display Student Protection Fact Sheet in P&C areas of operation and also with the Volunteer Register or refer to the location where the Student Protection Fact sheet is displayed.

Management

The following procedures are to be followed to ensure compliance with the legislation:

- Blue card application forms for P&C employees should be processed by the authorised officer determined by the P&C President
- The contact person in part B of the application form MUST be the P&C President
- Blue Card Services must be notified if the person in the role of President (the contact person for the Association) changes. (See Templates)

- Blue card application forms for volunteers should be processed by the authorised officer determined by the Principal
- Volunteers and P&C employees who already have a Blue Card must provide a copy to the authorised officer determined by the Principal for filing
- Maintain a Blue Card Register for volunteers and P&C employees
- Blue Card Register maintained by the authorised officer, determined by the principal, within the school in order to guarantee confidentiality of private information.
- Ensure that current versions of Blue Card application forms are available on site
- The contact address of the person processing the Blue card applications must be the address of the school.
- Volunteers and P&C employees applying for a Blue Card for the first time, or renewing their card **MUST** be provided with a warning, by the person signing their application, that it is an offence for a 'disqualified person' to apply for a Blue Card. A declaration on the application form that this warning has been given **MUST** then be signed.
- Maintain a Volunteer Register at every site and activity at which volunteers are working.
- The Volunteer Register **MUST** indicate if the volunteer has a blue card or not (see templates)
- Volunteer Register to be checked regularly against the Blue Card Register. (On a term basis as a minimum requirement) by a designated person in liaison with the authorised officer
- The designated person checking the Volunteer Register **MUST** inform the principal / P&C President of those volunteers or P&C employees who are non compliant.
- Currency of the Blue Card for volunteers who are required to have a Blue Card is a condition of their unpaid employment.
- Non current volunteers will be contacted by the principal / P&C President and advised of the risk management procedures and advise them that they need to amend the situation before they can continue in their current capacity
- Currency of the Blue Card for P&C employees is a condition of employment and is to be monitored by the P&C President.
- In accordance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* all volunteers and P&C employees who have a current Blue Card from the Commission **MUST** notify the principal/P&C President of any change in their criminal history (i.e. if they are charged with or convicted of an offence). The principal / P&C President **MUST** then notify Blue Card Services
- A Student Protection Activity Risk Management Plan (see template) should be completed for each activity in order to identify the potential risks and put appropriate strategies in place to minimize the risks.
- A Training Register is maintained by an authorised person, as determined by the principal, and lists the volunteers and P&C employees who have achieved the minimum requirements of Student Protection training.
- The annual checklist (see template) is to be completed to ensure that procedures continue to be followed.
- Suspected breaches of this Student Protection Risk Management Strategy **MUST** be reported to the principal/P&C president.

Offences and Penalties

P&C Associations MUST ensure that a Student Protection Risk Management Strategy is implemented, reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure compliance.

There is a range of penalties for breaches of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*. Some offences may incur a fine of up to \$37,500 or up to five years imprisonment. (Updated as of March 2006)

Blue Cards

Volunteers

Volunteers need a blue card if their usual function includes or is likely to include:

- providing services at a school that are directed mainly towards children; or
- conducting activities at a school that mainly involve children.

Volunteers do not need a blue card if they are:

- a "registered teacher"; or
- a volunteer parent of a child attending the school;
- a guest of a school or "recognised body":
 - for the purpose of observing, supplying information or entertainment to 10 or more people, and
 - the activity is for 10 days or less on no more than two occasions per year, and
 - the person is unlikely to be physically present with a child without another adult being present, or
- performing the function of employment at a national or state event organised by a school or "recognised body" (operating at a state or national level):
 - for a sporting, cultural or skill based activity, and
 - the event is attended by more than 100 people, and
 - the work is for 10 days or less on no more than two occasions per year; and
 - the person is unlikely to be physically present without another adult being present.
- a child under 18 years of age volunteering (except "trainee students" undertaking a course of study with an "education provider")

Executive Committee members of a P&C Association operating an Outside School Hours Care facility must have Business Blue Cards whether they are a parent of a child at the school or not.

Paid employees

Paid employees must apply for a blue card if they work, or are likely to work over a 12 month period, for at least:

- eight consecutive days; or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks; or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks; or
- once a month, each month, over six months.

Note: A paid employee or Executive member of a P&C operating an Outside Hours Care Facility can commence work pending the outcome of their blue card application.

More information on Blue cards can be found at <http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/index.html>

Student Protection Activity Risk Management Plan

The Student Protection Activity Risk Management Plan records details of the risks identified for the life of the activity, their grading in terms of likelihood of occurring and seriousness of impact on the activity, initial plans for mitigating each high level risk and subsequent results. (See Template).

All Student Protection Activity Risk Management Plans need to be filed together for reference and referral when necessary. This process needs to be completed as a provision of conducting activities that involve students. Risks identified at a high level **MUST** be reported to the principal before the activity is approved.

Definitions

Terminology used in this strategy is as defined in the Department's Student Protection Procedure and Guidelines. The Department's Student Protection Procedure:

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/community/Pages/Student-Protection.aspx>

In addition:

- A **P&C employee** is any person employed by the school Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) on a temporary, casual, permanent or contract basis.
- A **Volunteer** is any person who is engaged for a specific purpose in an unpaid capacity.
- A **Blue Card** is issued by Blue Card Services once it has carried out the Working with Children Check to see if a person is eligible. If a person is eligible, they are issued a positive notice and a blue card.
- A **Working with Children Check** is a detailed national check of a person's criminal history, including any charges or convictions. Also considered is:
 - Disciplinary information held by certain professional organisations for teachers, child care providers, foster carers, nurses, midwives and certain health practitioners, and
 - Police investigation information into allegations of serious child-related sexual offences, even if no charges were laid because the child was unwilling or unable to proceed.

Source of information

- Child Protection Act 1999:
<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/C/ChildProtectA99.pdf>
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000:
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/W/WorkwithChildrenRMSA00.pdf>
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening)* Regulation 2001:
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/W/WorkwithChildrenRMSR11.pdf>
- Department of Education Student Protection Procedure:
<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/community/Pages/Student-Protection.aspx>
- Code of Conduct for the Qld Public Service:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/codeofconduct/index.html>
- Department of Education Code of school behaviour:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/behaviour/code-behaviour.html>
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006:
<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/E/EducGenPrA06.pdf>
- Anti Discrimination Act 1991:
<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/A/AntiDiscrimA91.pdf>

Reporting of Harm Templates

These are for the P&C Association to use to assist in the processes and procedures as outlined in this model Strategy. They can be utilised as the P&C Association need to be able to ensure the implementation and management of the provisions, as outlined, are met.

- **P&C Association Student Protection Annual Checklist**
- **Student Protection Fact Sheet**
- **Standards of Behaviour Fact sheet**
- **Flowchart: Volunteer or P&C employee response to suspicion of harm to a student**
- **Blue Card P&C President change of contact proforma**
- **Blue Card Register**
- **Volunteer Register**
- **Student Protection Activity Risk Management Plan**

**Department of Education
SMS-PR-012 Student Protection
Student Protection Fact Sheet**

Student protection involves:

- Working to make schools safe and supportive places;
- Taking action to prevent students being harmed at school; and
- Reporting any suspicion you have that a student has been harmed or may be at risk of harm

All children have a right to be protected from harm.

Harm is:

Any detrimental effect of a significant nature to the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

This means anything that will have a serious and harmful effect on a student's physical health, or how they think and feel about themselves.

Any behaviour that harms a student is wrong. Sometimes a culture may have a custom or practice that harms children.

Departmental procedures say that harm to students will not be tolerated. It is **NOT** OK. In other words, culture or custom is NO EXCUSE for harming students.

Everyone who works in a school must look after the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children.

Managing your own behaviour is the first step in student protection

- NEVER harm a student, either physically, psychologically or emotionally
- NEVER make fun of a student, put them down or discriminate against them because of their race or religion
- NEVER touch a student in a sexual way, or engage in any other inappropriate sexual activity (for example, sending suggestive text messages or showing a student pornography)
- NEVER do anything that would make people think you are doing something sexual to a student

You must report, to the Principal, any harm to a student that is caused by:

- Someone working at the school
- Another student
- Someone from the student's family, a friend or a stranger
- The student self-harming

If you see harm occurring at school:

1. **Help** the student, who has been harmed, for example,
 - By telling the students to move away
 - Get a staff member involved as soon as possible
2. **Tell the principal** straight away about what you have seen
3. **Write** down what you saw and give the information to the Principal.

If you suspect a student has been harmed at school or outside of school:

1. **Tell the principal** straight away about what you suspect
2. **Write** down what you suspect and give the information to the Principal.

If a student tells you that they have been harmed at school or outside of school:

1. **Listen** carefully
2. **Reassure** the student that they have done the right thing by telling you
3. **Tell the student** you must tell the Principal what they have told you
4. **Tell the principal** straight away about what the student told you
5. **Write** down what the student told you and give the information to the Principal.

If you suspect the Principal is responsible for causing harm to a student report this to the Executive Director, Schools at the local district office.

The main thing to remember is: If you suspect a student might have been harmed or might be at risk of harm tell the Principal straight away. If the Principal isn't available you must tell the Acting Principal or a Deputy Principal.

Standards of Behaviour Fact sheet

The following tables include, but are not limited to, the specific ***standards of behaviour*** in relation to working closely with students in any situation:

Language	
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate, both verbally and non verbally, in a way which models and demonstrates respect for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all students Use appropriate language taking into consideration age, developmental stage, emotional or psychological state, special needs, language background, religion or disabilities Ensure both verbal and non verbal communication are non abusive or bullying When possible, frame communication from the positive perspective in interactions with students
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become involved in inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature Make sexually suggestive comments Use language that could be offensive to another Personally correspond (including email and/or mobile phone) with a child or young person in respect of personal or sexual feelings for students

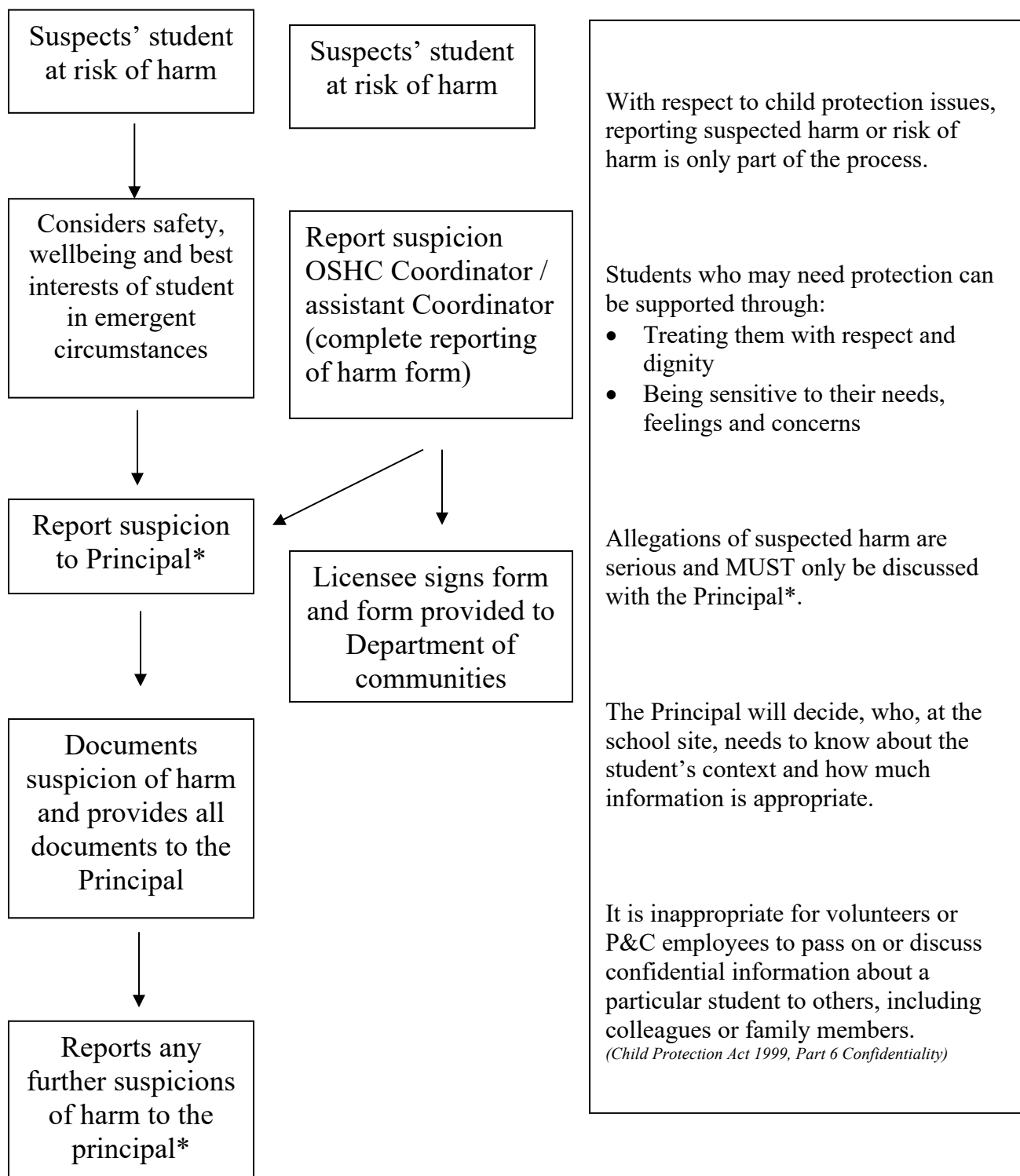
Relationships with Students	
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behave in a way, which models and demonstrates respect for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all students Dress appropriately while working with children and young people, in a way that models respect for the students
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend inappropriate time with a student Inappropriately give gifts to a student Show special favours to a student Expose student to sexual behaviour of others including displays of pornography Persuade a student that a 'special' relationship exists

Physical contact	
Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the personal space of student and limit physical contact generally Limit hugging when initiated by the student by changing from a frontal hug to arm around the shoulder of student Limit hugging when initiated by the student by sitting on the floor with child next to you
Don't	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hit, kick, slap or push a student Allow student to sit on your lap Touch parts of a student's body usually covered by a swimming costume Change nappies or engage in toileting practises

(Adapted from information from Blue Card Services)

Flowchart: Volunteer or P&C employee response to suspicion of harm to a Student.

Volunteer &/or P&C Employee/OSHC employee



* Or the Regional Director if the Principal is the subject of the allegation.