



# Child Safeguarding Program (EREA)

## Child Safeguarding Policy

### BACKGROUND

Insert an introductory paragraph about your school's approach to child safeguarding.

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board, the St Marys Flexible School's governing body, has approved the St Marys Flexible School's Child Safeguarding Policy, as set out in the Policy Administration section, below.

### Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people have a right to feel safe and be safe.

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd is committed to embedding a culture where the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under our care is paramount. Particular attention is given to the needs of vulnerable children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people with disability and mental health issues, children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people who are unable to live at home, and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. We are always committed to acting in the best interests of children and young people.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistent with our robust safeguarding policies and procedures. EREA Flexible Schools Ltd is committed to nurturing the wellbeing of all children and young people, respecting their dignity, ensuring their safety and protecting them from abuse and other harm. EREA Flexible Schools Ltd, its schools and its Staff, Contractors and Volunteers have legal and moral obligations to respond

swiftly including contacting authorities where relevant when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

## **PURPOSE**

Our Child Safeguarding Policy demonstrates the strong commitment of the St Marys Flexible School to child safety and to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly environment. It provides an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse and other harm.

Our Child Safeguarding Policy outlines the key elements of our approach to implementing the NSW Child Safe Standards and EREA Flexible Schools Ltd child safeguarding requirements, and to the St Marys Flexible School as a child safe organisation.

It informs the St Marys Flexible School community about everyone's obligations to act safety and appropriately towards students and guides the policies, processes and practices for the safety, wellbeing and protection of students across all areas of our work.

## **PRINCIPLES**

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd and St Mary's Flexible School are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under our care.

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board and St Mary's Flexible School have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected and their voices heard, and where they are safe and feel safe.

The Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and the NSW Child Safe Standards set out the principles that guide EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board and St Mary's Flexible School in the development and regular review of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

As a Catholic entity, EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board and St Mary's Flexible School are also guided by the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Requiring compliance with these Child Safeguarding Standards is one of the strategies employed by EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board to embed a culture of child safety at the St Marys Flexible School.

St Mary's Flexible School also endorses, implements, and complies with the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

## SCOPE

The St Marys Flexible School's Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all "Representatives of the St Marys Flexible School", as well as to Visitors.

"Representatives of the St Marys Flexible School" include all Staff (including teachers, administration, wellbeing and education support Staff, tertiary placement students, and temporary or casual Staff), pre-service teachers, Volunteers (including St Marys Flexible School EREA Flexible Schools Board members), Contractors (including External Education Providers) and clergy.

This Policy and its Procedures also apply to other people who are associated with the St Marys Flexible School, such as parents and carers when they are visiting the St Marys Flexible School or attending a St Marys Flexible School event.

This Policy and its Procedures apply in all St Marys Flexible School environments, including physical and online environments, on-site and off-site St Marys Flexible School grounds (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas travel), and environments provided by External Education Providers and other Contractors.

## DEFINITIONS

### **"Child"/"Child or Young Person"**

The term "child" and the phrase "child or young person" refer to a person who is aged under 18.

### **"Child Abuse and Other Harm"**

The phrase "child abuse and other harm" is not defined in NSW law. However, various sources of legislation provide definitions, concepts and conduct (set out in "Child Safety Incident or Concern", below) which, together, provide guidance as to what is child abuse and other harm in NSW.

For the purposes of this Policy and its Procedures, the phrase "child abuse and other harm" refers to incidents of or concerns about (including concerns about a risk of) physical, sexual, psychological and emotional harm, neglect, grooming and exposure to domestic violence, regardless of by whom or how this harm occurs.

### **"Child Safety Incident or Concern"**

St Mary's Flexible School uses the phrase, "child safety incident or concern", which includes, but goes further than, the concept of "child abuse and other harm".

Child safety incidents or concerns can take many forms. These include not only the abuse of a child or young person by their parents/carers, but also conduct by other people that can cause harm to a child or young person or to a student aged 18 or over.

We define "child safety incidents or concerns" as an incident of or concern about:

- a child or young person being "at risk of significant harm", as defined in the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act) 1998 (NSW) (Care and Protection Act), such as:
  - being, or at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated
  - living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, being at risk of serious physical or psychological harm
  - their parents/carers failing to meet their physical, psychological, educational or medical needs
  - their parents/carers behaving in such a way towards them that they are suffering or at risk of suffering serious psychological harm
- a child or young person being, or at risk of being, the victim of a "child abuse offence" as defined in the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) (Crimes Act), or a student aged 18 or over being, or at risk of being, the victim of a similar offence, such as:
  - a sexual offence (a sexual act, sexual intercourse, sexual touching, production of child abuse material, voyeurism or grooming offence) or an attempt to commit such an offence
  - assault and physical harm (wounding or causing grievous bodily harm, assault causing actual bodily harm, assault at a school, administering or causing the ingestion of an intoxicating substance, and female genital mutilation)
- "Reportable Conduct" by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor, as defined in the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) (Children's Guardian Act), such as:
  - a sexual offence against, with or in the presence of a child or young person
  - sexual misconduct with, towards or in the presence of a child or young person
  - ill-treatment of a child or young person
  - neglect of a child or young person
  - assault against a child or young person
  - behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or young person
- a breach of our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct, such as:
  - a teacher engaging in unauthorised after-hours meetings with a student

- a Volunteer sports coach engaging in inappropriate online personal communications with a student
- a Contractor music tutor publishing online photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.

## **“Staff”/“Staff Member”**

The terms “Staff” and “staff member” include all teaching and non-teaching Staff , including the Principal/Area Principal. They include all those employed by the St Marys Flexible School on a permanent, temporary or casual basis.

Although St Marys Flexible School EREA Flexible Schools Board members are technically Volunteers, they are considered “Staff” for the purposes of this Policy and its Procedures and EREA Flexible Schools Ltd child safeguarding requirements.

## **“Student”**

A “student” is a person who is enrolled at or attends the St Marys Flexible School. They may be a child or young person, or they may be an adult aged 18 or over.

## **“Volunteers” and “Contractors”**

A “Volunteer” is a someone who works without payment or financial reward for the St Marys Flexible School. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider St Marys Flexible School or local community.

A “Contractor” is someone engaged by the St Marys Flexible School to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the St Marys Flexible School.

The St Marys Flexible School categorises Volunteers and Contractors as either:

- **Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors:** Volunteers and Contractors who have direct physical or face-to-face contact with, or who directly communicate with, students (such as Volunteers and Contractors who are tutors, provide learning support, work in the Canteen, attend or provide excursions/incursions, assist in music/drama productions and coach sports teams). External Education Providers are considered Direct Contact Contractors.
- **Regular Volunteers/Contractors:** Volunteers and Contractors who assist the St Marys Flexible School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be

indirect or incidental contact), and who do this more than seven times per year (such as volunteers working in the St Marys Flexible School's administration office, contracted consultants, regular maintenance workers or cleaners, and caterers for staff events)

- Casual Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who assist the St Marys Flexible School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact) or whose services are aimed at the general public, and who do this seven times or less per year (such as Volunteers who work on a stall at a St Marys Flexible School fete or on a barbeque at a sporting event, and one-off emergency maintenance workers).

Clergy and religious personnel who visit, volunteer or otherwise provide services to the St Marys Flexible School may fall into any of these categories.

## **“Visitor”**

The term “Visitor” refers to any adult who attends a St Marys Flexible School event or is in a St Marys Flexible School environment on a one-off or casual basis. Examples of Visitors include, but are not limited to:

- Casual Volunteers/Contractors
- parents, carers and other adult family members of students, when they are attending St Marys Flexible School events or in a St Marys Flexible School environment
- people invited by the St Marys Flexible School or a staff member to attend a St Marys Flexible School event or to be in a St Marys Flexible School environment
- people who attend a St Marys Flexible School environment for commercial purposes, such as for deliveries or sales purposes.

## **“External Education Providers”**

An “External Education Provider” is any organisation that the St Marys Flexible School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the St Marys Flexible School.

The delivery of such a course may take place on St Marys Flexible School premises or elsewhere.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Child safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the St Marys Flexible School community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students.

Specific responsibilities include:

## **Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) Ltd**

EREA Ltd is the parent company of three subsidiary companies which operate schools and flexible learning centres governed and conducted in the Edmund Rice Tradition. It receives reports on child safeguarding matters from its subsidiary companies, in the context of its risk management oversight of the subsidiary companies.

## **EREA Flexible Schools Ltd**

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd is the proprietor of the School. It is responsible for:

- leading and supporting a positive safeguarding culture across designated schools
- providing expert safeguarding leadership resources
- assurance mechanisms related to schools
- oversight and analysis of active management and reporting (including legislative requirements such as Reportable Conduct)
- providing an Annual Report to the Member (EREA Ltd.)

## **EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board**

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board is the St Marys Flexible School's governing body.

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board has responsibility for EREA Flexible Schools Ltd's strategic directions, organisational policy and risk management.

It ensures that the St Marys Flexible School has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding child safety; approves and reviews the St Marys Flexible School's child safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures required for registration/re-registration as a non-government school; ensures that the St Marys Flexible School has and implements processes to comply with its child safety legal and regulatory obligations; and ensures that the St Marys Flexible School has ongoing monitoring processes to verify and evaluate the use of the resources allocated to manage child safeguarding obligations within the St Marys Flexible School.

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board delegates its functions relating to the operational management of the St Marys Flexible School and implementation of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd child safeguarding requirements to the Principal/Area Principal.

## **The Executive Director and CEO of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd**

The Executive Director and CEO of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd implements the strategy and policy approved by EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board and appoints staff to fulfil the leadership, management and operational structures of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd.

They ensure that EREA Flexible Schools Ltd-governed schools apply sound governance and management practices, and that EREA Flexible Schools Ltd-governed schools meet their child safety and child protection obligations and legislative requirements. They also monitor and assure appropriate and timely reporting to EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board in relation to child safety and child protection, to enable its members to discharge their responsibilities. They provide reports to EREA Ltd on child safeguarding matters relevant to risk management.

The Executive Director and CEO is the “head of a relevant entity” for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which is administered by the Office of the Children’s Guardian.

## **The NSW/TAS Regional Director**

The NSW/TAS Regional Director directs, supports and advises the Principal/Area Principals of all EREA Flexible Schools Ltd-governed schools in relation to child safety incidents and investigations.

They ensure that child safety incidents or concerns that occur at or involve EREA Flexible Schools Ltd-governed schools, as well as other child safeguarding issues, are promptly reported to EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board through the Executive Director and CEO.

For the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Executive Director and CEO has authorised the NSW/TAS Regional Director to undertake responsibility for reporting and investigating allegations of Reportable Conduct that involve the Principal/Area Principal.

## **The Director of Safeguarding**

The Director of Safeguarding supports EREA Flexible Schools Ltd and the Principal/Area Principals of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd-governed schools to maintain the highest standards in relation to the safety, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.



They support and advise Principal/Area Principals of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd-governed schools in relation to relevant child protection legislation and the implementation of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd child safeguarding requirements.

## **The Principal/Area Principal**

The Principal/Area Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the School, and the implementation of EREA Flexible Schools Ltd child safeguarding requirements. This will be done in conjunction with the Head of Campus where one is at a school site.

The Principal/Area Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safeguarding Policy and EREA Flexible Schools Ltd child safeguarding requirements are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School.

For the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Executive Director and CEO has authorised the Principal/Area Principal to undertake “head of a relevant entity” responsibilities for reporting and investigating allegations of Reportable Conduct that involve Staff, Volunteers and Contractors at the School. However, they must seek advice from the Director of Safeguarding and Director of Human Resources about risk management actions taken in relation to a staff member who is subject to an allegation or investigation.

## **The St Marys Flexible School EREA Flexible Schools Board**

Under the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd governance structure, the St Marys Flexible School EREA Flexible Schools Board is responsible for supporting and advising the Principal/Area Principal to ensure consistency and faithfulness to the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition.

Responsibility for the day-to-day management and implementation of the St Marys Flexible School’s child safeguarding policies and procedures rests with the Principal/Area Principal.

The St Marys Flexible School EREA Flexible Schools Board advises and supports the Principal/Area Principal in maintaining the St Marys Flexible School’s strategies for safeguarding children and young people.

## **The St Marys Flexible School’s Child Safeguarding Officers**

One or more senior staff members are nominated as the St Marys Flexible School’s Child Safeguarding Officers. Our Child Safeguarding Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and protection issues.

They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the St Marys Flexible School. They are also responsible for championing child safeguarding within the St Marys Flexible School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

They ensure that the St Marys Flexible School responds appropriately to students involved in child safety incidents and concerns, and provide assistance and advice to other members of the St Marys Flexible School community who receive or make a disclosure of abuse or other harm of a child or young person.

Our Child Safeguarding Officers are:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address
Matthew Rattenbury	Assistant Principal	0437 985 827	mathew.rattenbury@ereafsn.edu.au
Adam Richter	Principal	0437 985 827	adam.richter@ereafsn.edu.au
Sonja Marjanovic and Nadene Hall	Leader of Child Safeguarding	0474 460 935 / 0456 974 067	sonja.marjanovic@ereafsn.edu.au nadene.hall@ereafsn.edu.au

The Senior Regional Child Safeguarding Officer

St Mary's Flexible School has also appointed Michael Loudoun, the Head of Campus as the St Marys Flexible School’s Senior Regional Child Safeguarding Officer.

They have additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the St Marys Flexible School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal/Area Principal and the Head of Campus and Leadership Team as well as the NSW/TAS Regional Director.

## Staff Members

All Staff must comply with this Child Safeguarding Policy and the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct, be familiar with our child safeguarding policies and procedures and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and Working with Children Checks.

All Staff must be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, be observant, and raise all child safety incidents and concerns with a Child Safeguarding Officer.

All Staff are Mandatory Reporters, and must, by law, report to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child (aged under 16), or a particular group of children, are at risk of significant harm, and their suspicion arose in the course of their work at or for the St Marys Flexible School. All Staff who are adults (aged 18 or over) also have a legal obligation to report to Police when they know or believe that a child abuse offence has been committed against another person, including a student.

To meet these obligations, all Staff must:

- participate in child safeguarding induction and ongoing training provided by the St Marys Flexible School
- always follow the St Marys Flexible School's child safeguarding policies and procedures
- act in accordance with the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct
- identify and raise all child safety incidents and concerns with a Child Safeguarding Officer or the Principal/Area Principal
- identify and respond to concerns about students who are at risk of significant harm or who are or were the victim of a child abuse offence
- ensure that students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students
- comply with all relevant child safeguarding-related human resources policies and procedures.

## Volunteers and Contractors

All Volunteers and all Contractors at the St Marys Flexible School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the St Marys Flexible School environment.

To meet these obligations:

- All Volunteers and all Contractors must:
  - comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct
  - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm
  - raise all child safety concerns with a Child Safeguarding Officer or the Principal/Area Principal
  - comply with all relevant child safeguarding-related human resources policies and procedures.
- Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors must also:
  - participate in child safeguarding induction and ongoing training provided by the St Marys Flexible School
  - follow the child safeguarding policies and procedures to identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns.
- Regular Volunteers/Contractors and Casual Volunteers/Contractors must either:
  - participate in modified child safeguarding induction training; or
  - receive and acknowledge information about the Child Safeguarding Policy and the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct.

For Contractors, the St Marys Flexible School may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

## **External Education Providers**

All External Education Providers engaged by St Mary's Flexible School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the St Marys Flexible School environment.

All External Education Providers engaged by St Mary's Flexible School are required by the St Marys Flexible School to be familiar with our Child Safeguarding Policy and the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct.

St Mary's Flexible School will include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

## **WWCC Responsibilities**

The Senior Network Administrator and the Insert Position Title are responsible for verifying WWCC clearances for all Staff and for relevant Contractors and Volunteers when they first commence their role at the St Marys Flexible School, for monitoring the WWCC status of ongoing Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors and for all subsequent verifications.

Insert Summary

The HR Manager is responsible for maintaining the St Marys Flexible School's WWCC records.

## **ORGANISATION NAME'S POLICY**

### **Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct**

The EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct sets boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between Representatives of the St Marys Flexible School and students, including in physical and online environments.

We also have a Student Code of Conduct, which includes standards of behaviour for students relevant to child safeguarding.

Together, we refer to these as our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct.

Our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct include clear processes to report inappropriate behaviour. We publish our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at our St Marys Flexible School and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

### **Children and Young People's Rights to Safety, Information and Participation**

St Mary's Flexible School is a child safe and child-centred organisation, and we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We ensure that our physical and online environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our St Marys Flexible School and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

## **Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the St Marys Flexible School**

The St Marys Flexible School recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure that they have opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities (the variety of communities that are relevant to the St Marys Flexible School, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our Staff and student cohorts) know about the St Marys Flexible School's operations and policies, including the Child Safeguarding Policy and the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We build cultural safety at the St Marys Flexible School through partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as with culturally and linguistically diverse communities that make up our Staff and student cohorts.

## **Cultural Safety and Valuing Diversity in the St Marys Flexible School Community**

Our St Marys Flexible School values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- identify, confront and do not tolerate racism, and address any instances of racism within the St Marys Flexible School environment with appropriate consequences
- promote and support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- promote and support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- promote the safety of all vulnerable children
- support students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- support students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensure that all Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring that our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

## **Child Safeguarding Human Resources Management**

### **Recruitment and Screening**

St Mary's Flexible School applies best practice standards to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. Our practices include:

- making our commitment to child safety and wellbeing clear in recruitment advertising and documentation
- requiring all Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors to maintain a valid Working with Children Check clearance
- using additional selection, background checking and screening processes that take into account child safeguarding considerations.

### **Training On and Information About Child Safeguarding**

As a part of St Mary's Flexible School's induction process, all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors, must complete our child safeguarding induction program, which includes information about our child safeguarding policies, practices and procedures. All Staff, as well as relevant

Volunteers and Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing child safeguarding training at least annually.

Our child safeguarding induction and ongoing training program includes information about:

- this Child Safeguarding Policy
- the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
- recognising child abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators, including harm caused by other children and young people
- our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns (such as mandatory reporting, reporting to police and reportable conduct obligations)
- our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns
- Working with Children Check clearances, and other child safety and wellbeing human resources practices.

The St Marys Flexible School provides all Visitors to the St Marys Flexible School, including Casual Volunteers and Casual Contractors, with information about the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the St Marys Flexible School and to relevant external authorities.

## **Ongoing Supervision, Management and Support**

The St Marys Flexible School's Child Safeguarding Officers and Head of Campus and Leadership Team provide supervision and support to all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors to ensure that they are compliant with the St Marys Flexible School's approach to child safety.

Our child safeguarding supervision and support program includes:

- probationary periods for new staff members, where these are permitted by law or under an enterprise agreement
- annual performance reviews for all staff members
- appointing a supervising staff member to Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors and to those Regular Volunteers/Contractors who are engaged in "child-connected work"
- professional development programs for Staff that include child safeguarding education.



The St Marys Flexible School swiftly manages any inappropriate behaviour towards students, in accordance with our policies and legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing is the paramount consideration when managing inappropriate behaviour.

## **Complaints and Reporting Processes: The St Marys Flexible School's Response to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns**

St Mary's Flexible School fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the St Marys Flexible School community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns set out in the **Procedures** below and in the Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures.

We also have clear procedures that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect, or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a Volunteer, a Contractor or the St Marys Flexible School, set out in the **Procedures** below.

The St Marys Flexible School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including:

- allegations, complaints or disclosures of child abuse or other harm
- breaches of our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
- inappropriate behaviour by Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, students, parents/carers, Visitors and other members of the St Marys Flexible School community

when these are reported to the St Marys Flexible School, whether by Representatives of the St Marys Flexible School, students, parents/carers or anyone else.

The safety and wellbeing of the student/s involved in the matter will be the paramount consideration when responding to child safety incidents and concerns. The St Marys Flexible School follows the National Office of Child Safety's [Complaints Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#) when investigating and responding to child safety incidents and concerns.

The St Marys Flexible School's response will include:

- reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds externally to DCJ (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Offences), and/or the Office of the Children's Guardian (Reportable Conduct), depending on the issues raised
- reporting internally to EREA Flexible Schools Ltd:

- all matters that required reporting to an external agency
- harmful sexual behaviour by students that does not otherwise require external reporting
- other matters as directed by EREA Flexible Schools Ltd
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency and/or EREA Flexible Schools Ltd
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other vulnerable students (such as a student who is unable to live at home or a student who identifies as lesbian gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)
- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the law
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the St Marys Flexible School's response to it
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the St Marys Flexible School (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

## **Child Safeguarding Risk Management**

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board and St Mary's Flexible School recognise the importance of a risk management approach to child safeguarding and to minimising the risk of harm to children and young people in all St Marys Flexible School environments, without compromising their rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

We identify, assess and manage child safety risks in all St Marys Flexible School environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our St Marys Flexible School's activities, physical and online environments, and the characteristics of the student body, through our Risk Management Program. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We record identified risks to child safety and protection in our Child Safeguarding Risk Register, along with the actions in place at the St Marys Flexible School to manage these risks. EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board, the Principal/Area Principal and the Head of Campus and Leadership Team monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions at least annually.

## **Child Safeguarding Record Keeping and Privacy**

The St Marys Flexible School is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns.

We record all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the St Marys Flexible School.

St Mary's Flexible School collects, uses, and discloses information about children, young people and their families, including information in child safeguarding records, in accordance with NSW and federal privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our St Marys Flexible School collects, uses and discloses information, refer to our [Privacy Program](#).

## Communications

St Mary's Flexible School is committed to communicating our child safety and protection strategies, policies and procedures to our St Marys Flexible School community through the measures set out in the **Implementation** section below. In addition, we:

Insert a bullet point list of the methods used to communicate child safe procedures to parents, carers and the school community. .

## Child Safeguarding Policies and Practice Review and Improvement

St Mary's Flexible School is committed to the continuous improvement of our child safeguarding policies and procedures and of our child safety and protection practices. EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board reviews these policies and procedures at least every two years (and EREA Flexible Schools Ltd reviews these earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the St Marys Flexible School or legislation changes) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with relevant child safety and protection related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board/EREA Flexible Schools Ltd:

- actively seeks, actions, and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider St Marys Flexible School community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- analyses any complaints, concerns and child safety incidents that may have occurred
- communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the St Marys Flexible School community.

## PROCEDURES

## Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the St Marys Flexible School

*Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.*

*Any person, including all Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students, can at any time contact the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person (aged under 18), or a class of children or young persons, is at risk of significant harm. Voluntary reports to DCJ can be made by calling the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 or 1800 212 936 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).*

### Staff

All **Representatives of the St Marys Flexible School** must follow our Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally Policy and Procedures and report all child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Child Safeguarding Officer or the Principal/Area Principal.

Where the incident or concern involves the Principal/Area Principal, internal reports should instead be made to TAS/NSW Regional Director by Insert Contact Information.

We recognise that some children and young people face additional vulnerabilities to abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns. Our child safeguarding policies and procedures provide guidance on identifying additional vulnerabilities and barriers, and contains strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the St Marys Flexible School community and for enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the St Marys Flexible School.

### Students, Parents/Carers and Community Members

**Students** who have child safety concerns about themselves, or about any other child, young person or student aged 18 or over, can:

- disclose the incident or concern to a Child Safeguarding Officer
- disclose the incident or concern to any other staff member, Volunteer or Contractor. This might be done:
  - verbally
  - in writing
  - through electronic means (such as email)

- indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)
- disclose the incident or concern anonymously by using the St Marys Flexible School's anonymous Feedback box, which is located outside reception
- contact Child Helpline.

For more information, students can refer to the child-friendly version of our Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures, available [Insert Link to/Description of Where the Child-Friendly Child Safe Complaints Policy is Available](#).

**Parents/carers, family members and other community members** who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the St Marys Flexible School may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact:

- the St Marys Flexible School's Senior Regional Child Safeguarding Officer, Michael Loudoun, the Head of Campus, by phoning 0427 341 657 or emailing [michael.loudoun@ereafsn.edu.au](mailto:michael.loudoun@ereafsn.edu.au); or
- the Principal/Area Principal (or if the concern relates to the Principal/Area Principal, the TAS/NSW Regional Director by [Insert Contact Information](#)).

**Any person** can also contact the Senior Regional Child Safeguarding Officer, the Principal/Area Principal or the TAS/NSW Regional Director if they have concerns regarding the St Marys Flexible School's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know' basis.

## **The St Marys Flexible School's Response to and External Reporting of Child Safety Incidents or Concerns**

The Child Safeguarding Program sets out the procedures that the St Marys Flexible School will follow when notified of any child safety incident or concern involving a student, St Marys Flexible School staff member, Volunteer, Contractor, Visitor, or any other person connected to the St Marys Flexible School or the St Marys Flexible School environment.

These policies and procedures provide guidance for all Representatives of the St Marys Flexible School on their obligations to respond to child safety incidents and concerns and to report them to relevant external authorities.

These include:

- mandatory reporting to DCJ of children who are at risk of significant harm

- voluntary reporting to DCJ of young people who are at risk of significant harm
- mandatory reporting to Police of child abuse offences against children and young people
- reporting to Police in other situations where a student has been or is being harmed
- reporting Reportable Conduct by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to the Office of the Children's Guardian
- reporting child safety incidents or concerns occurring at or involving the St Marys Flexible School to EREA Flexible Schools Ltd.

These procedures are summarised for students, parents/carers and community members in the St Marys Flexible School's Procedures for Managing Staff Misconduct and Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff, available on our public website.

## **Support for Students, Families and Staff Following a Child Safety Incident or Disclosure**

The St Marys Flexible School will work closely with the student, parents and carers and our wellbeing team to provide all available support services. The St Marys Flexible School employs a range of measures to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern, depending on the particular circumstances of the matter and of the student and their family:

- a Child Safeguarding Officer may work with the student, and their family if appropriate, to develop a Student Support Plan
- support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include referrals to internal or external support, such as the St Marys Flexible School Counsellor, youth workers, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation which specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm

### **Insert Additional School Processes, Names and Roles Relating to Support Provided Following a Child Safety Incident**

The St Marys Flexible School also offers similar support to former students who disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the St Marys Flexible School.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for the Staff, Volunteers and Contractors involved. The St Marys Flexible School assists impacted Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to access necessary support.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Child Safeguarding Policy is published on our St Marys Flexible School's public website.

It is provided to new Staff, to Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and to Direct Contact and Regular Contractors at their induction. Training about the Child Safeguarding Policy is also included in annual refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors.

All Visitors to the St Marys Flexible School, including Casual Volunteers and Casual Contractors, are provided with information about the Child Safeguarding Policy and the EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Code of Conduct, and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the St Marys Flexible School and to relevant external authorities, through Insert How Child Safe Information is Made Available to Visitors/Casual Volunteers/Casual Contractors.

This Policy and its Procedures are also communicated to Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and other members of the St Marys Flexible School community through other mediums such as List where the Child Protection/Safe Policies are made available e.g. newsletters, our annual report and welcome packs for Board members, staff members and Direct Contact Volunteers.

The St Marys Flexible School makes this Policy and its Procedures accessible to students by providing all students with a child-friendly version of it and the EREA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, found Insert Link to/Description of Where the School's Child-Friendly Child Safe Policy is Available, and by communicating them through Insert Methods of Communication .

## BREACH OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

St Mary's Flexible School enforces the Child Safeguarding Policy and the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct.

In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review, in a timely and fair manner, that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

The NSW Children's Guardian monitors and enforces compliance with the NSW Child Safe Standards for all child safe organisations in NSW, including schools.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

A review of this Child Safeguarding Policy is conducted biennially or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation.

EREA Flexible Schools Ltd Board is responsible for ensuring that this Policy and its Procedures are reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy and its Procedures.

## **EREA FLEXIBLE SCHOOLS LTD AND ST MARY'S FLEXIBLE LEARNING CENTRE POLICY AND PROCEDURES LINKAGES**

### **SOURCE OF OBLIGATION AND RELATED LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS**

- [NSW Child Safe Standards](#), Standard 1
- [National Catholic Child Safeguarding Standards](#), Standard 1

### **RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS**

- Mandatory Reporting Form
- Procedures for Managing Staff Misconduct
- Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff

### **REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

- Department of Communities and Justice, [Reporting a Child at Risk](#)
- Department of Communities and Justice, [Mandatory Reporters](#)

### **POLICY ADMINISTRATION**

Insert Policy Control/Administration Information