



**MERCY**  
Regional College

## **Child Safe Policy**

**July 2016**

### **RATIONALE:**

The Mercy Regional College community is strongly committed to policies and procedures developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including all forms of abuse. This commitment extends to the whole college community including leaders, staff, volunteers, students and their families.

### **SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT:**

*“I have come that you may have life and have it to the full”*  
(John 10:10)

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

#### Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, Mercy Regional College have a right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

#### Children’s Rights to Safety and Participation

The staff and volunteers of Mercy Regional College encourage students to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Student empowerment and leadership is a key priority for Mercy Regional College and is reflective of our broader commitment to holistic education where students are encouraged and challenged to grow academically, spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and physically. Mercy Regional College offers a broad set of programs and activities designed to facilitate empowerment and leadership.

#### Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

We value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and their families
- promote the personal safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life

### Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Mercy Regional College will apply the most thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working With Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff and volunteers. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for staff and volunteer positions.

### Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Mercy Regional College provides support and supervision to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated. We have a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, with all staff having received the Code and undertaken rigorous professional development on it. Our volunteers also receive a copy of the Code and are required to adhere to it. All new staff at Mercy Regional College will be taken through the Code as part of their incoming induction program.

### Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct, and store the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures

- *Child Safe Reporting and Responding Policy*
- *Child Safe Reporting Procedure*
- *Complaints & Disclosure Policy*
- *Complaints Procedure*
- *Disclosure of Abuse or Harm Procedure*
- *Child Safe Responding Procedure*

*The specific policies and procedures are still to be confirmed.*

Mrs Emily Stephens and Mr Chris Grant have been appointed as Child Safety Officers with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to Child Safety.

### Risk Management

Risk management is an approach that minimises the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. Our Risk Management Plan (*To be developed according to Standard 6*) outlines and details all aspects of risk across our whole school environment (on site and off site school activities) with specific activity risk assessments. In addition to our general Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse and harm to our students.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

Developed:	July 2016
Ratified:	August 2016
Policy to be reviewed:	2019