



Mount Alvernia College

Student Protection Processes

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I. Introduction: Governance Framework

These processes have been developed by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC), in consultation with Catholic School Authorities (CSAs), to assist CSAs to meet legislative and procedural processes for responding to, and reporting, abuse, harm and behaviour of a staff member that a student considers is inappropriate.

Nothing that is written in these processes below prevents a staff member or any other person from taking immediate action to notify Queensland Police Service and/or the Department responsible for Child Safety, particularly if they believe that it is essential to act to ensure a student's safety.

Effective date	Insert date:
These processes shall be reviewed every year, or when necessary, as required by changes to legislation, policy, or procedure.	5 February 2024

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is Mount Alvernia College Ltd.

The Director/s of the Governing Body for the Mount Alvernia College are Chair Kate Eggar, Deputy Chair Gerard Ryan, Stacey Lang, Ally Hannon, Michael Skinner, Katie Lyndon, Jaimee O'Brien and Dominee Rye.

Delegation

Pursuant to section 366B of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, The Director/s of the Governing Body have delegated to the person performing the duties of Chair of the Board of Directors their obligations under section 366 and 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* and more particularly the obligations of the Director/s of a non-State school's governing body of receiving a report and giving a copy of the report to a police officer.

Student Protection Contacts

Under the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017* (section 16(3)), Mount Alvernia College has at least two nominated staff members to whom a student can report behaviour of another staff member that the student considers inappropriate. The names of these Student Protection Contacts are made known to staff, students and parents/carers and are published on the school's website and in the student planner, maintained on a central register, and are displayed visually around the College and updated regularly.

Ms Samantha Jensen (Principal) jenss@staff.mta.qld.edu.au

Ms Kathy Dendy (Deputy Principal Student Development and Wellbeing) dendk@staff.mta.qld.edu.au

Ms Tanya O'Connell College Counsellor mccot@staff.mta.qld.edu.au

Ms Amber Bleakley bleaa@staff.mta.qld.edu.au

Phone: 07 33576000

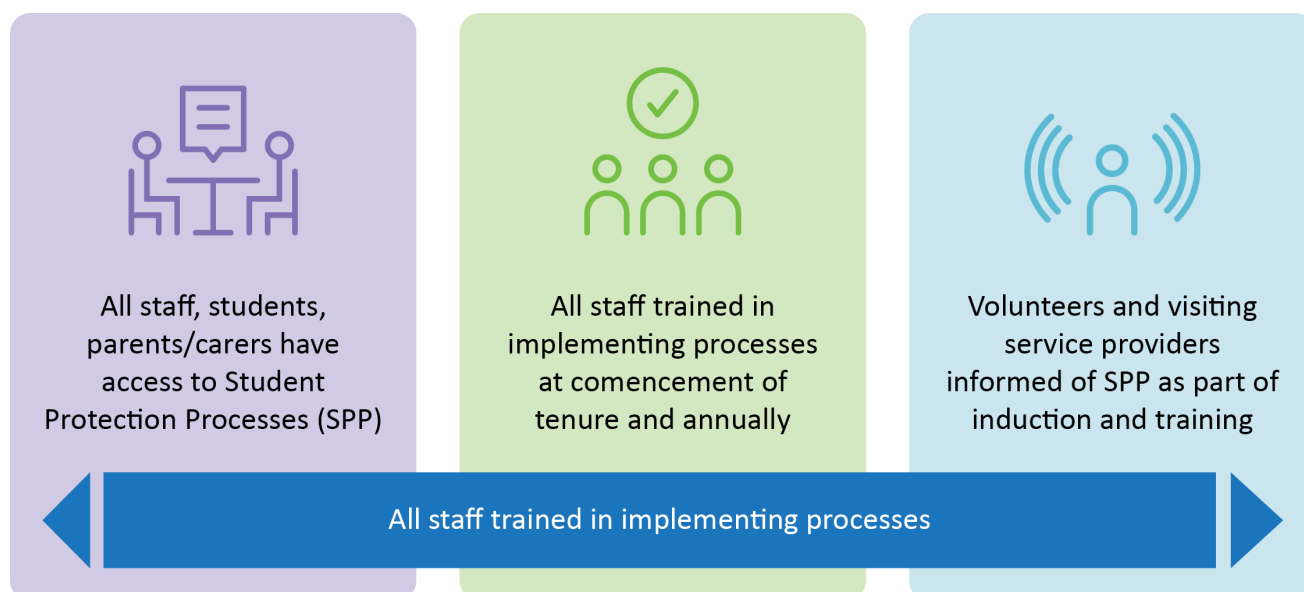
Complaints Procedure

Under the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017* (section 16(5)), Mount Alvernia College has a written complaints procedure to address allegations of non-compliance with student protection processes. Information about the complaints procedure is available from The Mount Alvernia College website and MyMtA portal. [Policies & Reports - Mount Alvernia College \(mta.qld.edu.au\)](https://www.mta.qld.edu.au/policies-reports)

Awareness and Implementation

If staff members, volunteers, parents/carers, or students require further information in relation to any of the processes described in this document, and/or other student protection compliance requirements, advice should be obtained from the Principal, the School's Student Protection Contacts or The Mount Alvernia College Board.

The Mount Alvernia College Ltd Board is responsible for ensuring the implementation and dissemination of the Student Protection Processes (SPP) in line with Section 16(4) [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulation 2017](#). This includes making the SPP available to staff, students, parents/carers, volunteers and contractors.



This is achieved by:

- Publishing an electronic copy of the Student Protection Processes on the Mount Alvernia College Website and Staff, Parent and Student Dashboards of our LMS (MyMtA)
- All Staff, College Board Directors, volunteers will complete the Student Protection eLearning module annually through CompliLearn Portal (within 4 weeks of commencing their employment/engagement);
- Students are made aware of the student protection processes, at the point of enrolment;
- All staff to receive annually, professional development in student protection processes;
- The College reports annually to the Board as to how the processes are being implemented within the school, monitored and oversighted. The Principal report is minuted in the Board Minutes.
- Students are made aware of the student protection processes in the Student Planner, and through Homeroom and the Personal Best Program.
- Parents receive information through communication in the college newsletter.

This document should be read in conjunction with the *Student Protection Guidelines (SPG) for Mount Alvernia College*.

2. Our Responsibilities

Mount Alvernia College is committed to creating and maintaining safe environments for students. This document sets out the responsibilities and processes for all staff members. The document also provides guidance and information for volunteers, other personnel, and parents/carers where they have a concern for the protection of a student. This document specifies:

Processes for reporting and responding to significant harm or allegations of significant harm to students, including physical, psychological, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect in accordance with legislative requirements

Processes for dealing with alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student

Processes for reporting a child sexual offence in accordance with Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 & Criminal Code Act 1899

Processes for responding to harm or risk of harm caused by students themselves or others as per S16 (1) of the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017

All Catholic schools are bound by a range of legislation that sets out our responsibilities for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. [Appendix 2](#) provides more detailed information about the relevant legislation.

Fundamentally, it is the responsibility of each member of staff and other personnel, to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of every student. This includes responding to any reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by abuse and/or neglect including sexual abuse, sexual offences and alleged inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards a student. The following definitions are used to cover the breadth of harm that is captured in the different legislation as per [Appendix 2](#):

As per the *Child Protection Act 1999* s.9:

- (1) Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing
- (2) It is immaterial how the harm is caused
- (3) Harm can be caused by –
 - a) physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - b) sexual abuse or exploitation.

The *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* s364 defines sexual abuse as:

sexual abuse, in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances—

- a) the other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- b) the relevant person has less power than the other person;
- c) there is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

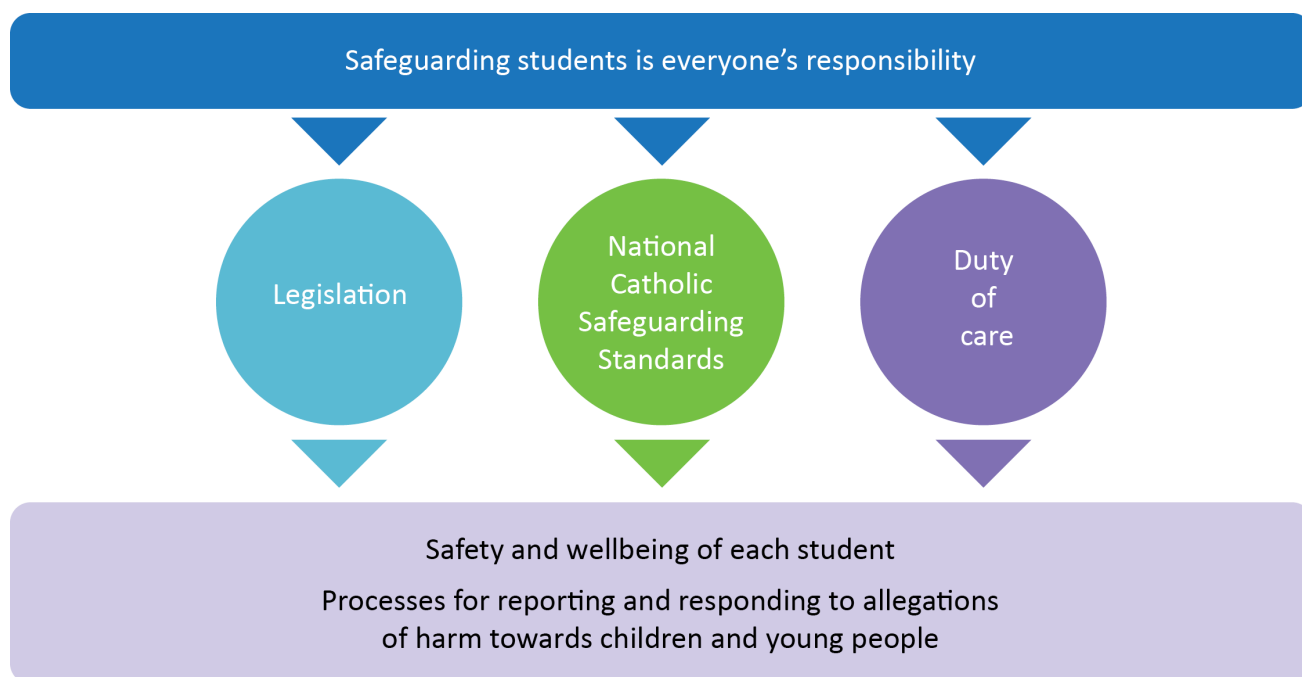
For further information see [Student Protection Guidelines](#)

All schools should develop processes and systems to support staff and other personnel to ensure all reports are actioned in a timely manner. These processes need to be clearly communicated to all staff.

Failure to report and respond can be both an offence under the relevant legislation and may constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct of Mount Alvernia College. Failure to act is not acceptable, it is **everyone's** responsibility to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The reporting processes for any allegations of significant abuse, harm or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student are set out in this document.

The regulatory framework includes the relevant legislation, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards which have been developed and adopted by the Catholic Church in Australia to support the creation of a child safe environment, and the associated duty of care of staff. This is visualised below:



3. Reporting Framework

This section summaries the actions required if any person who is part of the school community either in a paid or voluntary capacity has concerns or suspicions of:

- c) abuse and harm to a student; and
- d) alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student.

3.1 Who is responsible for identifying and responding to allegations of abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student?

The Student Protection Processes are relevant to any person who is part of the school community either in a paid or voluntary capacity. This includes but is not limited to the following personnel:

- Teachers
- Principals
- All staff, which includes all other personnel employed by Catholic Education
- Contractors who provide services to students on Catholic Education sites
- Volunteers
- Students on practicums
- Visitors to the school community

Staff members have responsibility for **reporting**.

Other stakeholders, that is, volunteers, other personnel and parents/carers who identify concerns or suspicions of abuse, harm or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student, are responsible for conferring with the appropriate personnel, as outlined in this document.

Definitions of terminology

Mount Alvernia College uses the following descriptors as specified in the relevant legislation.

First Person

This document uses the term [First Person](#) to refer to the staff member:

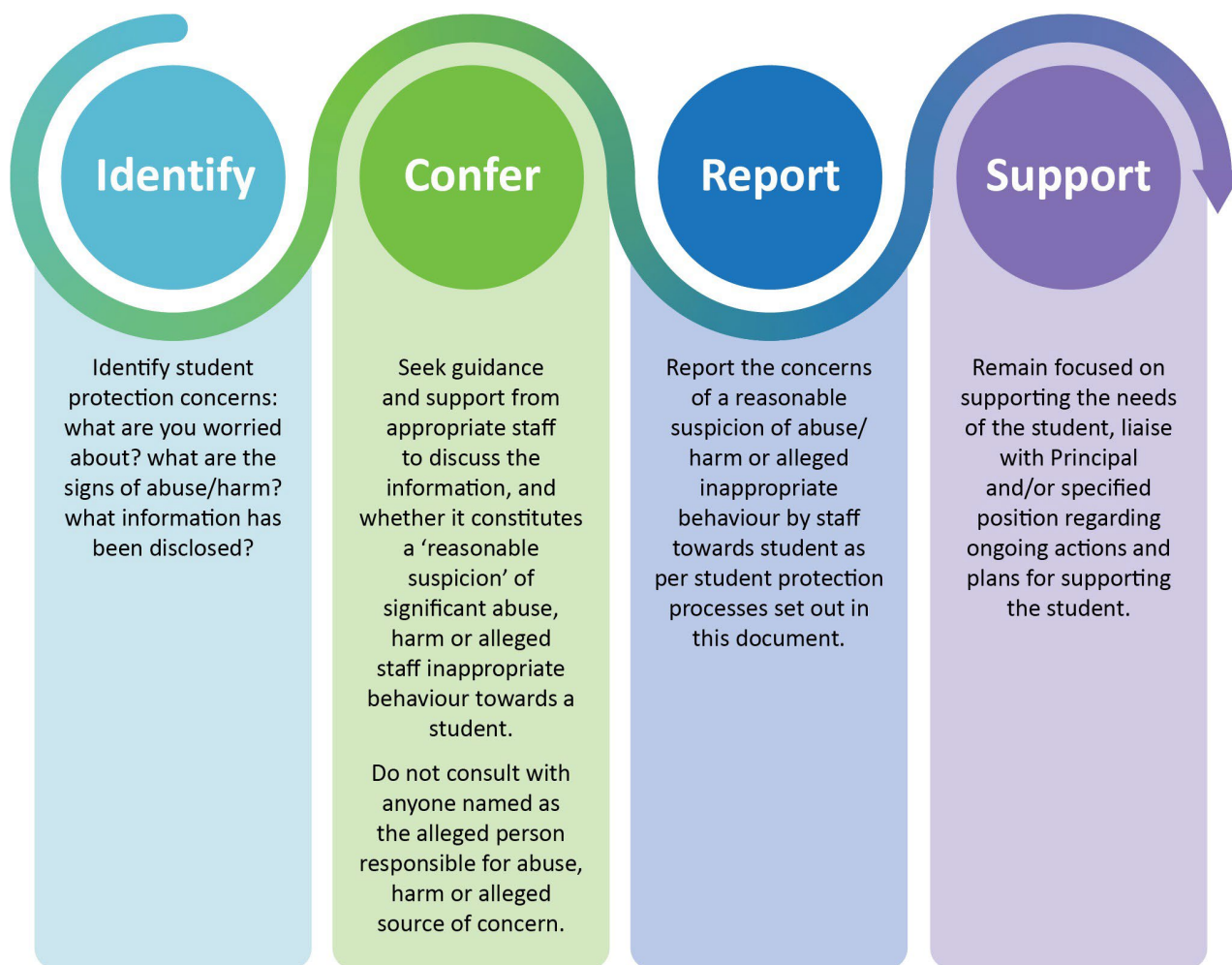
- who becomes aware of alleged abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student, this includes seeing and/or hearing about alleged abuse, harm or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student; **and**
- has the responsibility to commence the process of reporting; **and**
- this responsibility cannot be delegated to someone else.

The First Person fulfills their responsibilities by following the processes outlined in this document and immediately reporting abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student to the Principal or Student Protection Contacts in their school.

3.2 Framework for responding

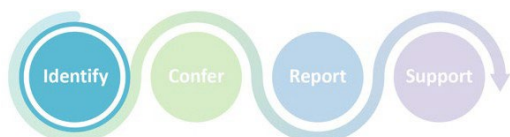
The Framework for responding to and reporting student protection concerns involves four steps: Identify, Confer, Report, Support (ICRS). This Framework is explained below and is referred to throughout this document.

Flowchart 1: Framework for responding to protection concerns



3.3 Identify

Any person who is part of the school community either in a paid or voluntary capacity is responsible for identifying student protection concerns.



Identifying concerns includes becoming aware of, recognising, seeing, or receiving information. This includes:

- Recognising the signs of abuse, harm, neglect, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student.
- Seeing or hearing something concerning.
- Receiving information from students, staff, parents/carers, or other community members about allegations of abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student.

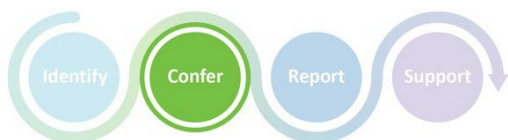
When in doubt, always confer with the Principal and /or Student Protection Contacts.

Resources to assist you:

[Student Protection Guidelines](#)

[FAQ](#)

3.4 Confer



3.4.1 What is conferring?

- Conferring means formally consulting with appropriate colleagues, for example Principal or Student Protection Contacts, to discuss and establish whether the information received may constitute a **'reasonable suspicion'** of abuse, harm or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student.
- Conferral is an opportunity to discuss and seek guidance about the concerns and agree on actions.
- Agreed actions and decisions must always be documented. This includes:
 - whether a 'reasonable suspicion' is identified resulting in the need to report; or
 - where the information does not constitute a 'reasonable suspicion', what, if any follow up support is required.

3.4.2 Why confer?

- Engaging in appropriate consultation to seek more information or guidance can:
 - inform responses and assist with the rigour of the decision making;
 - identify contextual factors/information that may not otherwise be known. For example, the Principal may have relevant information about a family;
 - aid in deciding whether a 'reasonable suspicion' of harm has occurred to support the decision to report;
 - assist in identifying if there is a parent who may be 'willing and able' to protect the student in the case of harm;
 - support staff in making a decision and help minimise psychosocial risks to staff; and
 - facilitate the best possible safety and support response for a student.
- Conferral is not reporting, nor is it investigating, it is a support to aid in deciding whether a 'reasonable suspicion' of harm has occurred under legislative requirements.

3.4.3 Who do I confer with?

- Conferral with the Principal or Student Protection Contacts is always recommended. The exception is if the Principal or Student Protection Contact is identified as the alleged person responsible for the harm or abuse. Conferral can also include the Department responsible for Child Safety, Queensland Police Service or Child and Family Connect. However wherever possible it is recommended to confer with the Principal and/or Student Protection Contact first.
- Conferral must not occur with anyone allegedly involved in the concerns to maintain safety of the student and avoid conflicts of interest and bias.
- The First Persons must **never notify** the person alleged to have caused the abuse or harm.
- Conferral does not replace the First Person's responsibility to report and respond to the harm.

3.4.4 How do I maintain confidentiality?

- Confidentiality is a crucial element of conferral processes. Information sharing should consider:
 - *The appropriateness of the person* you wish to confer with and their role, i.e., Student Protection Contact and/or Principal. This person must not be involved as a subject of concern.
 - *Limiting what information is shared to the extent necessary.* Consider what information will help respond to the immediate safety and well-being of a student without having to disclose too much personal information.
 - *Focusing on the purpose of the conferral*, i.e., to support decision making about whether there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse, harm or alleged inappropriate staff behaviour that should be reported.

3.4.3 If I confer do I still need to report?

Yes. Confering does not replace the legal obligations to report. Confering is a process to support and assist in making a decision if there is a reasonable suspicion of significant harm or risk of significant harm or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour. If the answer is **yes**, you must follow the processes as detailed in these Student Protection Processes.

Maintaining the safety of the student is the primary concern

Resources to assist you:

[Student Protection Guidelines](#)

[FAQ](#)

3.5 Report

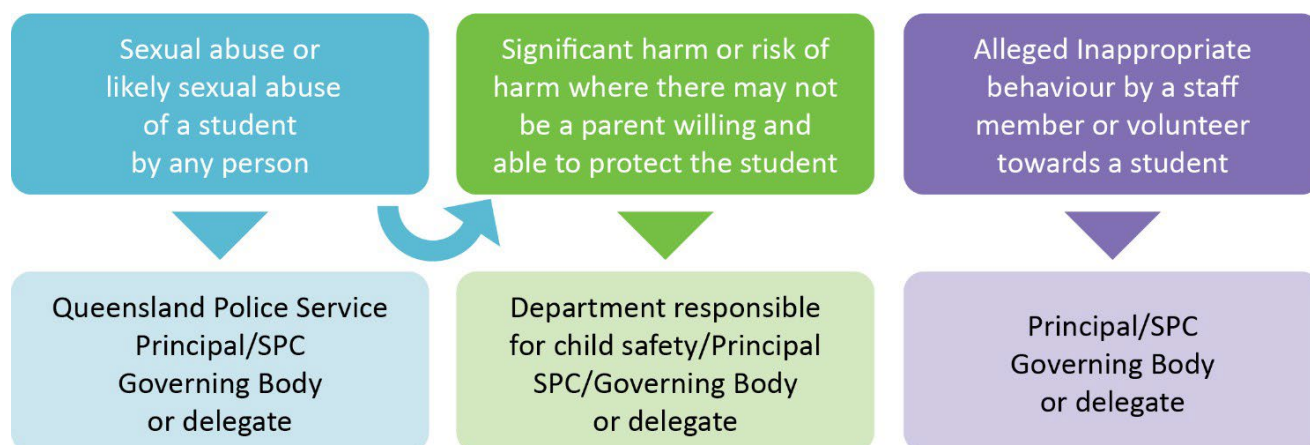


It is the responsibility of **all staff** members employed by Catholic Education and all personnel on Catholic Education sites as identified in this document to report concerns of significant abuse, harm or risk of significant harm or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student.

Our obligations include adherence to:

- Section 13E [Child Protection Act 1999](#)
- Sections 16(1) and (2) of the [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulation 2017](#)
- Any concerns about sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse are reported to the Queensland Police Service in accordance with Sections 366 and 366A of the [Education \(General Provision\) Act 2006](#)
- Sections 229BB and 229BC [Criminal Code Act 1899](#) requires that any adult report concerns about sexual offending against a child by another adult to the Queensland Police Service and take action to protect a child from a sexual offence.
- A report under the *Criminal Code Act 1899* is only required if a matter has not already been reported under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse) or the *Child Protection Act 1999* (reporting of significant harm/risk of significant harm where there may not be a parent able and willing to protect).

Flowchart 2: Reporting process for allegations of significant abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student



3.5.4.1 What does report mean?

- Reporting is the act of providing a written report about concerns when there is a 'reasonable suspicion' that a student has:
 - Experienced significant harm or is at risk of significant harm and does not have a parent willing and able to protect them from harm.
 - Experienced sexual abuse or is likely to be sexually abused.
 - Been the subject of alleged inappropriate behaviour by a staff member or behaviour by another person associated with the school, (for example, a volunteer or contactor) towards a student.

3.5.4.2 Who is responsible for reporting?

- The staff member who becomes aware of the alleged abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour is the First Person. The First Person is responsible for immediately reporting concerns. This includes providing a written report.
- The First Person may have support in completing the written report from the Principal and/or Student Protection Contact (if available). However, the First Person has responsibility under law to submit the report themselves. If the First Person is the Principal, then the Principal completes the written report.
- Reporting abuse/harm needs to be prioritised.
 - The First Person **must not delay** in reporting the concerns to the Principal/Student Protection Contact.
 - The Principal/Student Protection Contacts **must not delay** submitting the report to the relevant authorities.
 - To facilitate this, schools will support the First Persons to ensure all reports are actioned in a timely manner which can include for example, being released from their duties.
- The First Person must seek confirmation that the written report has been submitted to the appropriate authorities in writing wherever possible.

Resources to assist you:

[FAQ](#)

[Flowchart 3](#)

[Flowchart 4](#)

3.6 Support



- At all times it is essential to remain focused on the support needs of the student. Key questions to ask include:
 - Have all appropriate steps been taken to secure the student’s safety and wellbeing?
 - What support does the student need?
 - Who is best situated to provide this support?
- In the first instance consult with the Principal, and/or Student Protection Contact to develop a plan for how to best support the student, including who has responsibility for this.
- Support options can include referral to the Student Counsellor/Guidance Officer or organisations such as [Kids Helpline](#) and others, depending on the situation. This should be coordinated through the Principal and Student Protection Contact.
- Support also includes support provided to the family/carers of the student as appropriate.
- **Remember the needs of the student remain of paramount importance.**

Resources to support you:

[FAQ](#)

[Queensland Child Protection Guide](#)

[Queensland College of Teachers resources](#)

4. Reporting Requirements

This section outlines the legislative reporting requirements and provides guidance on the process for reporting.

4.1 Key guiding principles

The following key principles guide the reporting process:

- The safety and wellbeing of every child and young person is the paramount concern. Every child has the right to:
 - be protected from abuse, neglect and inappropriate behaviour by staff or other personnel associated with the school towards a student;
 - to dignity, privacy, respect, and safety.
- All members of Mount Alvernia College and other personnel:
 - have a duty to care for children and young people; and
 - must take necessary action to protect children and young people from harm.
- Reports of alleged sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse must be made to the Queensland Police Service even if there is a parent willing and able to protect their child from harm, in line with the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 obligations.
- All staff members employed by Catholic Education are obligated to report and follow the processes set out in this document.
- Urgency in responding is key.

4.2 Requirement to report sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse to the Queensland Police Service under the [Education \(General Provision\) Act 2006](#) and the [Criminal Code Act 1899](#)

4.2.1 What are our obligations?

- In accordance with sections 366 and 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, if the First Person becomes aware or [reasonably suspect](#) that a student has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused by another person, the First Person must immediately report this concern to the Queensland Police Service. (See Flowchart 3 below)
- The First Person has a responsibility to safeguard the child.
- The First Person must follow the reporting requirements set out in this process. This includes conferral with the Principal and or Student Protection Contact and completion of a report.
- All adults in Queensland (as per s229BC of the *Criminal Code Act 1899*) are required to report a reasonable suspicion of a sexual offence against a child, irrespective of where this occurs. Examples can include but not limited to:
 - A teacher may be coaching netball for a private non-school related team and a disclosure of a sexual offence is made to them.
 - A staff member is made aware through their friendship network of a sexual offence against a child.

The First Person **cannot** delegate or transfer the reporting requirements to another person. It is the responsibility of the First Person to make the report as per legal requirements. **Remember** the First Person can first confer and seek guidance from appropriate personnel.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Failure to protect a student from a child sexual offence

In addition to the requirement to report a child sexual offence, under section 229BB of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* it is a criminal offence for an Accountable Person, that is an adult, to fail to protect a child from a child sexual offence.

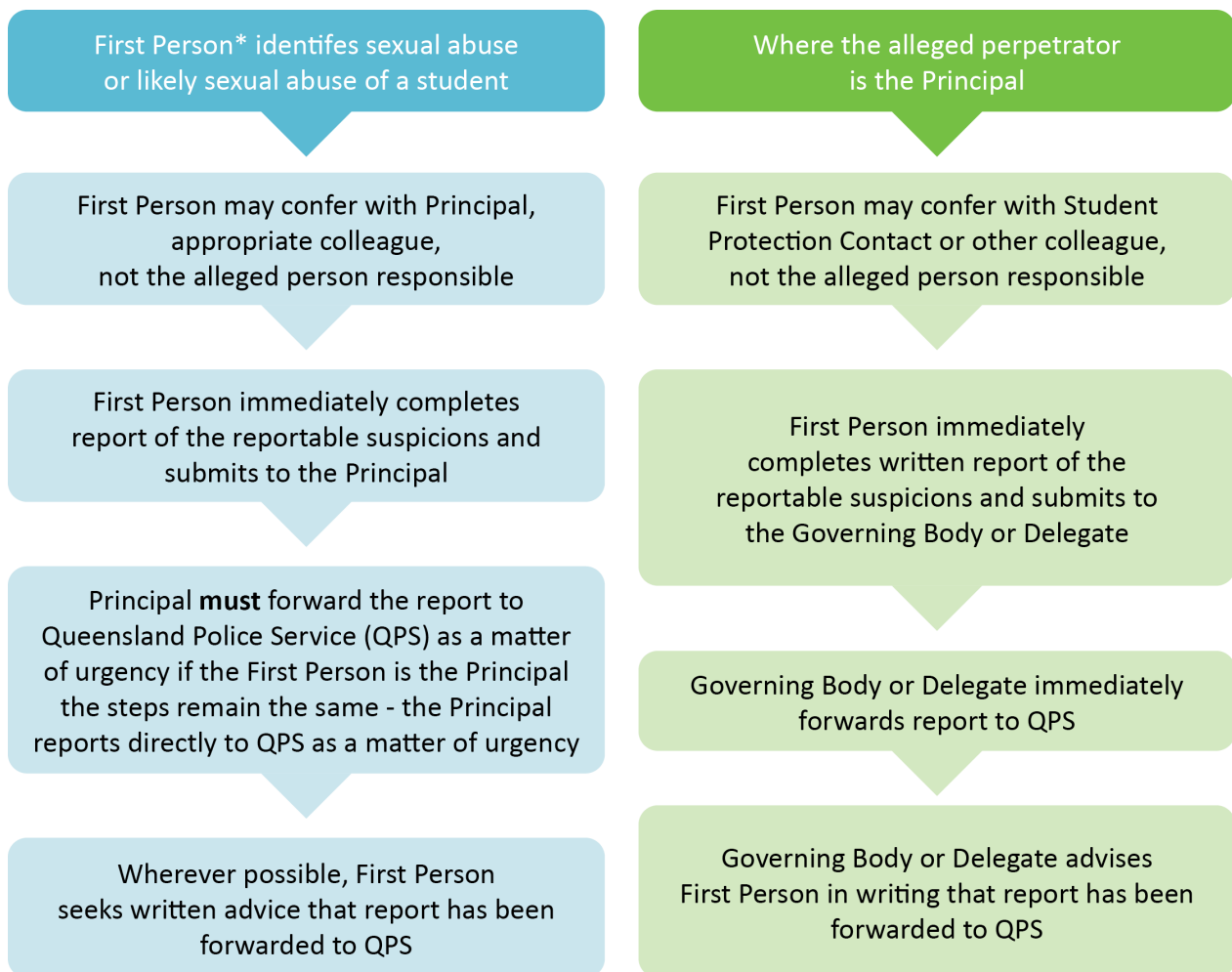
A failure to protect offence will be committed if an Accountable Person:

- a) knows there is a significant risk that another adult associated with the institution (school) will commit a child sexual offence against a child; and
- b) they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk; and
- c) they willfully or negligently fail to reduce or remove the risk.

Failing to report sexual abuse also breaches the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, and Catholic Education Authorities' policies and procedures.

In relation to **sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse**, the process for reporting involves:

Flowchart 3: Key steps for reporting sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse



- *The First Person must **satisfy themselves** that the Principal has provided a report to QPS in a timely manner.
- If the First Person does not reasonably suppose that the Principal has provided the report to QPS, they **must, as a matter of urgency**, make the report directly to QPS.
- First Persons are encouraged to confer with Mount Alvernia College for support in making the mandatory report themselves.

Important Note

For the purposes of Mount Alvernia College mandatory reporting of sexual abuse and likely sexual abuse relates to all students irrespective of their age, (i.e., aged 18 and over).

It is the policy of Mount Alvernia College **that all** reasonable suspicion that a student has experienced sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse are reported to the Queensland Police in accordance with these processes. This is irrespective of the context, i.e., during the course of the staff member's employment at the school, or in their private capacity outside the school.

Resources to assist you:

[FAQ](#)

[Student Protection Guidelines](#)

[Flowchart 3](#)

[Flowchart A](#)

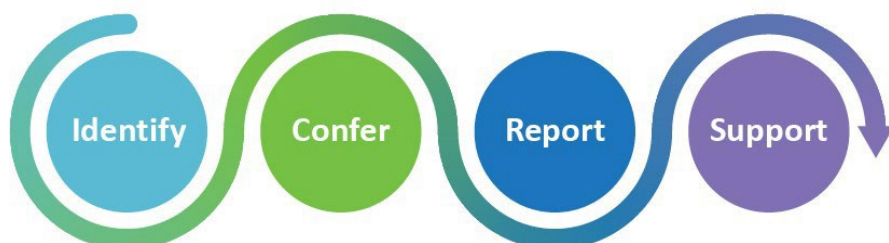
[Flowchart B](#)

4.3 Requirement to report to the Department responsible for Child Safety under the [Child Protection Act 1999](#)

4.3.1 What are our obligations?

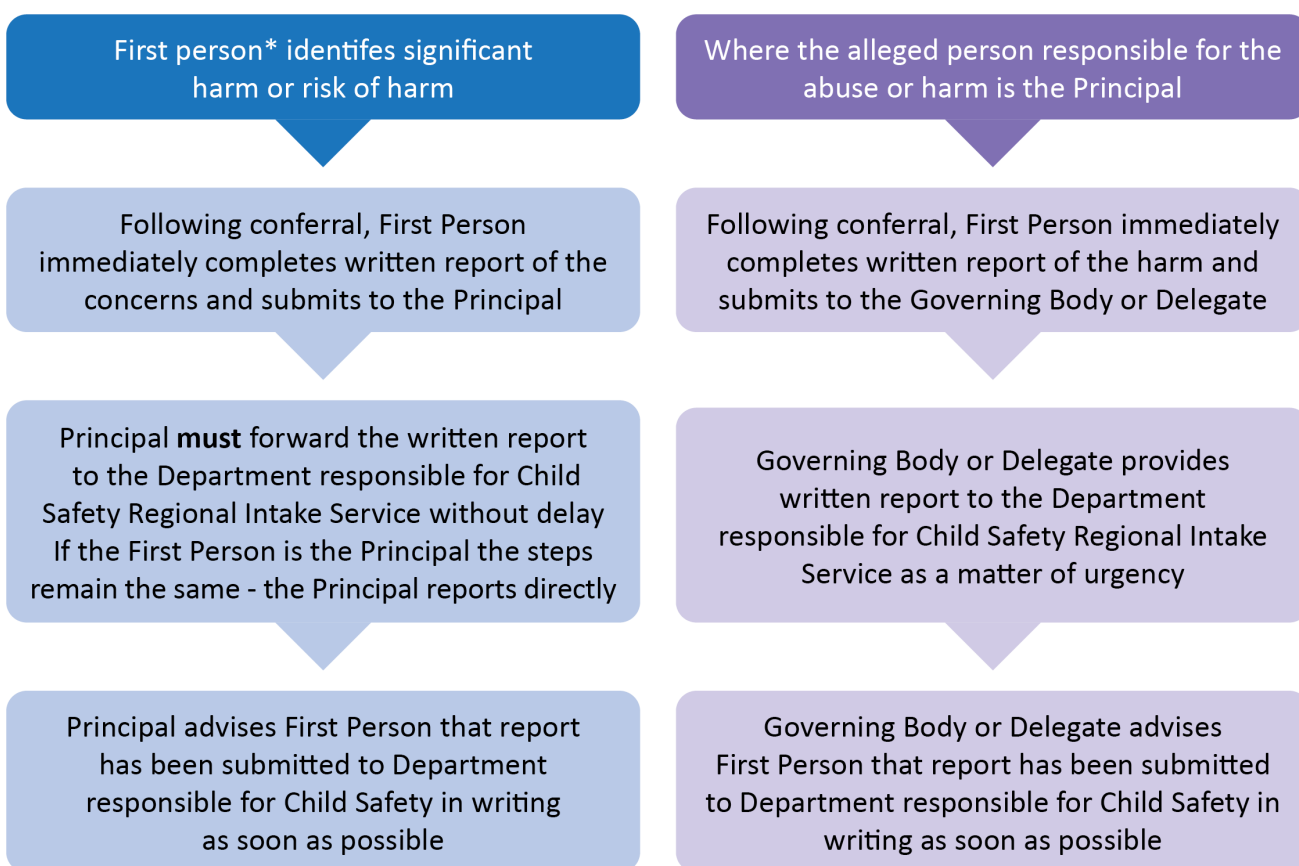
- The *Child Protection Act 1999* requires the reporting of any reasonable suspicion of significant harm or risk of significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse where there may not be a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm to the department responsible for Child Safety.
- Section 13E (1) of the *Child Protection Act 1999* identifies teachers as **mandatory** reporters to report significant harm or risk of significant physical or sexual abuse where the child may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm. This brings with it consequences for not fulfilling these obligations. These obligations cannot be delegated or transferred to another person.
- **All staff** members employed by Catholic Education have an obligation to report reasonable suspicions of significant harm or risk of harm to a child or young person as per the processes set out in this document.
- All other personnel have a responsibility to report reasonable suspicions of significant harm or risk of harm to a child or young person to the Principal and or Student Protection Contact as per the processes set out in this document.
- The First Person has a responsibility to safeguard the child and must follow the reporting requirements set out in this document. This includes conferral with the Principal and or Student Protection Contact and completion of a report.
- It is always recommended that the First Person confer and seek guidance from the Principal or Student Protection Contact at the school.

Remember: Reporting occurs after the process of identification and conferral



The process for reporting is outlined in flowchart 4 below:

Flowchart 4: Reporting process for significant harm or risk of significant harm



- **First Persons are encouraged to make mandatory reports to the Department responsible for Child Safety [Child Safety] through their Principal or a director of the Mount Alvernia College Ltd Board (as described above).*
- *The First Person must satisfy themselves that the Principal or a Director of Mount Alvernia College Ltd Board has provided a report to Child Safety as a matter of urgency. If the First Person does not reasonably suppose that the report has been made, they **must, as a matter of urgency**, make the report directly to the department responsible for Child Safety.*
- *First Persons are encouraged to confer with a Mount Alvernia College Student Protection Contact for support in making the mandatory report themselves.*

Resources to assist you:

[Flowchart C](#)

[Student Protection Guidelines](#)

[Child Protection Act 1999](#)

[FAQ](#)

4.4 Requirement to respond to all harm, abuse or allegations of harm or abuse

In accordance with legislative requirements, Catholic School Authorities have a responsibility to respond to harm or allegations of harm to a student irrespective of the cause. This section outlines our responsibilities.

4.4.1 Allegations of harm/risk of harm by Principal, staff member or other personnel or volunteer

A member of Mount Alvernia College who forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has suffered or is at risk of harm (that is, sexual, physical, psychological, emotional harm or neglect) caused by the Principal, staff member or other personnel, has responsibility to follow the processes outlined in this document. It is the responsibility of all personnel to safeguard and protect all students.

Where a member of Mount Alvernia College forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by a staff member or other personnel, the reporting processes detailed in sections 4.2 and 4.3 must be followed.

Where a member of Mount Alvernia College forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by the school **Principal** the reporting processes detailed in sections 4.2 and 4.3 must be followed.

Resources to assist you:

[Flowchart 3 and Flowchart 4](#)

4.4.2 Harm or risk of harm to a student caused by self-harm

All Mount Alvernia College staff and other personnel must respond to students who deliberately cause pain or damage to their own body which can be suicidal or non-suicidal in intent. The first priority is the immediate safety of the student. This includes determining if medical attention such as first aid is required and/or an immediate response from emergency services or mental health services is required.

Self-harm can take on different forms and its frequency can vary from student to student.

Self-harm is normally a sign that a student is feeling intense emotional pain and distress. Therefore, self-harming behaviour by a student must be reported immediately to the Principal and/or Student Protection Contact at the school.

As with all situations, there is a responsibility to report the harm as per section 4.3 if the First Person forms a reasonable suspicion that a student:

- has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of significant harm, as a result of their self-harming behaviour; **and**
- may not have a parent able and willing to protect the student from harm, (for example refusing to support the student in accessing medical or psychological care or unable to take protective action).

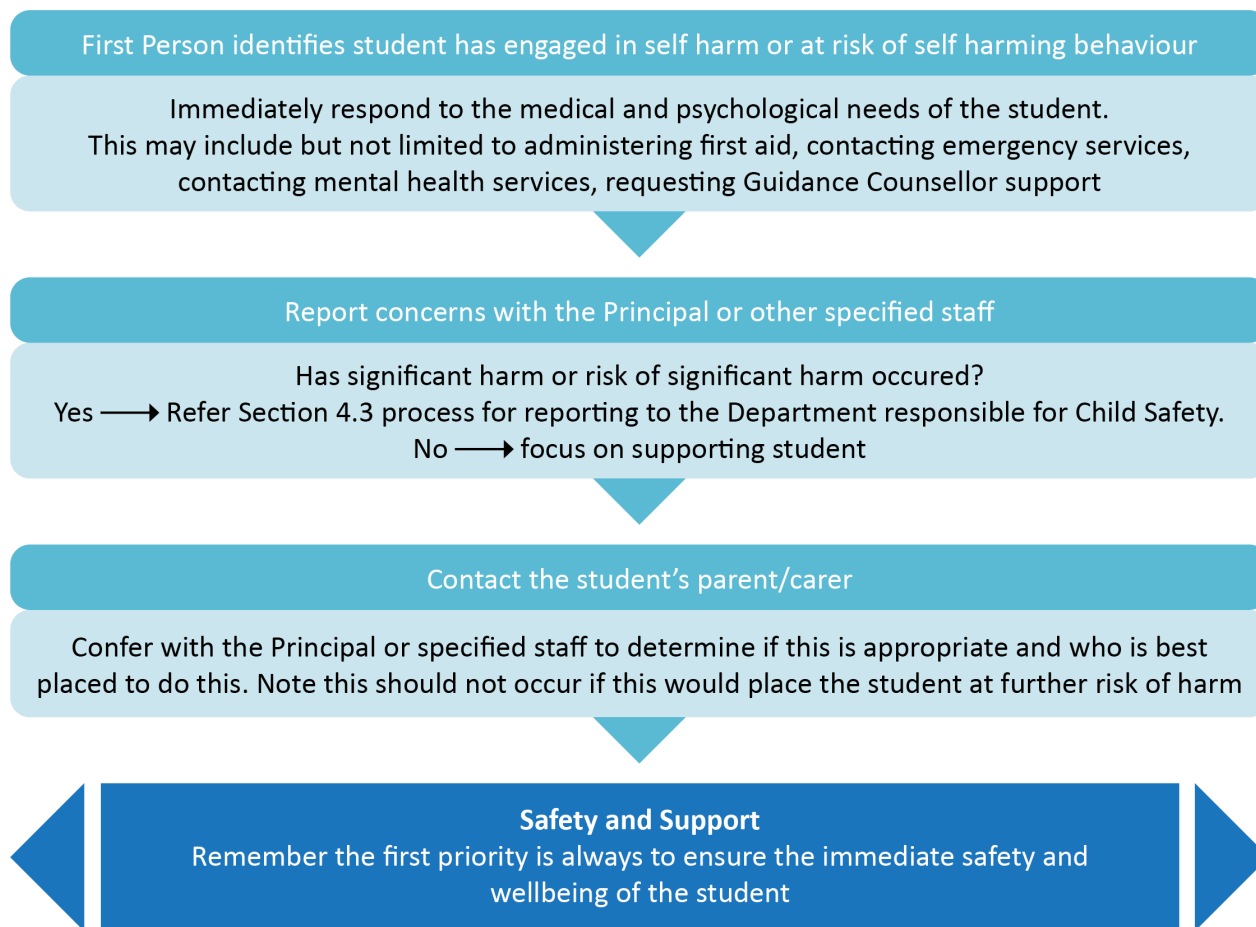
Resources to assist you:

[Student Protection Guidelines](#)

[Flowchart 3](#)

[Flowchart 4](#)

Flowchart 5: Process for responding to harm caused by self-harm

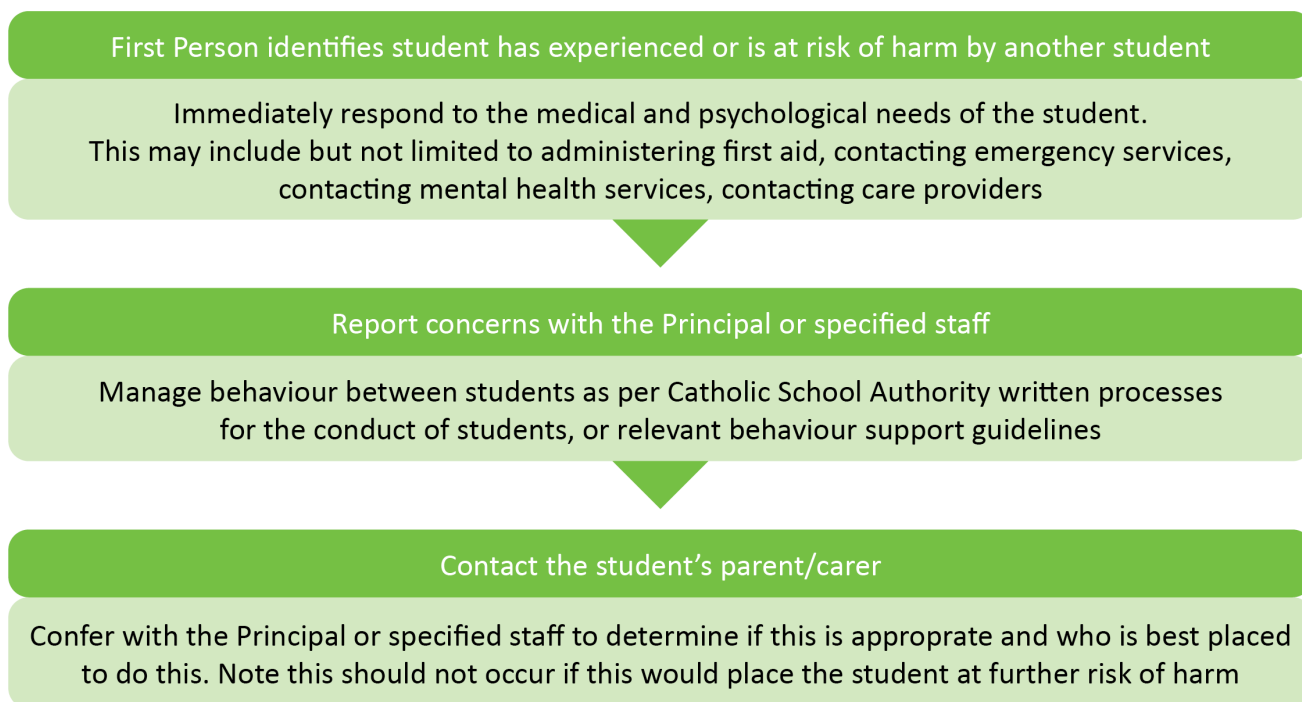


4.4.3 Harm or risk of harm to a student caused by another student

Where a First Person forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by another student, the process involves:

- Prioritising the safety of the student, this includes attention to any medical treatment.
- Managing student's behaviour in accordance with the Mount Alvernia College written processes for the conduct of students, or relevant behaviour support guidelines.
- Where criminal offences have been alleged, for example the serious assault of a student by another student over the age of 10 years, advising parents/carers of the option to pursue action through the Queensland Police Service. Mount Alvernia College will cooperate with any resulting investigation.
- Managing bullying behaviour, (including online bullying) in accordance with Mount Alvernia College bullying procedures.
- Making a written report to the department responsible for Child Safety if a staff member forms a reasonable suspicion that a student has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of significant harm, as a result of student to student behaviours AND may not have a parent able and willing to protect the student from harm, (for example an inability to provide supervision for the student), in accordance with section 4.3.

Flowchart 6: Process for responding to harm caused by another student



4.4.4 Responding to student sexual behaviour

- Sexual behaviours of various kinds may be evident in children, particularly in the early years. Some forms of sexual behaviour may be considered developmentally appropriate for the child's age and stage of development.
- Other behaviours may indicate that the child could have been exposed to inappropriate material or experiences (for example, reports of very young children knowing about and experimenting with oral sex). Resources such as those published by the Department responsible for Child Safety can assist in identifying inappropriate sexual behaviour.
- Suspicion that a student has been sexually abused may also be formed in some circumstances where a student exhibits concerning sexual behaviour. In these circumstances, the First Person must follow the Framework for responding to and reporting student protection concerns of Identify, Confer, Report, Support. This includes:
 - identifying if a reasonable suspicion or significant harm has occurred; and
 - reporting as per section 4.2 and 4.3, including a report to the Queensland Police Services, and/or the Department responsible for Child Safety.

Resources to assist you:

[Developmentally appropriate sexual behaviour in children](#)

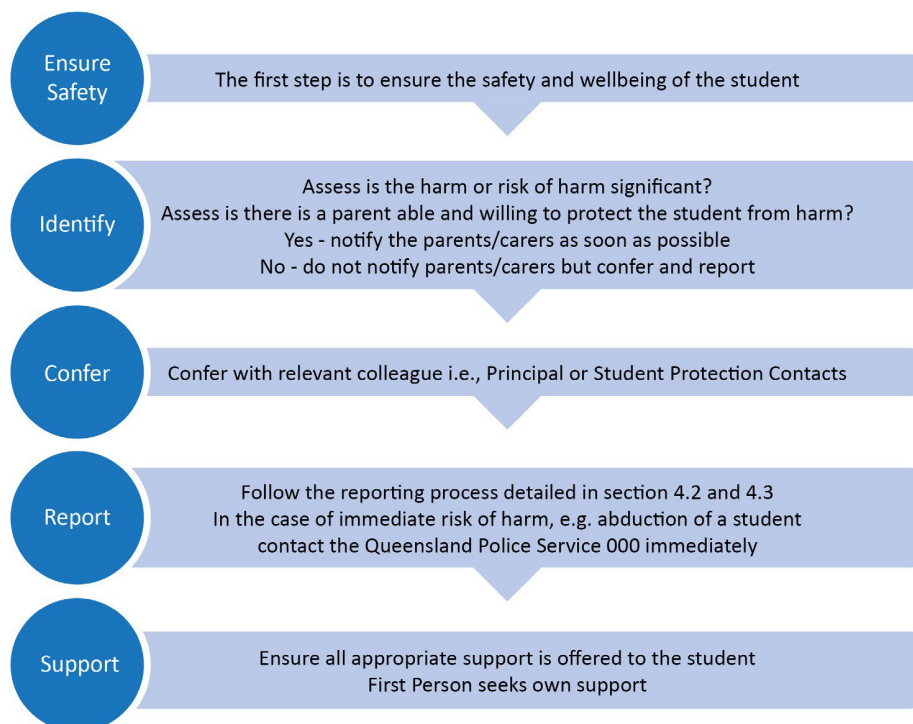
[Sexual Behaviours in Children & Young People – Traffic Lights Brochure](#)

4.4.5 Harm or risk of harm to a student caused by a person not associated with the school or family

There may be some circumstances where a First Person becomes aware of a concern that a student has been harmed, or is at risk of harm, by a person not associated with the school or family. For example, a boyfriend or girlfriend or ex-partner of a student; disclosure of abuse/harm by their dentist or physiotherapist or a stranger.

The **first priority** is the **safety** of the student.

Flowchart 7: Process for responding to harm or risk of harm caused by a person not associated with the school or family



4.4.6 Allegations of staff inappropriate behaviour or other personnel towards a student

A member of Mount Alvernia College may form a reasonable suspicion that a staff member or volunteer has behaved inappropriately towards a student. Inappropriate behaviour by a staff member is defined as violations of professional boundaries.

A description of professional boundaries can be found at Section 10 of the [Student Protection Guidelines](#). In these circumstances, follow the process detailed in:

- Mount Alvernia College Staff Code of Conduct Policy

If a staff member becomes aware of an allegation against herself/himself in relation to his/her alleged inappropriate behaviour towards a student, she/he must report the matter to the Principal at the school without delay.

If a member of Mount Alvernia College forms a reasonable suspicion that the Principal has behaved inappropriately towards a student, the staff member must complete a written report detailing the alleged inappropriate behaviour towards the student to the Chair of the Board of Directors (board@mta.edu.au) who will investigate the alleged inappropriate behaviour and respond to any substantiated unacceptable conduct under the provisions of the Mount Alvernia College Code of Conduct and the Complaints Management Policy.

In this event, the Chair of the College Board will manage the process for dealing with allegations of inappropriate behaviour against a Principal including:

- Processes for risk management and support;
- Considerations around standing down the Principal; and
- Processes for liaising with the Queensland Police Service around their investigation and its outcomes.

Important Note

Sexual activity between staff members and students

The involvement of **any** Mount Alvernia College staff member or volunteer in sexual activity with, or sexual exploitation of a student attending the school **is sexual abuse**. This must be immediately reported as per section 4.1

Resources to assist you:

[Student Protection Guidelines](#)

4.5 Responding to concerns that do not meet the threshold for reporting harm

- A First Person may identify concerns regarding a student that do not form a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse, likely sexual abuse, or significant harm. However, the assessment or professional judgement of the First Person may indicate that without support or intervention, a student and/or their family is at risk of entering the child protection system.
- Concerns should be raised with the Principal and Student Protection Contact, who may refer the student/and or their family to the appropriate service. This may include support options through the school, such as the School Counsellor, or to community-based options such as Family and Child Connect.
- The Student Protection Guidelines Section 9 provide details of options available to support students and families.
- Concerns and decision making must be documented and retained by the Principal and or Student Protection Contact.

Resources to assist you:

[Student Protection Guidelines](#)

5. Writing an effective report of concern

It is vital to complete a comprehensive report of the concerns. This will assist with an efficient and effective process important to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the student. This is the responsibility of the First Person.

However, the First Person is encouraged to seek assistance from the Student Protection Contact and/or Principal as outlined in this document.

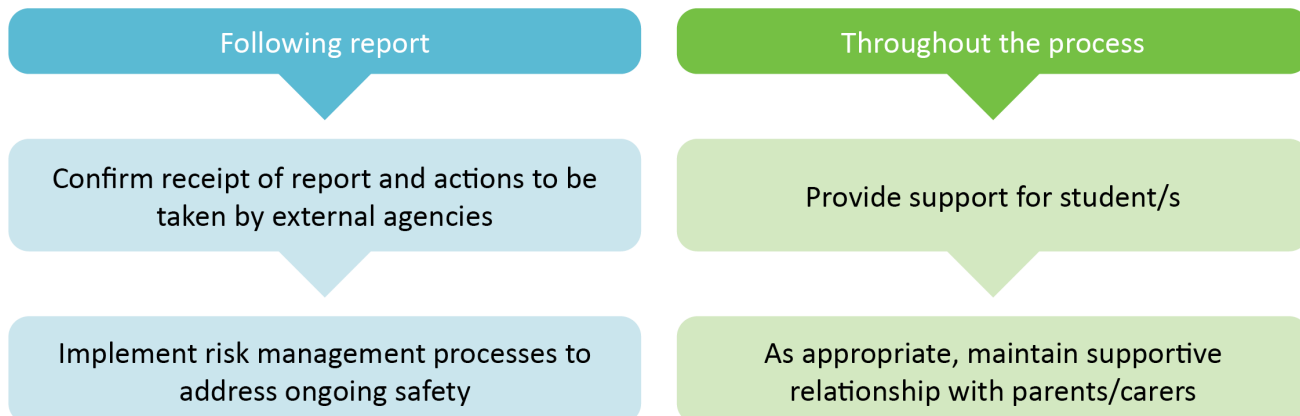
Resources to assist you:

Key tips in completing the report can be found at [Appendix 4](#)

6. After the report is made

It is important to remember that there is a parallel process of safeguarding through reporting the concerns **and** providing support to the student.

Flowchart 8: Parallel process of safeguarding and supporting



Our responsibility does not end with the report. The report is one step in an ongoing process that focuses on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students.

Follow up action includes:

- The Principal confirming receipt of the report and actions with Queensland Police Service and/or the department responsible for Child Safety to confirm both receipt of the report, and any action that these agencies may take. Wherever possible ask for written confirmation.
- Implementing risk management processes to address safety concerns of the student, this includes between students where harm has occurred.
- Providing or organising pastoral support to address the well-being of students. Ensure appropriate follow up is provided with the student.
- Maintaining supportive relationships with parents/carers, and families.
- Ensuring all parties involved respect the confidentiality and privacy of students and families involved.
- Where relevant, preparing for child protection interviews by assuring confidentiality, safety, and support. Seek advice from Student Protection Contact to support the student and prepare for any interview.

7. Advising parents/carers

When a student protection report to the Queensland Police Service and/or the Department responsible for Child Safety is required, Mount Alvernia College personnel must consider **when** or **if** parents/carers are advised of the report.

It is recognised that in some situations parents/carers should be advised immediately or just prior to the report being submitted, as the primary carers of the student. This acknowledges that we want to work with families/carers to support their children. However, in other circumstances it is recommended that parents/carers are advised after the report is made.

The following guidelines are recommended to support decision making:

- Confer with appropriate personnel as specified in this document which includes assessing the risks of when to advise the parent/carer.
- Conferral may also include seeking guidance from relevant authorities, The Queensland Police Service and/or Child Protection Regional Intake Service.
- Assessing risk of when to advise the parent/carer involves determining what is in the student's best interests. This includes determining whether there is a reasonable belief that:
 - Someone may be charged with a criminal offence for the harm and advising the family would jeopardise the investigation. For example:
 - ✓ The alleged person responsible for the harm/abuse is one of the student's parents/carers;
 - ✓ the alleged person responsible for the harm/abuse may abscond with the student;
 - ✓ risk that the parent/carer may confront a student allegedly responsible for harming their child.
- Advising the parent/carer may expose the student to harm. For example, the parent/carer may blame the student or threaten them which can cause greater harm, impede both the investigation and access to support.
- Advising the parent/carer may expose staff to harm.
- Where the suspected abuse or neglect is by a member of the student's family, the Principal, or a director of the Governing Body will only inform the parent/carer of the protection concern once guidance is sought from the Queensland Police Service or the Department responsible for Child Safety.

It is recommended that the Principal or a director of the Governing Body seek immediate guidance from the Queensland Police Service and/or the department responsible for Child Safety as to when it is appropriate to discuss the matter with the student's parent/carer.

The priority of all Mount Alvernia College personnel must remain on the safety and wellbeing of the student, and ensuring they have access to appropriate support including by parents/carers.

Appendix I Definitions

Accountable person

In accordance with S229BB of the Criminal Code Act 1899, an "Accountable Person" means an adult who is associated with an institution such as Catholic Education, who becomes aware that there is a significant risk that another adult, that is, the 'alleged offender' will or has committed a child sexual offence to a child. The Accountable Person is someone who has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk. An Accountable Person is **responsible** for **safeguarding** students from sexual offences and **must act** to reduce or remove the risk.

It is a criminal offence for an Accountable Person to fail to protect a child from a child sexual offence.

Child

A child is a person under 18 years of age.

Child in Need of Protection is a child who –

- a) Has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and
- b) Does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

Harm

As defined by section 9 of the *Child Protection Act 1999*:

- (1) Harm, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being.
- (2) It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- (3) Harm can be caused by –
 - (a) Physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect; or
 - (b) Sexual abuse or exploitation.
- (4) Harm can be caused by –
 - (a) A single act, omission, or circumstance; or
 - (b) A series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances

(See [Student Protection Guidelines](#) for detailed definitions)

[Child sexual offence \(Criminal Code 1899 Chapter 22\)](#)

Child sexual offence means an offence of a sexual nature committed in relation to a child.

S229BC identifies child sexual offence as

- (a) ... a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another adult; and
- (b) At the relevant time, the child is or was:
 - i. Under 16 years; or
 - ii. A person with an impairment of the mind.

Sexual assault includes

Any person who –

- (a) Unlawfully and indecently assaults another person; or
- (b) Procures another person, without the person's consent –
 - i. To commit an act of gross indecency; or
 - ii. To witness an act of gross indecency by the person or any other person; is guilty of a crime.

The *Criminal Code* specifies different levels of criminal action towards a child which includes indecent treatment of a children under 16, carnal knowledge with or of children under 16, procuring of a child for carnal knowledge or sexual acts, using internet etc., to procure children under 16, grooming a child under 16.

Child sexual abuse

As defined by section 364 of the [Education \(General Provision\) Act 2006](#):

Sexual abuse, in relation to a relevant person, includes sexual behaviour involving the relevant person and another person in the following circumstances–

- (a) The other person bribes, coerces, exploits, threatens or is violent toward the relevant person;
- (b) The relevant person has less power than the other person;
- (c) There is a significant disparity between the relevant person and the other person in intellectual capacity or maturity.

Colleague

As defined by section 13H of the [Child Protection Act 1999](#), colleague, of a relevant person, means a person working in or for the same entity as the relevant person.

Director of the Governing Body

As defined by section 364 of the [Education \(General Provision\) Act 2006](#):

director, of a non-State school's governing body, means a director of the governing body within the meaning of the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017*, section 9.

Failure to Report and Failure to Protect

See Appendix 2 for definitions under the [Criminal Code Act 1899](#)

First Person (S366-366A Education (General Provisions) Act 2006)

- The First Person is a staff member who reasonably suspects that a student attending the school has been sexually abused by another person or is likely to be sexually abused by another person.
- In addition, for the purposes of this document, the First Person is defined as any person who is part of the school community who reasonably suspects that a student attending the school has experienced, or is at significant risk of experiencing, all harm as a result of abuse, including alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student.
- The First Person has **responsibility** for commencing the reporting processes once they reasonably suspect significant abuse, harm or the risk of significant abuse, harm to a student and/or another child in the community. This responsibility **cannot** be delegated to someone else.

Alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student

Alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student includes but is not limited to any behaviour, including words, towards a student that is contrary to what is required of staff members under the *Mount Alvernia College Staff Code of Conduct*.

Further, any report from a person, including a student, about a staff member's behaviour towards a student that the person making the report considers to be inappropriate is to be taken as an allegation of inappropriate behaviour. This must be responded to in accordance with the processes contained within this document.

Reasonable suspicion

A *reasonable suspicion* is a suspicion that would be formed by a reasonable person based on a reasonable view of the evidence available to them. A reasonable suspicion is an objectively justifiable suspicion that is based on specific facts or circumstances.

Reportable suspicion

As defined by section 13E of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, a reportable suspicion means a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

Relevant person (Child Protection Act 1999)

A relevant person for the purposes of mandatory reporting under section 13E of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, is any of the following -

- (a) A doctor;
- (b) A registered nurse;
- (c) A teacher;
- (d) A police officer who, under a direction given by the commissioner of the police service under the *Police Service Administration Act 1990*, is responsible for reporting under this section;
- (e) A person engaged to perform a child advocate function under the *Public Guardian Act 2014*.

Staff member

A staff member is any person who is employed by Mount Alvernia College on a casual, fixed term, or continuing basis, either pursuant to a contract of employment or appointed to a role at the school pursuant to an agreement with a religious order. This includes visiting teachers providing private tuition.

Student

A student is any person enrolled as such at Mount Alvernia College. This includes a 'relevant person' for the purposes of mandatory reporting under sections 366 and 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*:

- (a) A student under 18 years attending the school;
- (b) A kindergarten age child registered in a kindergarten learning program at the school;
- (c) a person with a disability who—
 - (i) under section 420(2), is being provided with special education at the school; and
 - (ii) is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school.

Student Protection Contact

A Student Protection Contact is one of at least two persons who are nominated in each school in compliance with the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017*, (section 16(3)) to whom a student can report behaviour by a staff member that the student considers inappropriate.

Teacher

Means an approved teacher under the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* employed at a school.

Volunteer

A volunteer is any person who provides assistance or support at a Queensland Catholic Education site on a voluntary basis. Student teachers are included in this definition.

Appendix 2 Legislative references

Child Protection Act 1999	
Reporting of a child in need of protection	<p>Section 13A states</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">) Any person may inform the chief executive if the person reasonably suspects—) a child may be in need of protection; or) an unborn child may be in need of protection after he or she is born. <p>(2) The information given may include anything the person considers relevant to the person’s suspicion.</p>
Forming a reasonable suspicion of significant harm	<p>Section 13C of the Child Protection Act 1999 offers some guidance around forming a reasonable suspicion that a student has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm:</p> <p>whether there are detrimental effects on the child’s body or the child’s psychological or emotional state—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that are evident to the person; or) that the person considers are likely to become evident in the future; and <p>in relation to any detrimental effects mentioned in paragraph (a)—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their nature and severity; and) the likelihood that they will continue; and <p>the child’s age.</p> <p>The person’s consideration may be informed by an observation of the child, other knowledge about the child or any other relevant knowledge, training, or experience that the person may have.</p>
Reportable suspicions	<p>Section 13E of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> includes the mandatory reporting requirement for teachers to report a reasonable suspicion to the Department responsible for Child Safety, that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse where there may not be a parent willing and able to protect the child from the harm (a “reportable suspicion”).</p> <p>Section 13G(5) states that a person does not commit an offence under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> or any other act for failing to make a mandatory report under section 13E.</p>
Conferral with colleagues	<p>Section 13H of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> - Conferrals with colleague and related information sharing, states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">) A relevant person may give information to a colleague, and a colleague may give information to a relevant person, for any of the following purposes— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) for the relevant person to form a suspicion about whether a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; (b) in the case of a relevant person under section 13E—for the relevant person to form a suspicion about whether a child has a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm mentioned in paragraph (a); (c) for the relevant person to give a report under section 13G or keep a record about giving a report; (d) for the relevant person or colleague to take appropriate action to deal with suspected harm or risk of harm to a child.
Interviews with Children at School	<p>Section 17 of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> provides Department responsible for Child Safety and Queensland Police Service officers with the legislative authority to have contact with a child at a school prior to the parents/carers being told of the contact with the child and the reasons for the contact, as part of an investigation and assessment.</p>

[Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Act 2017](#) and [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Regulation 2017](#)

The *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017* establishes an accreditation regime for the accreditation of non-state schools. The Act also establishes the penalties for non-compliance with the accreditation criteria.

The *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017* prescribes the accreditation criteria relevant for a non-state school's accreditation as mentioned in section 11 of the Act. Sections 16(1) to 16(7) of the Regulation deal with the accreditation requirements relating to the conduct of staff and students and response to harm.

[Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#) and [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017](#)

The *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* contains mandatory reporting requirements for all non-state school staff who become aware of or who reasonably suspect that a student has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused by another person (sections 366 and 366A).

These requirements include sexual abuse, suspected sexual abuse and likely sexual abuse of students by another person. A staff member or Principal who fails to comply with the mandatory reporting requirements in relation to the sexual abuse or suspected sexual abuse of a student commits an offence under section 366 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* and is liable for a penalty of up to 20 penalty units. However, a person does not commit an offence for failing to report the likely sexual abuse of a student under section 366A of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.

Staff making a report in accordance with the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* will be protected from civil or criminal liability e.g., from defamation or breach of confidence.

However, staff making a knowingly false, malicious, or vexatious report will not be protected by this immunity and may risk action for defamation, disciplinary action by their employer or disciplinary action by the Queensland College of Teachers.

[Criminal Code Act 1899](#)

Section 229BC of *Criminal Code Act 1899* establishes a general requirement that applies to all adults (18 years or over) in Queensland to report to the Queensland Police Service any information that causes the adult to believe on reasonable grounds, or ought reasonably to cause the adult to believe, that a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another adult.

At the time of the offending behaviour, the child victim must be under 16 years of age or a person with an impairment of the mind. A 'child sexual offence' means an offence of a sexual nature [whether or not it meets the definition of sexual abuse under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*] committed in relation to a child, including for example, an offence against a provision of chapter 22 and 32 of the *Criminal Code Act 1899*.

Failure to protect child from sexual offence s229BB

(1) An accountable person commits a crime if—

-) the person knows there is a significant risk that another adult (the "alleged offender") will commit a child sexual offence in relation to a child; and
-) the alleged offender—

- (i) is associated with an institution; or
- (ii) is a regulated volunteer; and
- (c) the child is under the care, supervision, or control of an institution; and
- (d) the child is either—
 - (i) under 16 years; or
 - (ii) a person with an impairment of the mind; and
- (e) the person has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk; and
- (f) the person wilfully or negligently fails to reduce or remove the risk.

Penalty—

Maximum penalty—5 years imprisonment

Failure to make a report s229BC

It is a criminal offence when any adult in Queensland, including students who are 18 years or older, fails to report to the Queensland Police Service a reasonable belief that a child sexual offence is being or has been committed against a child by another adult without a reasonable excuse. A reasonable excuse not to make a report includes that a report has already been made under:

- a) the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (reporting sexual abuse or likely sexual abuse)
- b) the *Child Protection Act 1999* (reporting significant harm or risk of significant harm).

Maximum penalty—3 years imprisonment

[Education \(Queensland College of Teachers\) Act 2005](#)

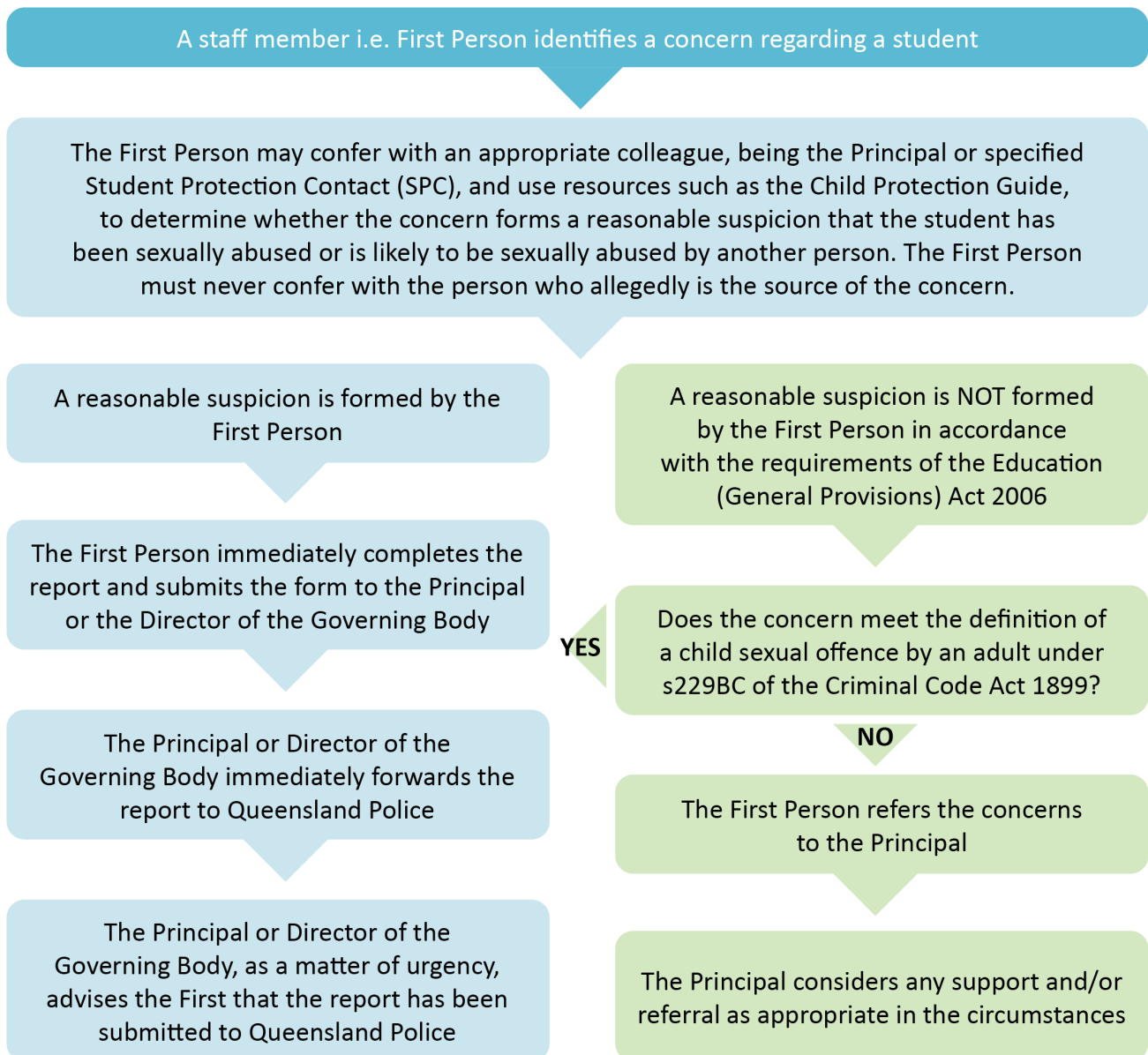
The *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* requires an employing authority to notify the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT):
about allegations of harm to a child because of the conduct of a teacher as soon as practicable, after commencing investigating the allegations (section 76)
about the outcome of allegations of harm because of the conduct of a teacher where the teacher has been dismissed or resigned within 14 days (section 77)
if the teacher has been dismissed in circumstances that call into question the teacher's competency as a teacher within 14 days (section 78).

[Evidence Act 1977](#)

Section 93A provides the legislative authority for the Queensland Police Service and the Department responsible for Child Safety to conduct an interview and obtain a recorded statement from a child under 16 years, or a person who was 16 or 17 years when the statement was made and who, at the time of the proceeding, is a special witness, or an intellectually impaired person who has personal knowledge of the matters dealt with by the statement.

Appendix 3 Reporting processes

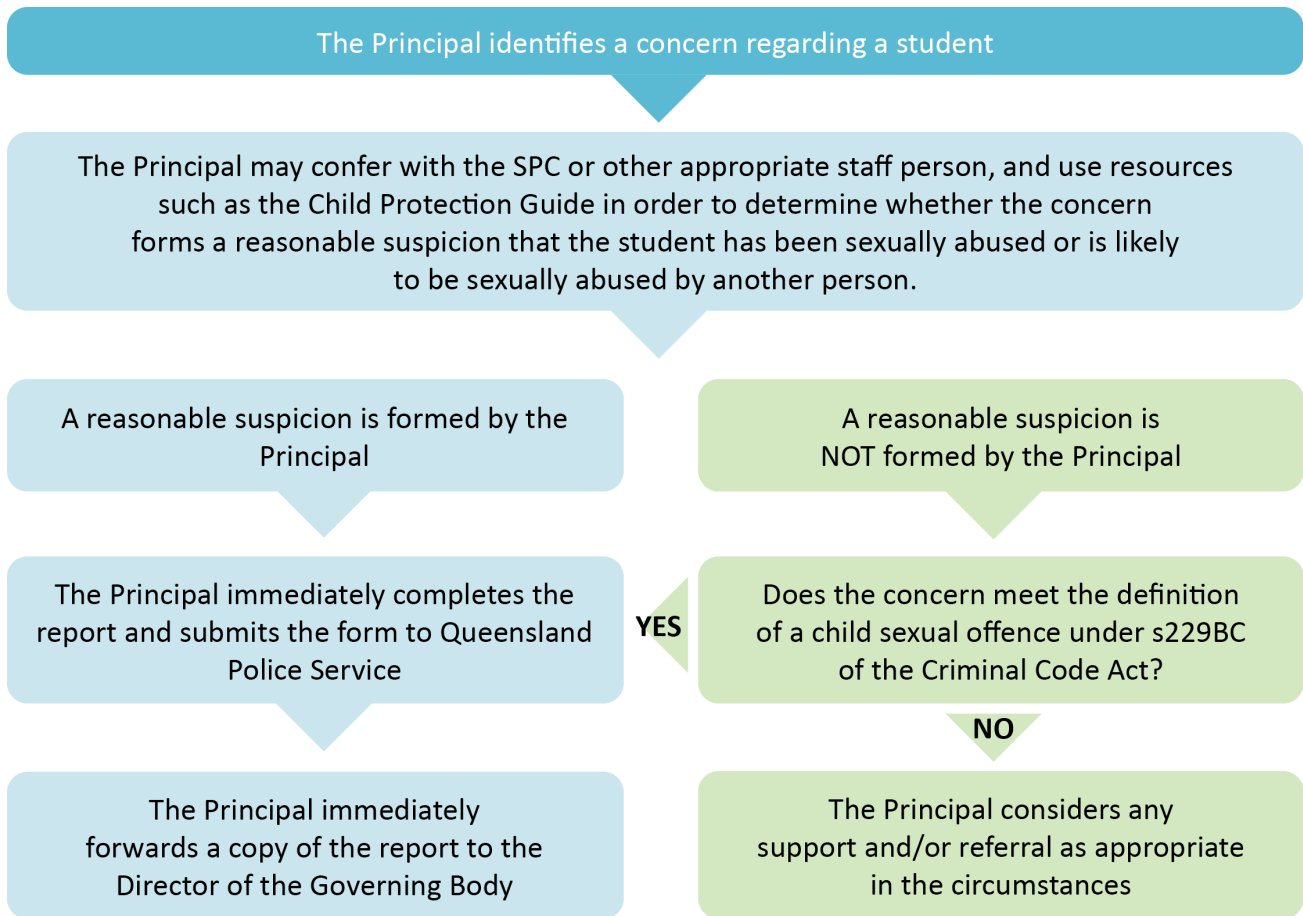
Flowchart A: Reporting sexual abuse & likely sexual abuse



Important Notice

If there is reasonable suspicion that the student has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused or has been the victim of child sexual offence perpetrated by an adult and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them, reporting to the Department responsible for Child Safety must occur. See Flowchart 3.

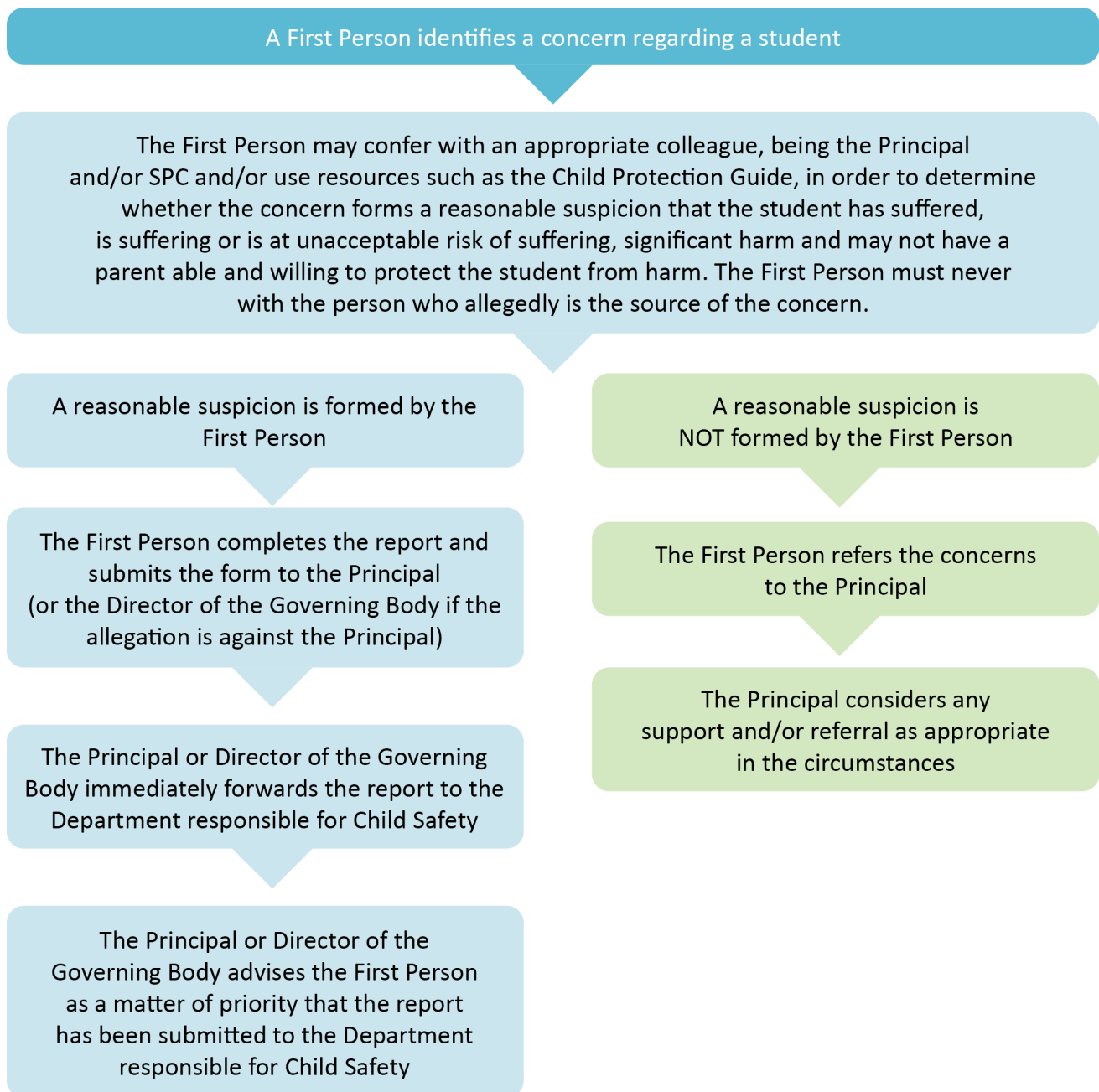
Flowchart B: Reporting sexual abuse & likely sexual abuse where the first person is the principal



Important Notice

If there is reasonable suspicion that the student has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them, reporting to the Department responsible for Child Safety must occur. See Flowchart C.

Flowchart C: Reporting significant harm to Department responsible for Child Safety



Important Notice

If there is a reasonable suspicion that the student has been sexually abused or is likely to be sexually abused by another person, then the processes as outlined in Flowchart A must also be followed, or Flowchart B if the first person is the Principal.

Mandatory Responsibilities for Teachers

If the First Person is a teacher, and the reasonable suspicion is that the student has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse and may not have a parent able and willing to protect the student from the harm (a reportable suspicion under section 13E of the *Child Protection Act 1999*), the teacher is responsible, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that the report has been submitted to the Department responsible for Child Safety, unless they become aware, or reasonably suppose, that the matter has already been brought to the attention of the authorities.

If a teacher forms a reportable suspicion and is not able to progress a report through the process detailed in the Flowchart above, they are able to meet their mandatory reporting obligation through reporting directly to Department responsible for Child Safety via the online reporting form: [Make a Report to Child Safety](#).

Appendix 4 Writing a comprehensive report of the concerns

Report categories	Tips
Cause of concern	Refer to the Sections 3 and 4 of Student Protection Guidelines to determine the type of harm that you suspect
Subject children	Refers to the student/s but may also include other siblings you are aware of who may have experienced harm or risk of harm
School	Refers to the school the student attends
Child risk factors	Be as explicit as you can about what the behaviours or risk are that have been identified (Refer to Section 4 of the Student Protection Guidelines)
Parent/Carer/Household members	Speak with your Principal or the Student Protection Contact for the school to obtain this information
Awareness of concerns	Focus on the factual information you have and be specific. Avoid emotions and assumptions. What do you know?
Description of concerns	Focus on the factual information you have and be specific. Avoid emotions and assumptions. What do you know? Be specific.
What happened?	Keep this factual. Use headings to break this down so it is easy to read and makes sense to you and the reader. Explain the concerns you have identified and categorise if more than one, for example, physical harm, neglect, psychological harm. Identify if in your assessment if there is a parent willing or able?
When did it happen?	Be as explicit as you can about when things happened.
Where did it happen?	Provide details about where you believe or know the harm occurred, for example at the family home.
Has the concern (or similar) occurred previously?	Document if you, your Principal or Student Protection Contact are aware of any previous concerns. You can seek this information through conferral and working with the Principal and or Student Protection Contact.
Injuries to child	Be as specific as possible, for example “bruising noted all along the left side of the face, around the eye, cheek, and neck. Bruising including to the right forearm, approximately the size of an adults hand. The bruising was purple and black in colour, with a hint of yellow.”
Immediate safety concerns	This asks you to identify immediate safety concerns and involves identifying if the student is currently at an unacceptable risk of harm to work. This again draws on your professional judgement and the information you have obtained. <i>For example, Adrian hinted that his father caused his injuries to his face and neck. Adrian stated his mother had told him to say he fell when at the skate park. Adrian’s father lives at the family home and will have full access to him. No medical attention was sought by Adrian’s father or mother.</i>
Observations of the child	Describe the student’s behaviour, how did they respond when you spoke with them?

	Have there been any patterns or concerns that you have noticed, for example, a decline in grades or the student becoming more withdrawn. Be specific.
Unborn child	Document if to your knowledge there an unborn child in the home that you know of who may be at unacceptable risk of harm.
Alleged person responsible for the abuse/harm	From your observations or information, who is the alleged person causing the abuse/harm? For example, <i>Adrian's father</i> .
Persons with more information	Include the name of any adults who may have additional information. Do not ask parent/carer for information if they are, or you reasonably suspect they are the alleged source of abuse or neglect.
Actions taken by staff member	List what actions you or other staff members have taken in response to the concerns. For example, <i>Consultation with Guidance Counsellor Ms Smith on 20/6/23 to provide emotional support to Adrian; Consultation with Student Protection Contact Ms Habib and Principal Ms Ying on 20/6/23. Child Protection Concern completed on 20/6/23 and submitted at 4.30 pm.</i>
Prior discussion with parent/carer(s)	Document any discussions you may have had with the parent/carers about the concerns. Importantly do not ask the parent/carers for information if they are the alleged person responsible for the abuse or harm. If this is the case specify this in the ROC.
Parent/carer(s) risk factors	Record any parental/carer risk factors you are aware of. Your Principal or Student Protection Contact may have additional information or provide assistance. Be as specific as you can.

Appendix 5 Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions: Identifying harm or abuse

What is my responsibility once I have become aware of abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour by a staff member towards a student?

Your responsibility is to take every concern seriously and gather sufficient information to help you identify if there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour. From there, follow the Framework set out in this document of Identify, Confer, Report and Support.

What is the difference between gathering information and investigating?

Gathering information is the process of seeking more information to determine if you have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse, harm, or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student (see definition at [Appendix J](#)). You can do this by speaking to the student and conferring with the Principal and/or the Student Protection Contact at your school. You do not have to determine if the concerns are true or false.

Who has responsibility for investigating?

Investigation is undertaken by the appropriate authorities, the Department responsible for Child Safety and the Queensland Police Service. The Principal, Student Protection Contact can help guide you about the boundaries of responsibilities.

If in doubt, can I talk with the alleged person responsible for the abuse or harm just to confirm?

No, the safety and wellbeing of the student is your priority, this means ensuring your focus is on safeguarding them. Talking with the alleged person responsible can place the student in greater risk, and potentially obstruct the investigation by the relevant authorities.

Conferral regarding harm or abuse or alleges staff inappropriate behaviour towards a student

What happens if during the conferral process, there is disagreement between the First Person and the Principal?

Seek another point of conferral, this should include the Student Protection Contact, Director of Governing Body or delegate.

Does conferral involve talking to the alleged person responsible for the abuse or harm?

No, the safety and wellbeing of the student is your priority, this means ensuring your focus is on safeguarding them. Talking with the alleged person responsible for the abuse or harm can place the student at greater risk, and potentially obstruct an investigation by the relevant authorities.

Does conferral involve talking with the student's parent/carer?

It is always advisable to confer with the Principal, and/or Student Protection Contact in the first instance to determine if there is a parent willing and able to safeguard the student.

When can I advise the parents/carers?

Parents/carers are an important support in student's lives, and we acknowledge the importance of working with and supporting them to support their children. However, an assessment must be made about the safety of the student. Therefore, confer with appropriate personnel to determine if and when to advise parents/carers.

Reporting harm or abuse

As a Teacher what is my responsibility?

Teachers are mandatory reporters and have a duty to report any concerns of abuse/harm to a student as per these processes.

As a Principal what is my responsibility?

In addition to being a mandatory reporter, Principals have responsibility for ensuring the processes set out in this document are followed.

Principals are responsible for maintaining a culture of safety and have a duty to report any concerns of harm to a student as per these processes.

As a staff member what is my responsibility?

All staff members are responsible for safeguarding students, this includes identifying and responding to concerns about abuse, harm or alleged staff inappropriate behaviour and ensuring the processes in this document are followed.

As a volunteer/other personnel what is my responsibility?

You are still responsible for following the process of identifying and conferral with the Student Protection Contact. The Student Protection Contact at your school will then facilitate reporting the concerns if necessary.

What happens if the online form is not available?

Where there are IT issues, you must still report without delay. This will involve:

- Making a verbal report to the relevant authority as a matter of priority
- Writing out the report using the headings specified in this document
- Following up with completing the report and submitting this.

What happens when the Principal is not available?

Do not delay. Remember the safety and wellbeing of the students is of paramount importance.

Every school has a designated delegate, you must confer with this person and follow the reporting procedures.

What happens if I don't have time to make the report because I am teaching or busy?

Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of the student is the priority.

The First Person can seek support from the Principal and or Student Protection Contact to ensure they have the time to Confer, Report and Support.

The First Person should be provided with support that may include having someone else take over their teaching responsibility or other duties.

Remember it is of paramount important to not delay.

What happens if it is an emergency?

- Immediate safety concerns require immediate attention, do not delay, and Call 000 and speak with the relevant authority, for example The Queensland Police Service or the department responsible for Child Safety.
- In a medical emergency contact 000 and ask for an Ambulance.

What happens if I am worried about a student, it is Friday afternoon, and I cannot find an appropriate person to confer with?

- If you cannot locate any appropriate member of staff as outlined in this document, you can contact the department responsible for Child Safety Regional Intake Service or Child Safety After Hours Service, or Queensland Police Service and confer.
- In the case of any sexual abuse or other related harm where there has been a possible criminal offence, for example domestic and family violence, immediately contact the Queensland Police Service and confer with them.

Supporting students

What is my responsibility in supporting a student?

The wellbeing of our students is our priority. This means making sure that we provide whatever emotional, physical, and medical support is necessary. Confer with the Student Protection Contact/ Principal about the best way to do this.

Do I need to do anything else after I have reported the harm or abuse?

Yes, your responsibility does not end with the report. Remember we need to ensure the wellbeing of the student; this means considering whether they need to be linked with support services such as counselling or other specialised supports. Always confer with the Student Protection Contact / Principal about the best way to do this.