

POLICY	PROCEDURE
Policy Name	Child Protection Policy
NESA Manual Section	Safe and Supportive Environment (B8) Child Protection (B8.1)
Related Procedures	Child Protection Procedure (B8.1) Working With Children Check Procedure (B8.1) Staff Code of Conduct Procedure (B8.2) Complaint Handling Procedure (B8.2) Complaint Handling Procedural Fairness Guidelines (B8.2) Complaint Handling Process Flow Chart (B8.2) Complaints or Allegations of Staff Misconduct Flow Chart (B8.2) Staff Recruitment and Screening Procedure (B3) Student Wellbeing Procedure (B8.2)
Related Policies	Staff Code of Conduct Policy (B8.2) Working With Children Check Policy (B8.2) Complaint handling Policy (B8.2) Staff Recruitment and Screening Policy (B3) Privacy & Confidentiality Policy (B8.2) Student Wellbeing Policy (B8.2)
Related Legislation	Children's Guardian Act 2019 Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1988 Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 Crimes Act 1900 Education Act 1990
Date of Issue / Last Revision	<i>20 September 2018</i> <i>27 March 2019</i> <i>27 March 2020</i> <i>28 March 2022</i> <i>11 November 2025</i> <i>26 January 2026</i> <i>30 March 2026</i>
Date Set for Review	<i>March 2029</i>

Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

Central Coast Montessori Primary School (CCMPS) is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and child-centred learning environment in which the safety, protection and wellbeing of all children are paramount. CCMPS recognises that children have the right to feel safe, to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect, and to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Child protection is a shared responsibility. All staff, contractors, volunteers and external providers at CCMPS are expected to uphold the highest standards of care, professional conduct and vigilance in order to prevent harm and to respond promptly and appropriately to any child protection or wellbeing concerns.

This policy is informed by and complies with relevant NSW legislation, including the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012, the Children's Guardian Act 2019, the Crimes Act 1900, and NESA registration requirements.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm CCMPS's commitment to safeguarding the safety, protection and wellbeing of all children. This policy outlines the School's child protection responsibilities, legal obligations and governance expectations, and provides a clear framework for preventing, identifying and responding to child protection and wellbeing concerns. It ensures that all adults associated with the School understand their responsibilities and that CCMPS complies with legislative, regulatory and NESA registration requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, external providers and board members who engage with children or perform work on behalf of Central Coast Montessori Primary School. It governs expectations relating to child safety, professional conduct, reporting obligations, and the School's response to child protection concerns across all school-related activities and environments.

Definitions

- Child — Any person under the age of 18 years.
- Child protection — Actions taken to prevent, identify and respond to abuse, neglect or harm to children.
- Risk of significant harm (ROSH) — Circumstances where a child is suspected to be at serious risk of harm due to abuse or neglect, as defined under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.
- Mandatory reporter — A person who, in the course of their professional work, is legally required to report concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm.
- Reportable conduct — Conduct defined under the Children's Guardian Act 2019, including sexual offences, sexual misconduct, assault, ill-treatment, neglect, psychological harm, failure to protect, or failure to report.

Further definitions relating to child protection processes are provided in accompanying procedures.

Child Protection at CCMPS

Our Child Protection Responsibilities

All staff, contractors and volunteers at CCMPS have:

- a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect children from foreseeable harm
- legislative responsibilities, including mandatory reporting, Working With Children Check (WWCC) requirements, and reportable conduct obligations
- professional responsibilities to act in a manner that prioritises the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children at all times.

Failure to comply with child protection obligations may constitute misconduct and result in disciplinary action.

Prevention and Child Safe Culture

CCMPS promotes a child safe culture by:

- implementing clear policies, procedures and codes of conduct
- providing regular child protection training
- maintaining robust recruitment and screening practices
- encouraging children to speak up and feel safe to raise concerns
- fostering respectful, inclusive and transparent relationships.

Training requirements

The School

CCMPS provides:

- annual child protection training for all staff
- induction training for new staff, contractors and relevant volunteers
- updates on legislative or regulatory changes
- access to child protection policies and procedures.

Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

All staff, contractors and volunteers must:

- read and acknowledge this policy on commencement
- Complete a school-approved child protection induction and any ongoing training as required
- comply with mandatory reporting and reportable conduct obligations
- Maintain an ongoing understanding of relevant child protection legislation, policies, and their responsibilities

Working With Children Checks (WWCC)

Responsibilities - Staff, Contractors and Eligible Volunteers

All workers engaged in child-related work must:

- hold a valid WWCC clearance before commencing work
- renew their clearance every five (5) years
- not engage in child-related work if barred or subject to an interim bar
- inform the Principal if their WWCC status changes
- update personal details with the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) within three (3) months.

Responsibilities - CCMPS

CCMPS will:

- verify WWCC clearances online prior to engagement
- maintain an accurate WWCC Register
- ensure only workers with valid clearances undertake child-related work
- notify the OCG of reportable conduct matters within required timeframes.

Parent and Carer Volunteers

Parents and carers of currently enrolled students do not require a WWCC unless they are:

- attending overnight camps, or
- performing high-risk volunteer duties that meet the legal definition of child-related work.

All volunteers must comply with the Staff Code of Conduct and sign the Volunteer Declaration Form.

Mandatory reporting requirements

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, certain staff are mandatory reporters and must report concerns about children under 16 who may be at risk of significant harm.

CCMPS requires all staff, whether mandatory reporters or not, to report any concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child.

Reporting Concerns Internally

Staff must immediately report to the Principal (Head of Entity):

- any child protection or wellbeing concern
- suspicions of risk of significant harm
- disclosures made by a child
- concerns involving staff, contractors or volunteers.

If the allegation involves the Principal, the matter must be reported directly to the Chair of the School Board.

When Immediate Action Is Required

If a child is in immediate danger and the Principal cannot be contacted, staff must contact:

- NSW Police (000), and/or
- Child Protection Helpline (13 21 11),

and notify the Principal as soon as practicable.

Confidentiality

Staff must:

- not investigate allegations themselves
- not inform parents or carers that a report is being made
- treat all information as strictly confidential.

Unauthorised disclosure of information is considered misconduct.

Reportable conduct requirements

Under the Children's Guardian Act 2019, the Principal (Head of Entity) must notify the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) of any reportable conduct allegation within seven (7) business days.

Reportable Conduct Includes

- sexual offences
- sexual misconduct
- assault
- ill-treatment
- neglect
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm
- failure to protect

- failure to report.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff must report to the Principal:

- any allegation or concern of reportable conduct involving an employee
- inappropriate behaviour by an employee
- if they are charged with, convicted of, or become the subject of proceedings for a reportable offence
- if they become aware of a colleague being charged with or convicted of a reportable offence.

Investigation Process

The Principal will ensure:

- timely and appropriate investigation
- procedural fairness for the person subject of the allegation
- risk assessments are conducted
- appropriate supports are provided
- confidentiality is maintained.

The person subject of allegation may have a support person present during interviews.

Criminal Offences (Crimes Act 1900)

Failure to Protect

An adult commits an offence if they:

- know another adult poses a serious risk of child abuse
- have the capacity to act, and
- fail to take reasonable steps to protect the child.

Failure to Report

An adult commits an offence if they:

- know, believe, or reasonably should know that a child abuse offence has occurred, and
- fail to report it to Police.

A reasonable excuse includes knowing that the Principal has already reported the matter.

Special Care Relationships

It is a criminal offence for a staff member, contractor or volunteer to engage in sexual activity with a student aged 16–17 where a special care relationship exists, as defined under sections 73 and 73A of the Crimes Act 1900 (NSW).

Records and Confidentiality

The Principal ensures the secure maintenance of:

- policy acknowledgement registers
- WWCC Register
- incident reports
- mandatory reports and evidence
- reportable conduct records.

All records are stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:

- ensures compliance with child protection legislation and NESA requirements
- oversees implementation of this policy and associated procedures
- manages mandatory reporting and reportable conduct obligations
- ensures appropriate training and record-keeping.

Staff, Contractors & Volunteers:

- comply with this policy and all child protection obligations
- report concerns promptly and appropriately
- participate in required training
- act in a manner that prioritises child safety and wellbeing.

School Board:

- supports governance oversight of child protection compliance
- receives reports as required under legislation.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

This policy will be reviewed three (3) years, or earlier if required due to changes in legislation, NESA guidelines, or identified gaps in practice.

Continuous improvement will be guided by feedback from Guides, staff, families, and, where appropriate, students. As key stakeholders, families and staff will be encouraged to participate meaningfully in the review process to ensure the policy remains relevant and responsive to the needs of the school community.

Related Documents and References

[NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools \(NSW\) Manual](#)

[NESA Resources for Schools](#)

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

Acknowledgement

I, _____, have read, understood and agree to comply with the Child Protection Policy (2026).

Signed: _____

Date: _____