

# Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at or involving Arethusa College, or its staff, volunteers or contractors

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For the purposes of this document, we use the terms “staff” and “staff member” to include all teaching and non-teaching staff, Board directors, volunteers, contractors and external providers.

## INTRODUCTION

Complaints involving:

- breaches of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- conduct that has caused, or has the potential to cause, harm to current or former students

by

- current or former staff members
- current or former students and
- other people on Arethusa College premises or at Arethusa College events

are managed in a different way to other complaints received by Arethusa College. These kinds of complaints are instead managed using the same procedures that we use for managing incidents of or internal reports raised about this kind of behaviour.

This is because these kinds of incidents, complaints, allegations or concerns are all of a similar sensitive nature and raise potential privacy and confidentiality issues.

## CHILD SAFETY INCIDENTS OR CONCERNS

We call **any** behaviour, that may be:

- a breach of our Child Safe Codes of Conduct or
- child abuse, grooming or other harm of a student

a “child safety incident or concern”.

It does not matter whether the behaviour is by a staff member, another student, a parent/carer or any other person on Arethusa College premises or at Arethusa College events.

### **Breaches of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct**

Arethusa College requires all staff members, parents/carers, visitors and other adults in the school community to comply with our **Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct**.

Staff members must also comply with our **Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy and Staff Code of Conduct**.

Students must comply with our **Student Code of Conduct**.

Any breach of these Child Safe Codes of Conduct is considered a child safety incident.

## Child Abuse, Grooming or Other Harm of a Student

Our child protection policies set out the different definitions and key indicators of child abuse, grooming and other harm of students. The following is covered by these definitions and indicators:

- sexual abuse/exploitation
- grooming and online grooming
- physical abuse
- psychological or emotional abuse
- neglect.

In addition to family members, other adults associated with a student can subject the student to these behaviours, including staff members, other students and other people associated with Arethusa College.

## Reportable Conduct

Where a child safety incident or concern involves, or is alleged to involve, behaviour by a staff member, we call this “reportable conduct.”

Not all physical contact, verbal communication and other behaviour of staff members is reportable conduct. Reasonable or accidental conduct is **not** reportable conduct.

Some examples of conduct that is **not** reportable conduct include a staff member touching a child on the arm to get their attention, guide them or comfort them, a teacher raising their voice to attract attention or restore order in a classroom, or conduct that is established to be accidental.

## CHILD PROTECTION RELATED COMPLAINTS

It is critical that the broader Arethusa College community tells us about all child safety incidents or concerns that occur at or otherwise involve Arethusa College. This enables Arethusa College to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and to comply with its legislative reporting obligations.

We call reports made to Arethusa College about child safety incidents or concerns at or involving the school or its staff members a “child protection-related complaint.”

## HOW TO MAKE A CHILD PROTECTION RELATED COMPLAINT TO ARETHUSA COLLEGE

If you would like to make a complaint about:

- a breach of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- conduct that has caused, or has the potential to cause, harm to current or former students

by

- current or former staff members
- current or former students
- other people on Arethusa College premises or at college events

you can do so by:

1. Sending an email to the Executive Principal: [executiveprincipal@arethusa.qld.edu.au](mailto:executiveprincipal@arethusa.qld.edu.au)
2. Writing a letter to Arethusa College addressed to the Executive Principal
3. Telephoning Arethusa College and asking to speak to the Executive Principal
4. Completing the Arethusa College online complaints form (also found on our webpage):  
[Complaint Form](#)

If the Executive Principal is the subject of your complaint or allegation of misconduct or reportable conduct, please contact the Board Chair via email at [chair@arethusa.qld.edu.au](mailto:chair@arethusa.qld.edu.au) or write a letter addressed to the Board Chair.

## HOW ARETHUSA COLLEGE WILL RESPOND TO CHILD PROTECTION RELATED INCIDENTS AND COMPLAINTS

### Immediate Actions

Depending on the nature of the incident, complaint, allegation or concern, after receiving the internal report or the child protection related complaint, Arethusa College will – if required by law or by our child protection policies and procedures – report the matter to the Child Safety Services, the Police and/or other relevant external agencies.

Arethusa College will conduct an initial risk assessment in consultation – if an external report has been made – with the Police or Child Safety Services, to identify and mitigate any ongoing risks to student safety and wellbeing.

Arethusa College will also ensure that support is provided to any students, staff members and family members impacted by the incident, concern or complaint. In particular, we ensure that they are informed about advocacy and support services which may be available to assist them.

### The Internal Investigation

Arethusa College will then conduct an internal investigation of the incident or complaint, led by the Executive Principal or an external investigator. However, if Child Safety Services or the Police are investigating the alleged conduct, that investigation takes precedence and Arethusa College's investigation will **only** proceed with their permission.

When conducting the internal investigation, Arethusa College follows the National Office of Child Safety's **Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People**.

All internal investigations uphold the principles of procedural fairness and confidentiality – information is only shared with those who need to know.

### ***Investigating and Managing Behaviour by a Student Against Another Student***

Responding to this kind of child protection-related incident or complaint involves considering Arethusa College's duty of care, both to any student who is a victim and to the student who is the alleged perpetrator, as well as to other students.

The Principal will follow our student discipline policies for these investigations.

### ***Investigating and Managing Behaviour by Non-Staff Members on Arethusa College Premises or at Arethusa College Events***

Where the child safety incident, or the child protection-related complaint, involves behaviour by a person who is neither a current or former Arethusa College student nor a current or former staff member (for example they are a parent /carer or a visitor whose behaviour occurs on Arethusa College premises or at an Arethusa College event), Arethusa College's investigation is generally limited.

It may involve only the risk assessment and a subsequent review of our systems, policies and procedures to ensure the future safety and wellbeing of our students.

### ***Investigating and Managing Complaints about Reportable Conduct***

Depending on the nature of the incident, complaint, allegation or concern about reportable conduct, Arethusa College may need to report the matter to additional external agencies, such as the Queensland College of Teachers or Blue Card Services.

The steps that will be followed for reportable conduct investigations include:

- planning the investigation (including planning the involvement of the child)
- information gathering
- staff member response
- ensuring support during the investigation
- making findings and determining outcomes/actions
- taking action.

In addition, further risk assessments are conducted during the internal investigation and at the end of that investigation.

### ***Record Keeping About Investigations***

Records are kept at each step of the investigation process including:

- records received or created during investigations (such as notes of interviews and documents received)
- records of findings
- records of actions proposed and taken.



These are kept in a safe and secure location.

## REVIEWS OF INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES AND OUTCOMES

### Internal Reviews

Staff members, students and parents/carers of students who are involved in the matter and who are not satisfied with an internal investigation or its outcome, may request an internal review of:

- the procedures undertaken
- findings made
- disciplinary actions proposed or taken and/or
- other outcomes (including a decision not to make a finding or to take disciplinary or other action).

Requests for internal reviews should be made to the Executive Principal:

[executiveprincipal@arethusa.qld.edu.au](mailto:executiveprincipal@arethusa.qld.edu.au)

## DISCLOSING INFORMATION TO THE ARETHUSA COLLEGE COMMUNITY

Arethusa College will consult with any relevant external agencies (such as Child Safety Services or Police) to determine when, what and by whom information can be shared.

### Sharing Information with Parents/Carers and Students

The parent/carer of a student who is an alleged victim of a child protection-related complaint, or any child safety incident or concern occurring at or involving Arethusa College, has a legitimate interest in being told that their child is an alleged victim and of the nature of the incident, complaint or allegation.

The parent/carer and student also has a legitimate interest in being informed of the process, progress and findings of any investigation, and of any action that might be taken after the investigation is completed.

However, special issues may arise that require an adjustment to normal information sharing practices. Legal impediments may impact the timeliness of disclosing information, the type or amount of information that is disclosed and to whom the information is disclosed, particularly in the case of reportable conduct allegations.

### Sharing information with the wider Arethusa College community

Arethusa College takes great care to assess the relevance and appropriateness of sharing information about a child safety incident or concern, or a child protection-related complaint, before providing any information about it to the wider Arethusa College community. This is because even the confirmation of an incident or allegation can lead to the identification of a victim.

Information that may identify the victim of the incident, concern or complaint will not be shared with the wider Arethusa College community without the consent of the victim and/or their parent/carer.



## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

For more information about our policies and procedures relating to Arethusa College's management of child safety incidents, or concern occurring at or involving Arethusa College or its staff members, child protection-related complaints, or complaints handling generally, please contact the Executive Principal.