



Child Safe *Policy*

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Child Safe *Policy*

	Contents	Page
1.	Background	3
2.	Purpose	3
3.	Scope	3
4.	Definitions	3
5.	Child Safe Standards	4
6.	Statement of Commitment to Child Safety	5
7.	Child safe principles and values	5
8.	Policy	5
9.	Procedures	8
10.	Child safe responsibilities at the School	11
11.	Implementation	13
12.	Breach of the Child Safe Policy	14
13.	Policy review	14
14.	Related policies and procedures	14
15.	Document control	15
16.	Approval	15



1. Background

St Andrew's Cathedral School and St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School (collectively referred to throughout this Policy as 'the School') are leading co-educational schools which provide an education underpinned by the Christian faith, with a core belief that every child is precious and unique, made in the image of God. This belief underlies the School's commitment and approach to child safety. We provide a child safe environment by implementing policies, procedures, practices and training which foster the safety, care and wellbeing of our students.

2. Purpose

The School's Child Safe Policy demonstrates our strong commitment to child safety and provides an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm. It outlines the key elements of our approach to being a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the School's entire Child Safe Program.

The Child Safe Policy provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the School
- the creation of a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child safe culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the School, and
- compliance with laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection and safety in NSW.

3. Scope

The School's Child Safe Policy applies to all adults in the School community, including staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

This Policy applies in all School environments. School environments include both physical and online environments, as well as any environment (including those outside the School grounds) where School-organised activities are occurring.

4. Definitions

Child abuse and other harm

The phrase **child abuse and other harm** refers to incidents of, or concerns about a risk of, physical, sexual, psychological and/or emotional harm, neglect, grooming and exposure to domestic violence, regardless of by whom or how this harm occurs.

Child and young person

A **child** is defined as a person aged under 16, and **young person** is defined as a person aged 16 or 17. Note however that different age ranges may apply to the definitions of 'child' and 'young person' for different legal reporting and responding obligations.



Child safe

The term **child safe** refers to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, which includes but goes further than the protection of them from abuse and other harm.

Child Safe Program

The **Child Safe Program** is the name given to the full collection of policies and procedures that assist the School to be a child safe organisation and to meet the requirements of the NSW Child Safe Standards and the Safe and Supportive Environment school registration requirements. It includes policies and procedures for:

- responding to and reporting child safety incidents and concerns
- child safe human resource management (including Working With Children Checks)
- participation and empowerment of students
- informing and involving families and relevant communities in child safety issues
- equity and diversity
- child safety risk management strategies
- strategies for embedding a culture of child safety at the School, and
- regular reviews and continuous improvement of child safe policies, procedures and practices.

Student

The term **student** refers to any student enrolled at the School, including those aged 18 and above.

Note that our policies and procedures about the internal and external reporting of child safety incidents and concerns must be followed for child safety incidents and concerns about students aged 18 years and above, provided that - for external reporting - the relevant student consents to the report or, if they do not consent, the external report is made to lessen or prevent a serious or imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare.

5. Child Safe Standards

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards, which set out overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse, neglect and other harm.

Aligning with the Child Safe Standards is one of the strategies employed by the School to embed a culture of child safety at the School. In NSW, all organisations that fall under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (including the School), as well as some additional child-related organisations, must comply with the NSW Child Safe Standards.

The NSW Child Safe Standards are:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.



6. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people who come to the School have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The School regards its child safe responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually, and collectively, to providing a child safe environment and supporting the wellbeing and safety of all students.

7. Child safe principles and values

The School's child safe principles and values are based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards. Our child safe principles and values are:

- the best interests of children and their protection from harm are paramount
- child abuse is not tolerated
- children's rights are understood and respected
- concerns about child safety raised by children and their parents and carers are taken seriously and investigated, and
- reporting of abuse is not obstructed or prevented.

8. Policy

8.1. Child Safe Codes of Conduct

The School's Child Safe Codes of Conduct include a Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy. Together, these Codes of Conduct set boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in our School community and students, including in physical and online environments.

We also have rules and codes of behaviour for students which include standards of behaviour relating to child safety.

Our Child Safe Codes of Conduct include clear processes to report inappropriate behaviour. We make our Child Safe Codes of Conduct available so that students, families and others know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at our School and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

8.2. Children and young people's rights to safety, information and participation

The School is a child safe and child-centred organisation. We ensure that our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people. We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe at School and we regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

8.3. Parents/carers, families and community involvement at the School

The School recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities know about the School's operations and policies, including our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions as appropriate and seek to build cultural safety at the School through partnerships with relevant communities.

8.4. Diversity in the School community

Our School is diverse and does not tolerate unlawful discriminatory practices. We:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of First Nations students and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- support students with disability and their families
- support students and families of diverse sexuality
- support diverse cultures and recognise cultural difference
- commit to promoting the inclusion of students of differing abilities, and
- refer to culturally appropriate external support agencies where appropriate.

8.5. Child safe human resource management

8.5.1 Recruitment and screening

The School applies child safe standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, volunteers and contractors to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students.

Our practices include:

- making our commitment to child safety clear in recruitment advertising and documentation
- requiring staff and relevant volunteers and contractors to maintain a valid Working With Children Check clearance, and
- using additional selection, reference checking and screening processes that take into account child safe considerations.

8.5.2 Training on and information about our Child Safe Program

As a part of the School's induction process, we require all staff, as well as relevant volunteers and contractors, to complete an induction program, which includes information about our child safe policies, practices and procedures.

All staff, as well as relevant volunteers and contractors, also receive refresher and ongoing child safe training at least annually.

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

- this Child Safe Policy
- our Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- recognising child abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators, including harm caused by other children and young people
- our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns (including mandatory reporting, reporting to Police and reportable conduct obligations)
- our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns, and

- Working With Children Checks and other child safe human resources practices.

The School provides relevant visitors to the School with information about our Child Safe Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School.

The School provides staff, volunteers and contractors with appropriate support and supervision to ensure compliance with the School's approach to child safety.

8.5.3 Ongoing supervision, management and support

The School's Child Safety Officers and Senior Executive Team provide supervision and support to staff, volunteers and contractors to ensure that they comply with the School's child safe approach. Our child safe supervision and support program includes:

- regular performance appraisals for staff members
- appointing a supervising staff member to relevant volunteers and contractors, and
- training and professional development programs for staff that include information and education on child safety.

8.6. The School's response to child safety incidents or concerns

The School fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the School community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns set out in the procedures in Section 9 below, and in our Complaints Handling Policy and our Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct which are available on the School's website.

We also have clear procedures that all staff, volunteers and contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a volunteer, a contractor or the School, set out for staff in the Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns section of the Child Safe Program. These are summarised for students, parents/carers and other members of the School community in our Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct which are available on the School's website.

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when staff, volunteers, contractors, students, parents/carers or anyone else reports these to the School.

The safety and wellbeing of the student/s involved in the matter will be the paramount consideration when responding to child safety incidents and concerns. The School is guided by the National Office of Child Safety's Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people when investigating and responding to child safety incidents and concerns.

The School's response will include:

- externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) (mandatory reports), the Police (mandatory reporting of child abuse offences), and/or the Office of the Children's Guardian (reportable conduct), depending on the issues raised
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about a First Nations student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other potentially vulnerable students
- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the law
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the School's response to it, and

- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the School (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

8.7. Child safe risk management

The School recognises the importance of a risk management approach to our child safe obligations and to minimising the risk of harm to children and young people without compromising their rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. Through our risk management procedures, we identify, assess and manage child safety risks in School environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

8.8. Child safe privacy and information sharing

The School collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the School to disclose child safe information to external people and agencies. For information about how the School collects, uses and discloses information, refer to our Privacy Policy which is available on the School's website.

8.9. Child safe record keeping

The School is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns. When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

8.10. Child Safe Program and practice review

The School is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safe Program and our child safe practices. We review the Child Safe Program annually (or earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the School or legislation changes) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

9. Procedures

9.1. Reporting child safety incidents or concerns to the School

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000 and also notify the Head of School or one of our Child Safety Officers immediately.

Any person, including all staff, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and students, can at any time contact the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person (aged under 18), or a class of children or young persons, is at risk of significant harm.

Voluntary reports to DCJ can be made by calling the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 or 1800 212 936 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

9.1.1 Staff, volunteers and contractors

Staff, volunteers and contractors must follow our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns and report all child safety incidents or concerns internally to the Head of School.

Where the child safety incident or concern involves the Head of School, internal reports should instead be made to the Chair of School Council by email at chair@sacs.nsw.edu.au.

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

9.1.2 Students, parents/carers and community members

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

- disclose the child safety incident or concern to any staff member. This might be done:
 - verbally
 - in writing
 - through electronic means (such as email)
 - indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)
- use the School's anonymous reporting processes.

For more information, students can refer to age-appropriate information and resources designed specifically for students relating to our child safety reporting and complaints procedures.

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

- the Head of School, who is our School's Senior Child Safety Officer, by phoning (02) 9286 9500 or emailing hos@sacs.nsw.edu.au, or
- if the concern relates to the Head of School, the Chair of School Council by email at chair@sacs.nsw.edu.au.

Any person can also contact the Head of School or the Chair of School Council if they have concerns regarding the School's leadership in relation to child safety.

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

9.2. Our response to, and external reporting of, child safety incidents or concerns


Our Child Safe Program sets out the procedures that the School will follow for any child safety incident or concern involving a student, School staff member, volunteer, contractor, visitor, or other person connected to the School or the School environment.

It also provides guidance for all staff, volunteers and contractors on their obligations to respond to and report, to relevant external authorities, child safety incidents and concerns.

These procedures and guidance are summarised for students, parents/carers and community members in our Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct which are available on the School's website.

9.3. Support for students, families and staff following a child safety incident or disclosure

Child safety incidents or concerns can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children, as well as on their families. In addition to reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, the School plays a role in addressing this trauma and has a duty of care to ensure that students feel safe and supported at School.



The School employs a range of measures to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern, depending on the circumstances of the matter and of the student and their family:

- Child Safety Officers or other appropriate staff will work with the student and their family to develop a Student Support Plan, and
- support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include offering or organising referrals to internal or external support, such as the School counsellor/psychologist, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation that specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm.

The School offers former students who may disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the School similar support.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for staff, volunteers and contractors involved. The School assists impacted staff, volunteers and contractors to access necessary support including through our Employee Assistance Program.

9.4. Embedding a culture of child safety: our Child Safe Program

Our Child Safe Program itself is one of the strategies employed by the School to embed a culture of child safety at the School.

Our Child Safe Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from abuse or other harm, and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the School. It includes:

- Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- clear information as to what is child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse or other harm
- clear procedures for reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally to the Head of School, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, contractors, volunteers, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening staff, volunteers and contractors
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, including mandatory reporting to DCJ, reportable conduct, and reporting to Police
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of First Nations students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability
- child safe training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards), and
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

10. Child safe responsibilities at the School

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

Specific responsibilities include:

10.1. School Council

The Councils of St Andrew's Cathedral School and St Andrew's Cathedral Gawura School (collectively referred to as the School Council) is the School's governing body. It is responsible for:

- approving and reviewing the School's Child Safe Policy
- ensuring that the School has and implements processes to comply with its child safety legal and regulatory obligations, and
- ensuring that the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement the NSW Child Safe Standards, the National Principles and the School's Child Safe Program.

10.2. Chair of School Council

Where a child safety incident or concern involves or is alleged to involve the Head of School or where a child safe-related complaint is made about the Head of School, the Chair of School Council is responsible for receiving and managing these reports, complaints, disclosures or allegations. Where a reportable allegation is made against the Head of School, the Chair of School Council undertakes the Head of School's responsibilities for managing the matter.

10.3. Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for the operational management of the School, and the School's Child Safe Program. The Head of School is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Safe Program is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School.

The Head of School is the first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and is responsible for coordinating the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Child Safety Officers, Executive Team and the School Council where relevant. The Head of School is considered the School's Senior Child Safety Officer.


Throughout the School's Child Safe Program, the Head of School is given specific responsibilities for receiving and managing internal reports, complaints, disclosures or allegations of child safety incidents or concerns that involve the School or its staff, volunteers or contractors.

The Head of School is the 'head' of the School for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme and the 'Head of a Relevant Entity (HRE)' under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW).

10.4. Child Safety Officers

As outlined in Section 10.3, the Head of School is the School's Senior Child Safety Officer and is the first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries.

A number of other senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Safety Officers, and they support the Head of School with child safety matters. Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and protection issues. They are also responsible for championing our child safe commitment within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.



In addition to the Head of School, our Child Safety Officers are:

- Deputy Head of School (Secondary)
- Deputy Head of School (Primary)
- Deputy Head Cocurricular
- Head of Senior College
- Head of Middle School.

10.5. Executive team

Each member of the School Executive team is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's Child Safe Program to be effectively implemented within the School, and to support the Head of School in the practical application of the School's child safe strategies, policies, procedures and work systems.

10.6. Working With Children Check responsibilities

The People and Culture team, under the direction of the People and Culture Manager, is responsible for verifying Working With Children Check clearances for all staff and for relevant contractors and volunteers when they first commence their role at the School, for monitoring the Working With Children Check status of ongoing staff and relevant volunteers and contractors, and for all subsequent verifications. The People and Culture team is also responsible for maintaining the School's Working With Children Check records.

10.7. Staff

All staff are required to comply with the School's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, be familiar with the School's Child Safe Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm and Working With Children Checks.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with the Head of School.


A Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and Independent Schools NSW enables centralised mandatory reporting via the Head of School. All staff are considered mandatory reporters and therefore must report to the Head of School if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is at risk of significant harm.

To meet these obligations, all staff must:

- participate in child safe induction and ongoing training provided by the School
- always follow the School's Child Safe Policy and related policies and procedures in the Child Safe Program
- act in accordance with the Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- identify and respond to concerns about students who are at risk of significant harm or who are or were the victim of a child abuse offence
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them, and
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

10.8. Volunteers

A volunteer is someone who works without payment or financial reward for the School. Volunteers may be family members of students or from the wider School or local community.



All volunteers at the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all volunteers must comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- identified volunteers must:
 - participate in child safe induction and ongoing training provided by the School
 - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
 - understand and meet their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and
 - raise all child safety concerns with the Head of School.

10.9. Contractors

A contractor is someone engaged by the School to perform specific tasks. Contractors may include, but are not limited to, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, tutors, sports coaches and School cleaners, as well as external education providers (organisations that the School has arranged to deliver a specific course of study that is part of the curriculum to a student or students enrolled at the School). Contractors may also include music teachers and other cocurricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

All contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all contractors engaged by the School must comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- identified contractors must:
 - participate in child safe induction and ongoing training provided by the School or provide evidence of other training
 - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
 - understand and meet their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and
 - raise all child safety concerns with the Head of School.

The School may include these requirements in the written agreement between the School and the contractor.

11. Implementation

The Child Safe Policy is published on the School's website. It is provided to new staff, and to relevant volunteers and contractors at induction or prior to them commencing their work at the School.

The School provides relevant visitors to the School with information about the Child Safe Policy (including in particular the Child Safe Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School).

We provide students with age-appropriate information about our Child Safe Policy and our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.



12. Breach of the Child Safe Policy

The School enforces this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Codes of Conduct. In the event of non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

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

13. Policy review

The School Council conducts a review of this Child Safe Policy annually or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation. The School Council is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy.

14. Related policies and procedures

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy
- Procedures for Handling Allegations of Staff Misconduct and Reportable Conduct
- Complaints Handling Policy



15. Document control

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16. Approval

Approver	Date of Approval
Governance Committee	12 May 2026
School Council	28 May 2026