



KOROWAL SCHOOL
Human-centred education • Kindergarten to HSC

KOROWAL SCHOOL LIMITED
CHILD PROTECTION RECORDS AND
INFORMATION EXCHANGE POLICY

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1. DOCUMENT CONTROL

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2. POLICY STATEMENT

Korowal acknowledges that the risks facing vulnerable children and families are often multi-dimensional in nature and cannot be satisfactorily addressed by any one School or other agency working alone. The School recognises that the current legal framework for child protection in NSW supports collaboration between Schools and other agencies in the provision of services to vulnerable children and their families by establishing a structure for the flow of information between agencies relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.

The School also recognises that cumulative harm may be identified through maintaining accurate records and sharing information about safety, welfare and wellbeing concerns for children. The School is committed to ensuring the suitability of employees and others who are engaged to provide services to children in the School. In this respect the School also acknowledges the importance of maintaining recruitment and employment screening records, records regarding actions taken to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour by employees towards children, and records of training provided to employees in the area of child safety and child protection.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Promote the maintenance of certain records that may be needed at a later date for the safety and protection of children.
- Allow government agencies and other authorities access to information on children who are at risk in certain circumstances.
- Allow the School to seek information from and share information with other agencies to prevent an issue from occurring or getting worse, to identify whether a child has been harmed, or identify if a child is at risk of significant harm.
- Promote a collaborative approach between agencies in the safety and protection of children.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of its students at the same time as promoting their safety, welfare and wellbeing through sharing information which may be relevant for that purpose.
- Assist The School employees to understand what records need to be kept relating to the safety and protection of children, how those records should be kept to respect privacy and confidentiality and the circumstances in which information may be lawfully exchanged with other agencies for child protection purposes.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all the School's employees who, under this policy, include all paid staff, contractors and volunteers who are engaged by the School in working with children.

5. RELATED POLICIES

This policy is part of the *Child Protection Framework* and should be read in unison with that document. This policy is also related to the School's other policies including but not limited to:

- *Employee Code of Conduct*
- *Identify and Respond to Child Abuse and Neglect Policy*
- *Promote Child Safety in the Workplace Policy*
- *Protected Disclosures Policy*

6. LEGISLATION

This Policy has been drafted to comply with the following legislation:

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Ombudsman's Act 1974 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Child Safe Standards Final Report: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

7. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Employees	This includes all employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience participants and student placements who are engaged by the School in working with children.
Child	Any person who is under 16 years of age.
Young Person	Any person who is 16 or 17 years of age.
Student	Any person receiving education services at the school whether above or below 18 years of age.
Head of Agency	Head of Agency is defined in accordance with the Ombudsman Act. At the School it is the Principal.
Records	Information, whether it be electronic or in writing, that is retained for later reference.
Business Manager	Manager of the business and financial affairs of the School.

8. PRINCIPLES

The School adheres to the following principles:

- **Records**
The School is committed to maintaining rigorous records relevant to safety and protection of students in out care.
- **Collaboration**
The School acknowledges the importance of collaborating with other agencies to enable us to provide a better service for our students.
- **Involving Students**
The School is committed to involving students in discussions regarding the exchange of information about them and the parents/caregivers in the first instance.
- **Sensitivity**
Given the sensitive nature of these and other issues that our students face, the School is committed to managing information in a sensitive way, and where possible informing students early in their relationship with the School that information about them might be requested from or provided to other organisations.

9. RECORD KEEPING RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 What child protection information is recorded?

In this policy “child protection information” is any information that relates to:

- a. Children involved in the School’s programs.
- b. Any concern regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child whether or not the concern has been reported to Family and Community Services.
- c. Any concern regarding the inappropriate behaviour by an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor to the School towards any child.
- d. Recruitment and employment screening records relating to the checking of a person’s suitability to work with children.
- e. Training records relating to the induction and training of employees, contractors and volunteers in relation to child protection and professional standards (code of conduct).

9.2 Record Keeping Guidelines

Appropriate assessments and meaningful decisions relating to the safety and protection of children depend in part on the quality and accuracy of information gathered and recorded.

In addition, in certain circumstances, records may be subject to scrutiny by external authorities or other organisations in accordance with provisions relating to the sharing of information (see section 7: Receiving and Sharing Information).

It is therefore important that records relating to the safety and protection of children are accurate, objective, of a high quality and contain relevant information.

9.3 Records relating to children who are students at the School

Student records may include but not limited to information relating to:

- a. Identity (child's name, date of birth etc.)
- b. Details of living situation
- c. Health and medical information
- d. Education, vocation, training and development
- e. Emotional and behavioural development
- f. Social skills, peer relationships and recreation
- g. Living skills and self-care skills
- h. Legal information

The School maintains relevant documents relating to students of the School in a systematic manner. Administration is responsible for maintaining these records.

9.4 Records relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child

Records relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child may include:

- a. Diagrams, drawings, photos, screenshots
- b. Any writing in any form by a child such as stories, emails, letters, statements, social media pages
- c. Records of interview, meeting minutes, file notes
- d. Reports, forms, plans, medical reports
- e. Court reports
- f. Notes of disclosures by children
- g. Formal records/documents associated with local mandatory reporting requirements
- h. Critical incident forms
- i. Records of decisions made and management action
- j. Records related to information sharing with other agencies or professionals
- k. Records of referrals

Records relating to the safety and protection of children are sensitive and must be treated with strict confidentiality and in accordance with principles which safeguard privacy. This includes storing such records securely and protecting them from unauthorised access, use or disclosure. The Principal is responsible for maintaining these records.

9.5 Records relating to the employment of both paid and unpaid employees working with children

The School maintains on the employee file:

- a. Records of the Working with Children Check.
- b. Employee's CV or resume
- c. Notes of referee checks conducted in accordance with the *Promoting Child Safety in the Workplace Policy*
- d. Employment contract
- e. Volunteer agreement
- f. Notes of any complaints or grievances against employees
- g. A database is also kept recording all employee full names, dates of birth, relevant probity check information (e.g. clearance number) and the date of expiry of the check.

Any confidential records relating to professional standards matters, including investigation records and reports to external agencies, are maintained under confidential, secure and restricted access by the Principal.

9.6 Records relating to child protection training of the School's employees

Records of all child protection/professional standards training and induction programs delivered to employees are kept by the School ensuring the date that the training program was delivered is clearly recorded, and is supported by a list of attendees with attendees' signatures indicating attendance as well as copies of training packages. The Business Manager is responsible for maintaining these records.

9.7 Sharing and receiving information

As a general rule, any information about students, particularly information relating to their safety, welfare and wellbeing, may be shared with other individuals, agencies or child protection authorities.

At times it is possible to legally share information without a child or family's consent without breaching laws relating to privacy.

- a. Certain agencies or prescribed bodies are allowed to share information without the child, young person or family's consent under Chapter 16A of the Children and Young People's (Care and protection) Act 1998 s245A. Non-government agencies are prescribed bodies if they provide health care, welfare, education, children's services, residential services or law enforcement, wholly or partly to children. The School is a prescribed body.
- b. Family and Community Services and other State and certain Commonwealth government departments are prescribed bodies.
- c. The information that is exchanged must relate to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person, and be of assistance in providing a service, undertaking an investigation, assessing or planning, or addressing employer concerns.
- d. The exchange may be verbal or in writing.
- e. If an employee receives a request for information or wishes to provide or request information they should direct the request to the Principal or his or her direct delegate.
- f. For further guidelines see *Child Wellbeing and Child Protection – NSW Interagency Guidelines*.
 - <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/providers/children-families/interagency-guidelines>