



Sacred Heart
College
GEELONG

STUDENT SERVICE PROVISION POLICY

Rationale

At Sacred Heart College our Mercy Values compel us to create an environment that values diversity and seeks to engage every learner, regardless of culture, academic, social emotional and physical attributes. We aim to foster inclusive practices where all students are welcomed, valued, acknowledged and actively engaged in learning, and experience success

Definitions

APP Guidelines	Australian Privacy Principles Guidelines
FLS	Flexible Learning Space in Learning Centre
PSG	Program Support Groups
SSS	Student Support Services
ID Body	First Aid Officer
ID Mind	Social Workers and Psychologist
MGT	Mentor Group Teacher
HL	House Leader

Policy Statement

The College is committed to ensuring that all young people in its community learn and thrive, by providing positive and growth oriented learning environments, engaging curriculum and quality teaching. The College strives to meet each student's academic, social, emotional, spiritual and physical learning needs. This includes the provision of Student Support Services (SSS).

The Student Support Services at the College are provided by:

- College Social Workers, Occupational Therapist, and Psychologists
- College First Aid Officer
- Inclusion and Diversity Co-ordinator
- Learning and Teaching Representative
- Learning Culture Leader
- House Engagement Leader



Educating Girls to Make a Difference

A Ministry of Mercy Education Limited ABN 69 154 531 870

Our SSS team are vital members of our College. The changing needs of students, families and staff require support professionals who are skilled in current evidence-based practice.

Our SSS team members:

- work in collaboration and consultation with others in the College community and external agencies within the wider community;
- will continue to support the various facets of mental, emotional, social, physical and spiritual health and wellbeing;
- utilise the model of early identification, assessment and prevention of learning, mental, emotional and issues
- will advocate for young people to become empowered positive, resilient, confident and faith-filled learners
- will act in accordance with respective professional Codes of Ethics (Social Work, Psychology)
- will act in alignment with legislation; Health and Privacy Act, Duty of Care, Discrimination Act, Disability Standards for Education, The Human Rights Commission, Child Safety Standards.

Within the developmental context of adolescence, a proportion of young people are likely to experience social, emotional, mental and physical health issues. These issues can impact a young person's ability to engage in learning, relationships and personal development.

The SSS team plays an important part in supporting the diverse needs of students to ensure they learn, thrive and are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

Service Availability

Professional support services should be readily and easily accessible to all students. To enable this to occur, the availability of these services within the College should be made known to students, staff, families and the wider College community.

Referral Process

The referral process may be via a student self referral or from:

1. Contact with the student's MGT
2. Contact with the HL
3. From discussion at PSG and/or student meeting
4. Community or parental concern

Please refer to the Student Referral Procedure for operational details.

Nature and duration of Services

Access to SSS is short term and inclusive of assessment and is solution-focused.

Students can access a maximum of six internal support consultations. Beyond this point, a further assessment of need and family consultation will occur, with a view to providing recommendations for external support.

Internal support consultations are generally 30 minutes in length (one teaching period of the school day).

Students requiring "self-management" time during the school day may do so in a supervised situation in the Calm Room located in Mercy House. The Calm Room is monitored by Mercy House staff. It is expected that



students who access the Calm Room in Mercy House are able to self-regulate and then return to classes. If this cannot occur, Mercy House staff will call home and request that the student be picked up. Repeated presentations will prompt a PSG meeting.

Students with complex needs and under the care of external practitioners will have an SSS team member as a point of contact at the College to assist in activating their management and care plan. The role of the SSS team member in these cases will be one of support rather than therapeutic engagement.

Confidentiality

Discussions held between the student, their families and the SSS team members are confidential to the extent that information will only be made accessible or shared to other College staff on an as needed basis.

It is important that all students using the College's support services are made aware that there will be occasions when the contents of discussions may be disclosed to the Principal (and possibly others) and that the Principal may wish to see the records of their support session. Confidentiality practices will be explained to students beforehand and students will be required to sign an informed consent form.

SSS team members are aware that they need to work in conjunction with teachers at the College as a team so that all can properly meet their obligations in relation to their duty of care.

Record Keeping

Appropriate records must be maintained including details of the student's name, the date of each session, those present in the session and a brief summary of the main issues discussed. Any telephone calls or notes of meetings regarding the student with families, teachers, staff of the College or external practitioners must also be recorded.

The College's record keeping system *Compass* must be used with confidential notes stored in a limited access section. General notes should be stored as per chronicle entry prompts. All emails should be logged in *Compass*.

Members of the SSS team must ensure that any hard copy records containing more confidential information are secured in locked cabinets with restricted access and building security measures. However, it is noted that hard copy records should be limited, as *Compass* is sufficiently configured to allow all-digital and secure records.

All records written by SSS team members remain the property of the College. The Principal is able to call for those records which directly pertain to a student of the College. Those records may also be accessed by the student in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act.

Consent

In relation to consent and young people, the APP Guidelines provide as follows:

The Privacy Act does not specify an age after which individuals can make their own privacy decisions. An APP entity will need to determine on a case-by-case basis whether an individual under the age of 18 has the capacity to consent.

As a general principle, an individual under the age of 18 has capacity to consent when they have sufficient understanding and maturity to understand what is being proposed. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for a parent or guardian to consent on behalf of a young person, for example, if the child is young or lacks the maturity or understanding to do so themselves.



If it is not practicable or reasonable for an APP entity to assess the capacity of individuals under the age of 18 on a case-by-case basis, the entity may presume that an individual aged 15 or over has capacity to consent, unless there is something to suggest otherwise and an individual aged under 15 is presumed not to have capacity to consent.

From time to time issues arise in relation to the role of SSS team members and their obligations to students, the College and the families of those young people. It is important to remember that SSS team members:

- do not enjoy any general 'legal professional privilege'
- must respond to Summons and Subpoenas (subject to Protected Confidences provisions)
- have to maintain the confidence of engaged students in the context of an ethical (not just a legal) relationship.

The codes of various professional bodies do not override obligations that a SSS team member may have as an employee of a College or any contractual obligations to which they may be subject. Neither do they override the provisions of the Privacy Act.

In the context of duty of care, the personal information of the student, regardless of their age can only be disclosed to families if:

- disclosure is for the primary purpose of collection or for a related secondary purpose which is reasonably expected; or
- is necessary to fulfil the College's duty of care to the student.

However, on occasions, even though disclosure to families may be permitted, for example, as a reasonably expected secondary purpose, the College Principal may decide not to do so because they have formed the view that disclosure may result in the child suffering harm.

Referral to external allied health professionals:

The SSS teams are unable to provide long-term therapeutic intervention or specialised intervention, and in these instances ongoing support will be sought from external agencies and/or practitioners.

Decisions regarding the recommendation for external intervention is made post assessment and in consultation with the student and their families, relevant staff and/or health professionals. The rationale for external intervention will be explained to the students and families.

Where an external referral is recommended this may commence with the family establishing contact with the student's general practitioner, psychologist, social worker, youth service or other allied health professional.

The SSS teams may assist in making initial contact with external practitioners and if asked supply the names of suitable practitioners or agencies. The SSS team member will then act as a link between the external practitioner and the College in relation to support strategies for the student whilst at school and relating to adjustments to the educational program for the student.

References

National Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Council of Australia - Privacy Compliance Manual- May 2018

Australian Privacy Principles Guidelines 2014



Educating Girls to Make a Difference

A Ministry of Mercy Education Limited ABN 69 154 531 870

Document Control

Date Approved: 27 March 2024

Name: Anna Negro, Principal

Signature: 

Date presented at Advisory Council Meeting: 26 March 2024

Sponsor: Deputy Principal - Student Engagement, Development and Empowerment

Person responsible for implementation: Deputy Principal - Student Engagement, Development and Empowerment

Reviewed by:

- School Committee: Student Support Services, Inclusion and Diversity network
- Sub Committee of the College Council: Wellbeing Subcommittee
- Student Leadership House Focus Team: N/A

Location checklist: Staff Handbook Student Space Parent Portal Website

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date approved	Next review
1.0	Sept 2018 (creation)	2021
2.0	Oct 2021 (update)	2024
3.0	Mar 2024	2027

