



220 Forest Way Belrose NSW 2085

www.kamaroi.nsw.edu.au

Child Protection Information for Parents

Child Protection is a community responsibility. Staff at Kamaroi Rudolf Steiner School takes the safety of children in our school most seriously. There are a number of steps our school undertakes to protect children which are both preventative and responsive.

This includes complying with NSW laws about child protection by screening people who work with children, risk assessments and reporting allegations of abuse or neglect to relevant authorities. However, it goes further than that. It means creating a safe school environment for children to learn within, when they attend school. It means we expect others in the community, who are involved in our school, to support our school processes for ensuring student safety. This includes staff, volunteers, parents, family members, students themselves, visitors and contractors.

The key areas are outlined below.

Preventative Responsibilities:

NSW Working with Children Check

Kamaroi School complies with NSW laws on screening persons to ensure they are suitable to work (paid or unpaid) with children. This is administered under the responsibility of the Office of the Children's Guardian (OoCG). This process is called a Working with Children Check (known as "the check") and includes a national police check and review of findings of misconduct involving children. The result is either a clearance or a bar. The process identifies persons who are prohibited at law to work or volunteer in our schools.

This means that any person who seeks to work (paid or unpaid) with children at Kamaroi School must comply with the requirements of the NSW OoCG which includes "the check". Fact Sheets for parents about the process can be located on the OoCG website at www.kids.nsw.gov.au

The Principal or delegate verifies the clearance number for those required to undertake "the check" to ensure they are not barred to work with children.

Other Procedures

Regardless of whether a person has to undertake "the check" or not, Kamaroi School also has other procedures to ensure children are safe in our schools.

The NSW Working with Children Check allows parents to volunteer in school and other activities that involve their own children without needing a Check.

The two exemptions from the Working with Children Check for parent volunteers are:

- volunteering by a parent or close relative of a child in activities for the child's school, early education service or other educational institution
- Volunteering by a parent or close relative, with a team, program or other activity in which the child usually participates or is a team member.

If the volunteering work fits either of these descriptions, the parent **does not need** to get a Working with Children Check.

However, this is **not** a blanket exemption for all parent volunteers. If the work is part of a formal mentoring program or involves intimate personal care of children with a disability, the parent volunteer must get a Check.

Parents who volunteer on camps need to get a check but it is free of charge for volunteers.

Applicants should allow **four weeks** to receive their Working with Children Check results.

For more information go to www.newcheck.kids.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 9286 7276.

Schools have a duty of care to ensure that children are safe when in the supervision of the school. Therefore, if the Principal has a concern that a person, (whether an adult or young person), may pose a risk to a child they have discretion and authority to request that person to disengage from the school activity and leave the school premises until further assessment can be undertaken. Similarly, if the Principal assesses that an activity poses a risk to a child they have a duty to stop that activity until further assessment can be undertaken to reduce the concerns. There are procedures in place for such situation if they arise.

Inappropriate language or behaviour that presents a risk to safety or disruption of education for any student in our schools, which occurs on school premises or at any school activity, is not acceptable.

A Principal may request information from certain authorities and other agencies if that information is required to assess, investigate or respond to the safety, well-being or educational needs of a child in its care.

Responsive Responsibilities – a school's response to concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child/young person in general

Reporting Requirements Department of Family and Community Services

The abuse of a child is an offence under the NSW law. The Department of Family and Community Services is the government authority responsible for responding to reports that a child (under the age of 16 years), or a young person (aged 16 or 17 years), is at "risk of significant harm".

Staff at Kamaroi School are mandatory reporters. This means they are lawfully required to report to Community Services if they have "reasonable grounds" to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect and those grounds are identified in the course of, or from the person's work.

Whilst not mandated under NSW law to report a young person, (age 16 or 17 years), our staff will make such a report, given their duty of care to children in our schools, if their professional judgment believes a statutory intervention is required for the young person's safety and well-being (that is a student aged 16 or 17 years).

The Principal, teachers, school consultants, as well as many external professionals working with children in our school, are all mandatory reporters. It is an offence for these people not to comply with their legal duties under the Act.

The types of reports our staff are required to make to Community Services are when they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child/young person are at significant risk of harm include:

- o Physical abuse
- o Neglect of supervision, physical shelter/environment, food, medical care, mental health care, education
- o Sexual abuse
- o Problematic sexual behaviour
- o Psychological harm
- o Relinquishing Care
- o Carer concerns – parent/carer substance abuse; parent /carer mental health; parent/carer domestic violence
- o Unborn child

It is Community Services responsibility to assess if intervention is required. The school's responsibility is to report certain information and not to assess the validity of that information.

NSW Police

The NSW Police will be informed of any information received by our schools which may be of a criminal nature.

NSW Ombudsman

All schools in NSW are required at law (Part 3A NSW Ombudsman Act 1974) to report to the NSW Ombudsman allegations of "reportable conduct" involving an employee or volunteer. The role of the NSW Ombudsman is to oversight how each agency manages such reports. The process requires making a report within 30 days to the NSW Ombudsman, making reasonable inquiries into the allegation, assessing the information obtained and making a finding.

This is an allegation based scheme. Therefore, the requirement to report and investigate is at the point an allegation is received. The type of allegations required to be reported can be viewed in the NSW Ombudsman Fact Sheets on their website www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OoCG)

All schools in NSW are required to report to the Children's Guardian any finding of misconduct that the following conduct occurred by a person working with children within the school:

- A. sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child, including grooming a child
- B. any serious physical assault of a child.

A report of such a finding will trigger the OoCG to undertake a risk assessment to consider if that person is suitable to be working with children or not.

The school has in place procedures to comply with reporting requirements to the OoCG.

Other internal procedures and guidelines

The Principal has internal procedures for managing and responding to reports of information that relates to the protection of a child at Kamaroi School. Any concern in relation to safety and protection is assessed and the appropriate process implemented. This may involve reporting to external authorities such as the NSW Police or Community Services. It may require the school to undertake its own inquiries and investigations. It always involves risk assessment.

Kamaroi School consults and works closely with the police and community services to respond to concerns of safety for children and young people. It will assist police and community services with inquiries if requested.

Children's Safety at School

Kamaroi School has a number of policies and procedures they follow to respond to and address any safety issues of a child whilst on school premises or in a school activity. Consistent to all are the following:

- Any concern about a child's safety whilst at school should be reported immediately to the Principal.
- The Principal will determine if the matter requires a report to an external authority and undertake a risk assessment
- If the matter requires a mandatory report to Community Services this will be undertaken by the Principal
- If the matter requires a report or consultation with the NSW Police this will be undertaken by the Principal
- The Principal will work with parents/carer and child to address any safety issues at school
- If a concern about a child's safety relates to actions of a staff member or a volunteer the Principal will investigate the concern in accordance with the school procedures. In some instances the concern may require a report to an external authority as noted above for example – NSW Ombudsman, NSW Police or Community Services.
- If a concern regarding safety relates to a Principal a report should be made immediately to the Chair of the Kamaroi Board of Directors.
- In making an assessment the protection of children is paramount and takes precedent over any other competing interest

Parental responsibilities and the School

Kamaroi School recognises the joint parenting responsibility naturally afforded to parents other than where this is changed by an Order under the Family Law Act (Cth). In this regard, Kamaroi School will engage with all parents and legal guardians objectively and equally in relation to their child's education and wellbeing at school unless a Court Order changes the responsibilities of either parent in relation to the child's education.

A copy of any Court Order that changes the parenting responsibilities of a parent should be provided to a school to assist the school in undertaking its own responsibilities in educating the child. Any conflict between parents or carers is not tolerated on school premises as it poses a risk to the safety of children and disruption to their education. It is expected that parents and carers will resolve any disputes in relation to their responsibilities for parenting of a student outside the school, and through appropriate processes.

What can parents do if they have concerns about a child/student safety at school?

Parents should raise any such concerns with the Principal in the first instance. If the concern involves the Principal they should take their concern to the Chairperson of the Kamaroi School Board of Directors.

Parents have a right to report a relevant concern to the NSW Police or Community Services at any time.

Helpful Contacts relevant to the information in this document

The Advocate for Children and Young and People (formerly the NSW Children's Guardian)

Website: www.acyp.nsw.gov.au

General Phone: 02 9286 7276

WWCC Phone: 02 9286 7219

Community Services

Website: www.community.nsw.gov.au

Phone: Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 (TTY 1800 212 936) NSW Ombudsman

Website: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au Phone: 02 9286 1000

NSW Police

Website: www.police.nsw.gov.au

Phone options:

Kamaroi has in place procedures to deal with incidents of bullying. The school takes seriously all reports of cyber bullying, intimidation or physical harm. The school maintains contact with the School Liaison Police and utilises these services when needed.

Contact details

Robyn JENNINGS | Senior Constable | Youth Liaison Officer
Northern Beaches Local Area Command | Cnr St David Avenue & Fisher Road DEE WHY 2099
Ph: 02 99713399 | EN: 68025 | FAX: 02 99713366 | EN: 68011
Email: jenn1rob@police.nsw.gov.au

- Your local police station
- Dial 131444 for general police inquiries
- Dial 000 for emergencies

For further information on the policies and procedures referred to in this document please contact the Principal