

SHIELDING POLICY

Last Review:	October 2023
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Next Review:	October 2025

Vision

Loreto College is centred in God, rooted in Christ and animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, the founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our vision is that it will be an educational community where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God; a community where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a better world.

Introduction

The College aims to be an educational community which gives expression to the core values of Mary Ward - freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, joy, excellence and internationality.

Loreto College has the highest expectations of personal, academic and professional excellence. This document sets out the College's policy and guidance on the procedures it will follow to ensure the safe storage of information for students who are shielded. In doing so, the college will be mindful not only of its legal responsibilities but of its core values and in particular the need to act in a manner which respects the dignity and worth of all.

Preamble

Loreto College is an educational community where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God: communities where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity. Students can expect to be in a safe, happy and secure environment where teaching and learning can take place. Students must be secure in their expectation that they or their families will not be placed in danger by the sharing of information about them. Loreto College recognises that each student is a unique, sacred individual and as such will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

1. Overarching principles for this policy:

- No child or young person, their family or those living at the same address should be put in danger by information of their whereabouts being shared.
- The necessity to shield a record must be assessed on a case-by-case basis and agreed by the Head of Student Services or the Deputy Principal.
- Practitioners must act promptly if they have strong reasons to believe that a record should be shielded.
- Shielding requests can come from practitioners from a variety of agencies, a member of staff, a child/young persons and parents or carers. These requests to shield should be treated as a matter of urgency.

2. Criteria

When assessing the criteria for shielding, the professional judgement of the staff and other agencies are key to deciding if a child or young person should be shielded. It is vital that shielding (and thereby not disclosing the whereabouts of a child or young person) is only applied where there are strong reasons, for example, where a practitioner has reason to believe that not doing so is likely to:

- Place a child/young person at increased risk of significant harm
- Put a child's/young person's placement at risk e.g. looked after or adopted children
- Place an adult at risk of significant harm
- Prejudice the prevention or detection of a serious crime.

Such cases could arise for example where:

- A child/young person is in a placement that is not disclosed to their birth parent by court order or due to concerns about the safety of the child or carers.
- The child/young person is in an adoptive placement and there are no plans for ongoing direct contact by the birth parents.
- A child/young person and/or their parent/carers have been moved to another address to protect them from violence, abuse or intimidation e.g. refuge, safe-house.
- Any other circumstance where it is assessed that revealing information about the child or others in the household could place the child at risk of significant harm.

The necessity to shield a record must therefore be assessed on a case-by-case basis and agreed by the Head of Student Services or Deputy Principal.

The above is not an exhaustive list.

3. At Loreto

- 3.1 Shielding within Loreto must be assessed on a case-by-base basis by the Head of Student Services and a student's Head of Hall, after discussion with the "to be shielded parties".
- 3.2 The Head of Student Services will enter into discussions with any external agency which advises the Shielding on any individual student.
- 3.3 Precautions may include:
 - Student Files to be held securely by the Head of Student Services or Deputy Principal. Any request for staff access will be considered by the Head of Student Services or Deputy Principal.
 - All relevant staff to be informed of the shielding by Head of Student Services.
 - All relevant staff meetings/discussions to be recorded.
 - All relevant staff to be informed of procedure should the student come under threat in college.
 - Access to student contact details by staff restricted.
 - System alert on myLoreto for all staff users (shown as red band).
 - Updated records on the Safeguarding Log, to include, but not limited to:
 - School transfer safeguarding records
 - Student disclosures
 - Professional/external agency information/updates

This is not an exhaustive list.