Student Welfare Policy

Version 2.3

Prepared by	CEN Hub Compliance Officer
Date Prepared	March 2016
Date ratified by the Board:	25 February 2019
Monitored by	Board
Review by	Board
Date for review	2027
Status	Final
Policy Pertains to:	Board members; All Staff; Students & Families

Version History

Version	Date	Notes
1	June 2014	Adopted
1.1	Sept 2015	Minor amendments to policy references
2.0	October 2018	Adopted CEN Hub Policy. Incorporates and replaces Student Security Policy 1.1
2.1	June 2020	Updated policy & FACS references; reviewed 6.1 Physical Security
2.2	July 2023	Addition of Student Onboarding Procedure and replacement of School Pro with SEQTA
2.3	April 2024	Updated roles and responsibilities and associated procedures and added references to RCC Wellbeing Framework

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RICHMOND CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

VISION STATEMENT

A Christ centred learning community exploring and impacting on God's world

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist parents in the nurture of their children, by providing a Christ-centred, biblically grounded, culturally engaging and academically rigorous education that instils hope and equips children to live for God's glory

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Important related documents:

Child Safe Framework
Recruitment Policy
External Providers Policy
Continued Professional Learning Policy (inc Staff Appraisals)
Enrolment Policy
Attendance Policy
WHS Policy
Anti-bullying Policy
RCC Onboarding Program for New Students
Behaviour Management Policy
Complaints Framework
Privacy Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Student Code of Conduct & School Rules
Parents and Visitors Code of Conduct
Staff Handbook

Pathways to and from Care, NSW Govt Health, (20 September 2012)
Suicide Postvention Toolkit, Headspace School Support

Relevant Legislation

Ombudsman Act 1974 and Ombudsman Amendment (Child Protection and Community Services) Act 1998 NSW
Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 NSW
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 NSW

1 INTRODUCTION

The welfare of students at Richmond Christian College is a paramount responsibility and privilege of the school as it partners with parents in the education of their children.

Welfare encompasses the whole of a student's well-being and healthy development. It therefore includes nurturing, building and encouraging; protection from harm (Child Protection Framework); and also training, direction and correction. (Behaviour Management Policy)

Student welfare is built in to everything that happens in the school to meet the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, social and learning needs of students. The school partners with parents, the school and wider community, in strategies which are preventive and proactive in caring for students; and responsive in identifying welfare needs and determining best actions.

2 CHRISTIAN RATIONALE

The purpose of Richmond Christian College (RCC) is to honour and glorify God by giving each child a Christ-centred education, as a complete person created by God in His image. Healthy students are happy and resilient; who can form good relationships with peers and others; and who are well-resourced to develop into leaders of godly character, and will blend academic achievement and biblical truth, to influence society for the glory of God.

The school recognises that the responsibility for a child's welfare is given to his or her parents by God; but that this task is shared by the community of faith, and the wider community. RCC considers the welfare of the children in its care as a sacred trust from God, through the parents who enrol their children.

In partnership with parents, every person who belongs to the community of RCC is encouraged to take responsibility for, and seek the well-being of, others: *'...admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people*.' 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15

The school's policies and procedures, educational programs and extra-curricular activities are designed to build a healthy personal framework for children, teach them about their responsibilities as citizens of God's kingdom, and allow them opportunities for practical experience in caring for others.

Recognising the vulnerability of children, the school seeks to identify and minimise harm in the school environment; and to respond quickly and appropriately when a student appears to be struggling or in distress. The school dedicates resources and structures to protect, heal and restore students; through a vital partnership with parents, the community and local churches.

RCC honours the laws and processes of our state and federal governments for the safety and well-being of our students.

3 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the policy and procedures of the school in pursuit of the welfare of students; and its obligations to government authorities for child protection.

4 TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities	*Evidence of Compliance*
Principal	
Implement the policy within the school	Executive CPL Program & Calendar
Review the policy in collaboration with school community	Calendar of Policy Review
Report to relevant authorities	Records of investigations; secure confidential files on server
Investigate reports and incidents	Records of investigations stored on register in google drive
Oversee appropriate follow up	Secure files on Google Drive, minutes of Exec meetings
Report serious welfare concerns to the Board	Board reports
Board	
Review of monthly report of serious welfare concerns	Board reports
Deputy Principal/Heads of School/Welfare & Curriculum Coordinators	
CPL weeks: communicate welfare & discipline policies and procedures to teachers in their faculty	Executive CPL Program & Calendar Faculty meetings
Ensure anti-bullying curriculum in teaching programs and co-curricular activities such as Connect or PC.	Staff Appraisals; Program Registration & Review; co-curricular timetable
Assist class teachers in welfare & pastoral care issues	Faculty meetings; SEQTA; secure files
School Counsellor	
Support of students, parents, staff	Secure files on SEQTA; fortnightly report to appropriate staff
Referral to other specialist service providers	Secure files on SEQTA and in file cabinet, fortnightly report to appropriate staff
Assist class teachers in welfare & pastoral care issues	Faculty meetings; SWAT meetings; secure files
School Chaplain	
Support of students, parents, staff	Secure files on SEQTA; fortnightly report to appropriate staff
Assist class teachers in welfare & pastoral care issues	Faculty meetings; SWAT meetings; secure files
School staff	
Respect and support students	Staff Code of Conduct
Respond in a timely manner to welfare concerns, especially bullying concerns	Anti-Bullying policy
Support students to develop an empathetic and caring attitude toward others	Teaching Programs, implementation of resilience program
Students	
Behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity	Student Code of Conduct; Discipline records
Behave as responsible bystanders	Student Code of Conduct;
Parents	
Support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible on-line behaviour	Parent Code of Conduct

Support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying	Anti-bullying Policy, Parent Code of Conduct
Open communication with the school about matters which may affect their child at school	Complaints Framework and register; teacher notes;
All Staff	
Can report issues of concern re: child welfare to authorities	Child Safe Framework
Participate in annual CPL in child protection, discipline, welfare	CPL calendar & sign-on sheets

5 POLICY

At RCC, student welfare and academic achievement involves the balance of physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of the child. Thus student welfare is incorporated into every area of school life.

RCC aims to provide:

(a) A safe and nurturing environment in which students can learn. (WHS Policy)

(b) Effective teaching and learning experiences which engage students in the activities of the school, including extra-curricular activities.

(c) Oversight of day to day monitoring of student well-being as determined by observable signs at school.

(d) A fair and effective discipline system which encourages behaviour consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and School Rules; and seeks to improve the behaviour of students who do not meet those expectations. (Behaviour Management Policy)

(e) An environment in which students can come to understand how God has given them abilities and gifts and how they can use them.

(f) An environment that encourages attitudes of self-respect, self-discipline, and respect for others, as people made in God's image; and an understanding of individual differences. (Staff Code of Conduct; Student Code of Conduct; School Rules; Parents and Visitors Code of Conduct)

(g) An environment in which it is clear that bullying, violence and aggression are unacceptable. (Anti-Bullying Policy)

(h) Monitoring of student attendance at school to ensure safety and well-being of students, and the continuation of a sound educational program. (Attendance Policy)

(i) Staff who are committed Christians, qualified teachers, have current clearance under WWCC; and who seek to care for and nurture the students in their care. (Recruitment Policy; Child Safe Framework)

(j) Open Classroom policy – classrooms are open to visits from other staff, team teaching arrangements, the assistance of a teacher's aide; and a teacher may invite observation by their Head of School or have a class observation agreed to as part of Staff Appraisal. (CPL Policy inc Staff Appraisals)

(k) A clear understanding across the school community of duty of care; the provisions of the Child Protection Act; and commitment to reporting incidents relating to child protection. (Child Safe Framework)

6 PROCEDURES

RCC seeks the welfare of all students through nurture, protection, training and building them up in every element of school life; so they may develop personal resilience and a sense of self, through the understanding that they are loved and valued by God.

6.1 Physical Security

Measures to ensure the safety of students include:

- Playground and bus supervision by teachers
- Visitor sign-in and ID stickers; Parents and Visitors Code of Conduct
- Late and early notes for students arriving or departing during class hours
- Roll marking at beginning of school and after recess and lunch in Pre-K - 6 classes and at the beginning of each lesson in 7-12.
- Maintenance of buildings, grounds, facilities (WHS Policy)
- Collection by a person other than a designated parent or guardian:
    - Written/verbal request by parent/guardian
    - ID confirmation by school office staff prior to the person collecting the student

6.2 School Programming

(a) Daily commitment of time to Biblical devotions, mentoring and peer relationship building which complement family and church priorities for development of Christ-character and attitudes.

(b) The Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) program addresses issues of physical and emotional health, reinforced by events such as: sports carnivals and teams;

(c) A range of co-curricular activities such as Peer Support, New Student Orientation and visiting experts to raise awareness of and capacity for wellbeing;

(d) The Student Code of Conduct sets out positive expectations for students to confidently know how to behave in the school setting. It is reviewed annually at the start of the year, and regularly in classroom discussions.

(e) Anti-bullying content is incorporated in classroom management practices and teaching programs. (Anti-Bullying Policy)

(f) Discipline procedures provide a clear behaviour modification plan that provides direction and both positive and negative consequences for behaviour choices at school. (Behaviour Management Policy)

(g) Staff morning devotions and staff meetings will update staff generally on student issues for information and prayer, maintaining confidentiality and privacy according to the sensitivity of the circumstances.

(h) Work experience and work readiness programs give students practice scenarios and orientation to the workforce.

(i) Staff training in child protection, behaviour management and welfare occurs annually at the start of the year (PD Week); and is included throughout the year at staff meetings as incidents arise, or policies and procedures change.

6.3 Development of Student's Gifts and Strengths

(a) The school offers individualised learning support; and creative extension, to enhance students' learning opportunities.

(b) The work, gifts and achievements of students is celebrated; and regularly showcased through assemblies, newsletters, performances and displays.

(c) A range of extra-curricular activities is offered for students to try new things, mix with students in other year groups, and to learn from invited guests who can build positively into the lives of students.

(d) Opportunities are provided for student leadership that allows development of skills and positive relationships within different year groups in the school context e.g. Peer Support, Buddy programs (Year 6 + new kindergarten children).

(e) The Student Representative Council involves representatives from year groups. The SRC coordinates fund-raising, social events and is a student liaison group.

(f) The school encourages the development of an outward focus and service to others through involvement in charities and local events designed to help others in our local or wider community.

6.4 Building the School Community

(a) Enrolment

- The Enrolment process includes orientation to the school. (Enrolment Policy)
- Orientation activities occur for students entering Pre-Kindy and Kindergarten the following year. Year 7 Experience Days and orientation days are held during the year for students commencing the following year.
- The RCC Onboarding Program is implemented for new students for twelve months following enrolment (RCC Onboarding Program for New Students)

(b) Communication

- Regular information to parents, and other members of the school community, on all aspects of school life and events, through: newsletters, personal letters, website, annual report, school reports, Facebook, advertising etc.
- Information nights for parents at the beginning of the school year include a discussion of welfare pathways for the support of students.

(c) School Counsellor and School Chaplain

- RCC engages a School Chaplain and an on-site School Counsellor for student and staff support, who may be called on for advice or direct involvement with the welfare of a student.
- The Chaplain and School Counsellor regularly speaks at assemblies and contributes to newsletters, on topics such as: wellbeing checklists, bullying, cyberbullying, mental health issues, resilience training for students, and relationships.

6.5 School Welfare Team

(a) **Class / Connect teacher:** the first point of contact for students, parents and other staff concerning student welfare.

- Parents are encouraged to arrange a meeting during scheduled parent-teacher meeting times; and at any other time through appointment via the School Office, if they would like to talk to their child's teacher.

(b) **Subject teachers :** the first point of contact for students, parents and other staff concerning student welfare that relates to a specific subject area.

- Subject teachers should be contacted during scheduled parent-teacher meetings for regular updates on a child's progress in those subjects; or at any other time by appointment through the School Office, if there are concerns about that subject.

(c) **Teachers** will consult with Heads of School or Welfare Coordinator in all significant matters of student welfare; or when requiring further support in dealing with a welfare issue.

(d) **School Chaplain:**

- The school may refer students to the Chaplain; or include the Chaplain in discussion/ mediation/ investigation as required.
- The Chaplain may also initiate contact with students, parents or staff, to invite discussion, intervention and/ or prayer.

(e) **School Counsellor**: available to students, parents and staff.

- The school may refer students to the Counsellor; or include the Counsellor in discussion/ mediation/ investigation as required.
- The Counsellor may also initiate contact with students, parents or staff, to invite discussion, intervention and/or prayer.

(f) **Deputy Principal/Heads of School/Welfare Coordinator**: oversight of the welfare and pastoral care for the students in the years for which they are responsible. They deal with pastoral care issues, arrange pastoral activities and assist with discipline. They are key people in the welfare system and will often liaise with parents, the school counsellor, the learning support teacher and with the Principal.

- Parents and students may raise issues of concern directly with the Deputy Principal/Heads of School/Welfare Coordinator by making an appointment.

(g) **Principal**: ultimately responsible for the welfare of students. Parents may contact the Principal if they feel the need for further intervention in a matter of their child's welfare.

- The Principal will meet regularly with the Heads of School and School Counsellor to discuss issues involving students and to plan activities/interventions.
- The Principal deals directly with issues such as child protection matters and provides appropriate information to the Deputy Principal and Heads of School.
- In emergency or critical incident situations any Executive member can be called on for assistance.
- The Principal reports all incidents where a student appears to be at risk of significant harm, to the relevant authorities. (Child Safe Framework)
- The Principal will also intervene in any issues of a serious nature where there is difficulty reaching resolution.

6.6 Welfare Strategies

(a) Early communication to parents of any educational, welfare or behavioural concerns the school holds regarding their child.

(b) Individualised Enrolment Plan – partial enrolment; return to school plan; probationary enrolment; (Enrolment Policy; Attendance Policy)

(c) Learning Support - Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Learner Profiles (LPs). Learning Support Teacher has proformas: actual plan stored on Google drive and SEQTA; copy given to teachers, diagnostic testing as necessary.

(d) Classroom Support – teacher's aides in class, observing lunch/playground, taking kids out of class; parent involvement; Continued Professional Learning (CPL) for teachers.

(e) SWAT: Student Welfare and Assistance Team. This team meets fortnightly and is composed of School Counsellor, relevant Head of School and Learning Support teacher. They review IEPs, BPs, LPs and communicate necessary information to teachers and parents.

(f) Parent Connection/ Involvement – such as: information nights; parent-teacher meetings; regular communication to parents if welfare/ discipline issue; parent involvement in classes and on excursions/ camps; displays/ performances of student work;

(g) Feedback on effectiveness of the school in numerous areas - Annual Satisfaction Survey; Year 12 Exit Survey (student); Exit interviews (Principal with departing families)

(h) Attendance procedures - to ensure regular attendance and follow up of unexplained/ persistent absences or late arrivals (Attendance Policy)

(i) Behavioural procedures – individual plans to reward or improve behaviour (Behaviour Management Policy)

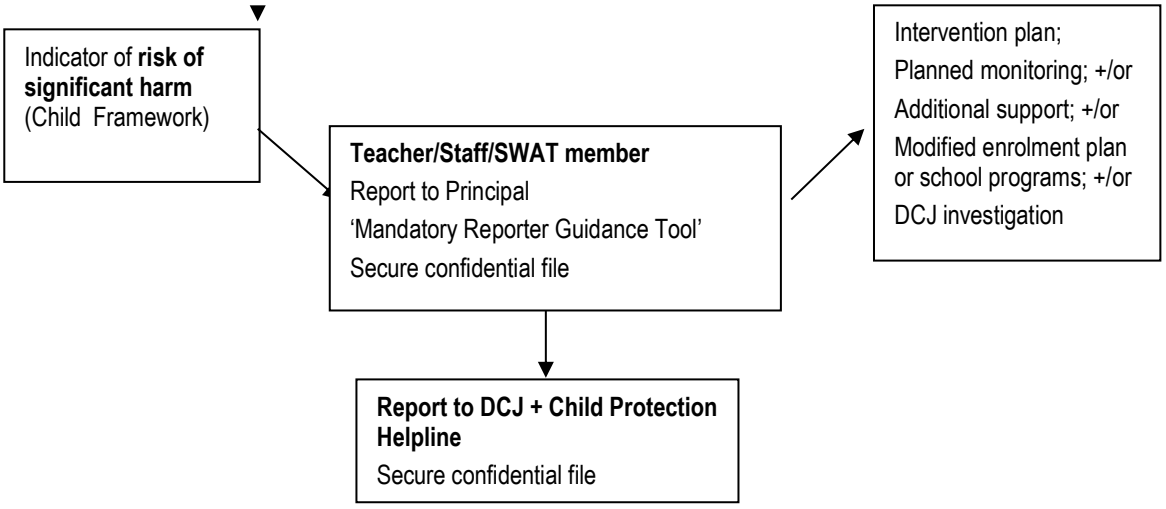
(j) Centralised record keeping on SEQTA - an accurate profile of student records as updated by staff. Confidential notes are securely maintained on Google Drive, with access limited to authorised staff only.

6.7 See: RCC Welfare Framework for processes for Tiers of Support, Roles and Responsibilities and Levels of Intervention.

6.8 When School Intervention is Required

(a) Where there is suspicion that a student is at **risk of significant harm** (Mandatory Reporter Guide, https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/), procedures will be followed as set out in the Child Safe Framework. (Diagram 1, below)

Diagram 1. Risk of Significant Harm Flowchart



(b) If the welfare situation indicates **reportable conduct**, the Principal will make a report to the Office of the Children's Guardian, and follow procedures set out in the Child Protection Framework.

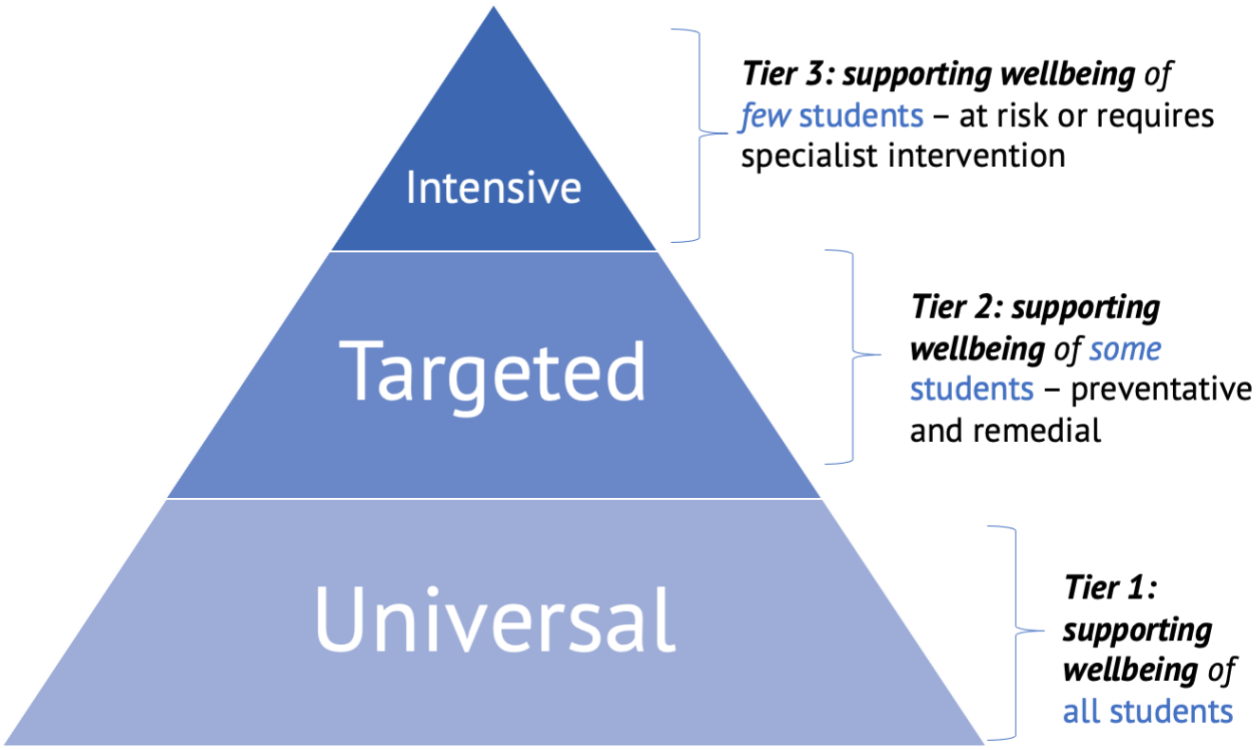
(c) A concern or issue of student welfare may be raised by any member of the SWAT, other staff member, parent or family member, or by the student themselves.

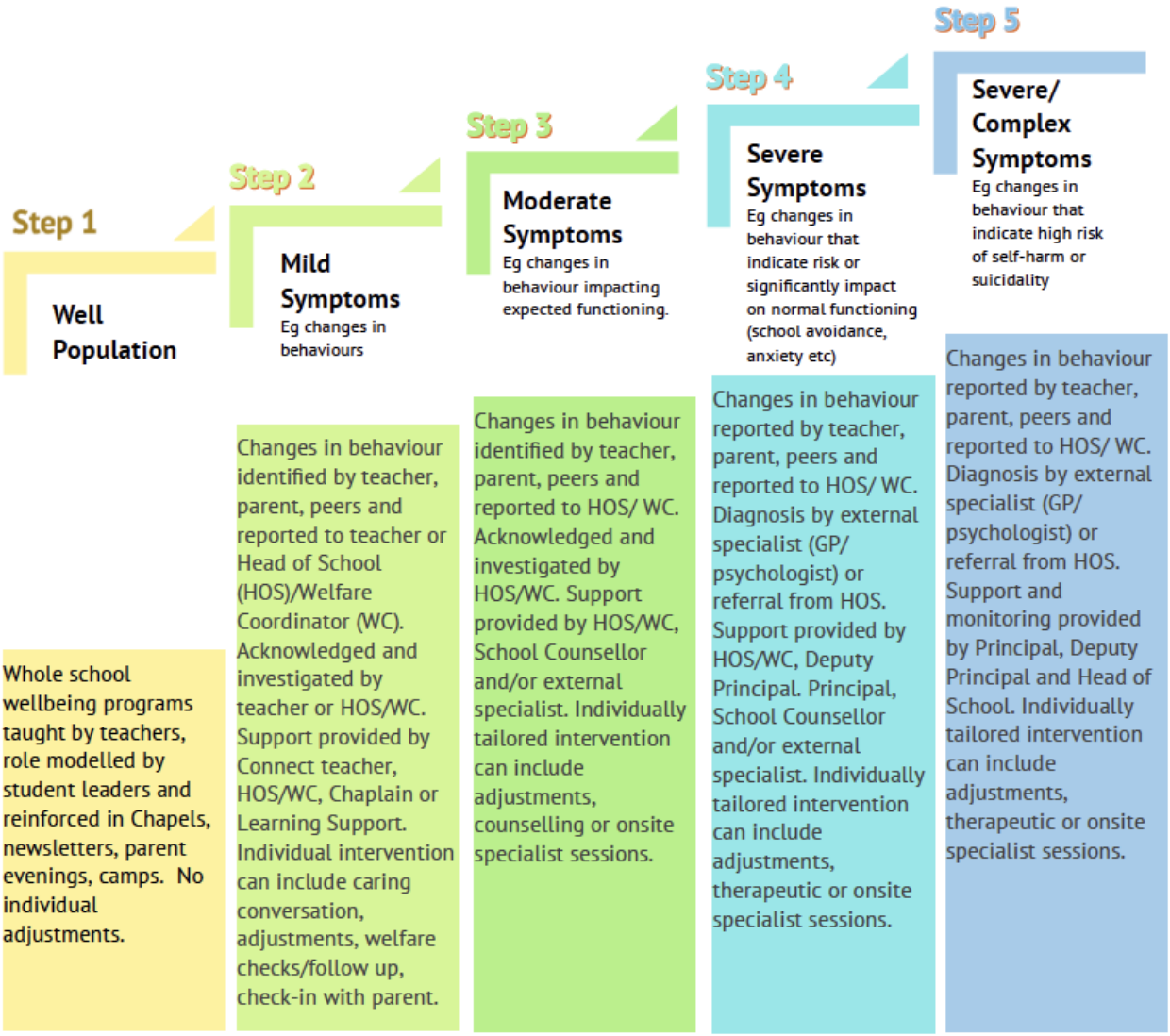
The concern may be an observation, report or allegation of an incident or an indicator of lack of well-being or harm. (See Child Protection Support Documents)

(d) The response/s, including most appropriate staff member/s and strategies chosen, will depend on:

- the severity of the circumstances
- any legal requirements for reporting the incident
- the indicators of student lack of well-being
- the observer's relationship with the student
- determination of underlying causes and effects e.g. a behaviour/ discipline issue or undiagnosed health issues
- willingness and comfort of the student with the planned intervention;

- following the processes outlined in the Welfare Intervention Flowchart (6.8) and the RCC Welfare Framework (see figures below but refer to framework for full detail).





(e) The full resources of the SWAT are available for consultation by the observer; for support of the student, and the assistance of the parents/ family. Where indicated, specialist consultants may be brought into the school, or the student and family referred to specialist services outside the school.

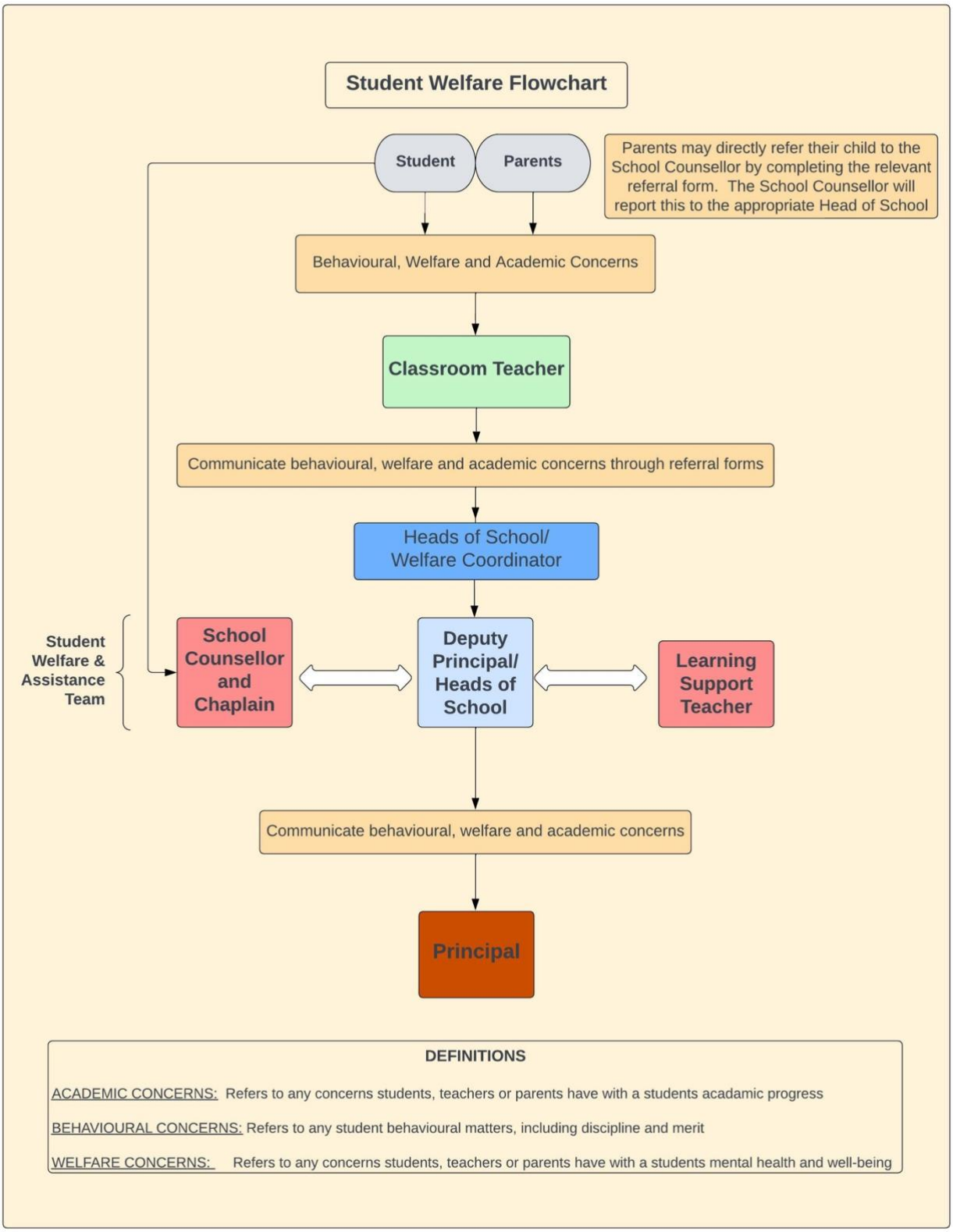
(f) All student welfare incidents are entered on SEQTA with sensitive information restricted to authorised staff members.

(g) Parents/ family will be consulted early in any intervention, unless specifically contra-indicated by circumstances. (Child Protection Framework)

(h) Teachers, Heads of School, Welfare Coordinator, School Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal will keep parents notified of escalating circumstances as appropriate. Teachers should check with Heads of School for guidance in this matter.

(i) All meetings are to be conducted in a manner consistent with Child Safe Framework.

6.9 Welfare Intervention Flowchart



6.10 Working With Other Professionals

The school seeks to partner with local and other agencies to assist in student welfare; and may refer both students and staff to outside services when circumstances indicate additional support or training may be required. These include:

(a) External providers e.g. medical, educational specialists, who contribute towards planned programs for additional support of students within the school.

(b) Training partners for staff and school procedures e.g. AIS, CEN

(c) Local churches for family and spiritual support

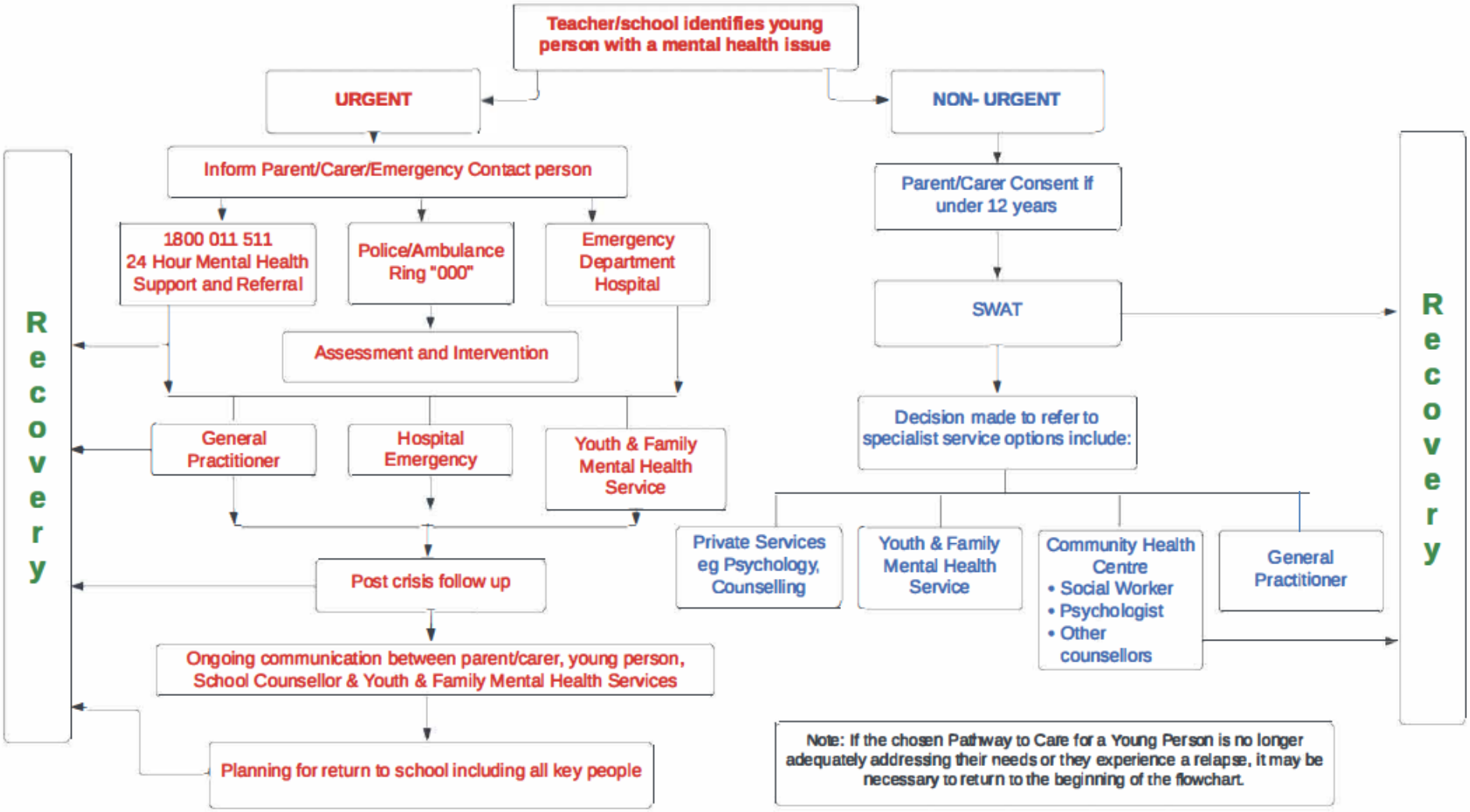
(d) Police Youth Liaison Officer

(e) Youth and Family Mental Health Service (NNSWLHD)

(f) Family and Community Services

6.11 Resources for Youth Mental Health in Ballina

Mental Health Line	1800 011 511
Alcohol and Drug Information Line	1800 422 599
Headspace Lismore	6625 0200
Community Health	6686 8977
Ballina Community Services Centre	66861999
Police Youth Liaison Officer (Richmond Police District)	6626 0799

'Pathways to and from Care' School-Link Initiative, Western NSW Local Health District (2012) – See Flowchart following page.

Pathways to Care for a Young Person who has been identified by their school as having a mental health issue.