



# Volunteers Training Handbook

Version 3.0 - 2022 Edition

**CHANGING LIVES ONE AT A TIME**

# CONTENTS

About Alta-1 College	3
History & Vision	3
Alta-1 Values	5
The Alta-1 System / Personal Recovery Model	6
The Value of Volunteers	7
Volunteer and Mentor Expectations	8
Volunteer and Mentor Roles	9
Tips to remember when Volunteering	10 -11
Strategies to build relationships	12
Alta-1 System Therapeutic Approach	13-19
Working with Youth-at-Risk	20-23
Working with LGBTQA+ Youth	24
Volunteers Code of Conduct	25-26
Duty of Care	27-28
Mandatory Reporting	29-33
Child Safe Schools Compliance and Boundaries	34
Rights and Responsibilities	35-36
Volunteers Live Training Completion Checklist	37

## ABOUT ALTA-1 COLLEGE

Alta-1 College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

A Christian school, Alta-1 College is a division of Alta-1 Australia, a not-for-profit constitutional corporation. The program provides an alternative education to students 12 - 19 years old who are marginalized by mainstream education and are therefore at educational and emotional risk.

Typically, students are enrolled into Alta-1 College because they have been unsuccessful in mainstream schooling as a result of personal issues that have impacted their learning and engagement.

Many have been excluded from their former schools and some are referred by agencies.

Most students take two years to complete Year 11 after which they are able to access employment, an apprenticeship, further training or re-integration into mainstream schooling. Some opt to complete a further twelve-month Year 12 program with us.

Alta-1 grew out of a shared vision between three Founding Directors to see:

- The amount of young people finishing school and either going on to further education or employment increase.
- The amount of young people turning to crime and substance abuse decrease.
- The self-esteem and initiative of young people increase, giving confidence and strategic direction in considering their future and contribution to their community.
- The program act as a model to engage students' & parents in the life of Gospel centered communities.

The project originally began in 2002 as an annex to the educational services of a northern suburbs Christian school, in the facilities of a local church at Landsdale. By the end of 2004, Alta-1 became its own organisation allowing its services to expand to a greater level and incorporate many other organisations and service a larger demographic of people.

In December 2006, the WA Minister of Education granted Alta-1 its own registration as a multi campus school, commencing in 2007 as an independent Christian school operating from three northern suburban sites.

Alta-1 College in Western Australia operates a Year 10-12 senior school program out of its north metro schools. In addition, Year 8-9 middle school classes operate in Albany, Ellenbrook and Joondalup (girls only) and Port Kennedy, as well as Connect Ed (An online program that happens in north and south metro areas). A Targeted Engagement Program (TEP) also exists for disengaged young people. With our newest initiatives, this year being pioneered in Kununurra (Regional).

In Queensland, Alta-1 College operates a Year 11-12 senior school program and Year 11-12 ConnectEd program on the north side of Brisbane.

### Relationship

Alta-1 is an organisation committed to healthy relationships. It was founded, established and launched on the strength of relationship and the work it engages in is only effective because of the relationships that exist between staff and students.

### Transformation

The work of Alta-1 is the work of transformation. As such this is a critical cultural value. It is essential that the transformation that occurs is not just in the students, but is present at all levels of the organisation.

### Flourishing

As a value, flourishing is a commitment to creatively bring out the health, wholeness and purpose in every person – staff and student – As a College we strive to create flourishing spaces for continued growth and whole-hearted living.

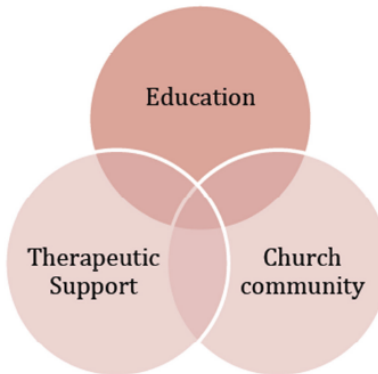
# THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS

The active dynamic that makes the Alta-1 program successful is its focus on the creation of strong, encouraging and supportive relationships. This is done in three integrated domains of engagement, namely: Academic, Therapeutic and Community. These domains are what is known as the Alta-1 System.

## **Alta-1 System**

The Alta-1 System® has three key elements:

*Fig. 1 The Alta-1 System®*



As such a vital key to the success of the Alta-1 system is its connection with our Partner Churches and with other welfare-oriented agencies that assist students address a whole range of issues that impact them.

## Personal Recovery Model

The Alta-1 Personal Recovery model is a crucial component of the College, students regularly complete activities designed to lead them through a socio-emotional developmental process involving the following stages:

- Belonging. The student is integrated into a caring community that allows him/her to become connected.
- Healing. The units of study facilitate a process whereby the student needs to face the issues that are impeding his/her personal development.
- Restoration. The student has the opportunity to re-build his/her life and become a better person.
- Identity Formation. The student develops a new understanding of his/her self- worth and relationship to family, church and the wider community.
- Purpose-Driven. The adoption of a beliefs and values system and the development of identity provide reasons and motivation to engage in life.

Volunteers provide an important service to the College. They participate in a range of activities including relationship building, mentoring, learning support, life skill development and spiritual discipleship of students.

There is significant research to suggest the positive impact that a safe, caring and consistent Adult can make in the life of a young person. The stabilizing and accepting atmosphere volunteers can bring into the Alta-1 classroom provides a greater level of social-emotional support that is additional to the presence of College staff.

## What Do Volunteers Get?

As a volunteer with Alta-1 there are some significant benefits that you gain through joining this mission to see lives changed one at a time! They are:

- A sense of purpose and giving back to community
- Development of general skills with a professional education provider
- An opportunity to be a model of authentic Christian faith
- The privilege of witnessing a young persons journey of change
- Alta-1 Certificate of Training - Working with at Risk Youth



# VOLUNTEER AND MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Alta-1 has four main expectations within the role of a volunteer:

1. **Supporting Alta-1 staff and classroom activities.**
2. **Engaging with students respectfully and safely**
3. **Promoting Personal Recovery.**
4. **Using appropriate language and behaviour**

## **Supporting Alta-1 Staff and Classroom activities**

Some students at Alta-1, are easily distracted by the environment they are working in.

While engaging with students, it is important to make sure the volunteer / mentor is supporting the work ethic and positive morale of the classroom, should a student present as feeling overwhelmed or needs some time out, please inform a staff member that the student needs some time out so the student can be monitored.

## **Engaging with students respectfully and safely**

Engaging with students is simply talking, spending time with the students, getting to know them and becoming a mentor/role model for them. It is important that this is done in a respectful and safe manner for both student and volunteer/mentors. Always ensure to check with a staff member when unsure around an appropriate course of action with a student.

## **Promoting Personal Recovery**

Personal Recovery is not only part of the curriculum that the student is required to complete, but it is also part of their recovery/healing process. It is important that volunteers / mentors encourage students, not only to do personal recovery, but also to engage with it and make positive change in their lives.

## **Appropriate language and behaviour**

Due to Alta-1's focus on personal recovery, and the students' tendency, to look up to volunteers as role models, use of encouraging and appropriate language and behaviour to support the students journey of personal recovery is paramount.



## VOLUNTEER AND MENTOR ROLES

The role of volunteers/mentors and work experience placements is to support the College staff and the students on campus with their daily activities. It is important that the volunteer attends a morning briefing so they know what the daily expectations will be at their specific campus.

Some specific responsibilities may include:

- Building trusting and respectful relationships with students
- Encouraging students to stay on task
- Being a positive role model to students
- Being a safe person
- Allowing students to share
- Helping with any tasks that you feel comfortable with
- Helping set up and /or pack down the class
- Providing a non-judgemental listening ear for students
- Assisting in monitoring of students
- Reinforcing positive behaviour
- Assisting students with academic tasks where necessary
- Providing a helping hand
- Helping develop healthy boundaries
- Using appropriate language that builds character and reinforces the Personal Recovery model that the student is working through at school.
- Inviting them to church events (where appropriate)
- Creating fun & positive learning experiences
- Developing trust - when building rapport with a child, it is important to show that you can be trusted.
- 

For children, trust is about being consistent and not just saying the 'right thing' but also demonstrating that you 'do the right thing'. Never make promises that you cannot keep. When building trust it is important that you are clear about boundaries where confidentiality cannot be maintained. Children should be informed when you are unable to keep information, that they provide to you, secret. These include instances when the child discloses harm, abuse or neglect that has occurred to them or others, including any indications of suicidal ideations. It is also necessary to disclose any information that is given pertaining to a criminal offence. Thus, honesty is important when establishing trust (Commission for Children and Young People (NSW), 2001).

## TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN VOLUNTEERING

Take the time to get to know and relate. Everything we do as staff and volunteers/mentors is built upon a safe and positive relationship with our students. Don't be surprised that this will take anywhere between a few months to a few terms depending on the student.

*Students don't care what you know until they know that you care!*

### **How to build relationship with students**

Gently ask them questions about themselves eg. Siblings, hobbies, what school they previously attended, plans on the weekend (don't judge), how Alta-1 differs etc. Take the time to learn about what they enjoy doing to find common interests. But don't push, students will open up when they feel comfortable. Also try to remember whatever the student tells you so that you can ask them about it at a later date- this shows that you are genuinely interested in them. Learning names is also a great way to show students that you care about them.

- Make the students feel appreciated. Everyone likes to feel appreciated and if you can be someone to inspire that in another person, they are more likely to maximize opportunities at Alta-1 College. Relationship is built with a strong foundation of appreciation. One great way to do this is to remember to treat others like you would like to be treated.
- Have a sense of humour. Students love to have fun and appropriate humour lightens any mood. We want all mentors to feel relaxed so being able to laugh and not take things too seriously go a long way with Alta-1 students.
- Don't take things too personally. If a student doesn't give you as much as you want, don't feel disheartened. A lot of the time they have things going on outside of school that are already weighing down on them. Many times when a student is distant, it indicates that something else is on their mind. Sometimes the best thing to do is give them space and give it another go later.
- Don't judge. There are some behaviours that students take part in outside of school that we do not agree with; however, it is important that volunteers/mentors get alongside them to help them make safe, healthy and empowering choices.

- Romans 14:13

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

- Luke 6:37

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

- Avoid preaching; you'll be amazed how much more attentive young people will be.

Be careful on how you speak to a young person about drugs, drinking, smoking and so forth...don't preach. Acceptance precedes change and it is in an environment of acceptance that volunteers/mentors can share their views and thoughts without imposing biases or judgment. By sharing in this way you'll be letting them know that you are concerned without being overbearing or rupturing any relational trust that's been built. Always remember you're not to own their problem for them.

- Don't do anything that you do not feel comfortable with. We value all of our volunteers and do not want you to be put in an uncomfortable position. Should you ever feel that way in your volunteer experience you are more than welcome to approach a staff member and advise them.

## STRATEGIES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIP

Many strategies can be utilised in order to allow children to feel comfortable. These include the following:

- Ensure your questions are age-appropriate
- Choose simple words - sentences should contain only one thought or issue
- Avoid negatives
- Be honest
- Use the child's name and names of other persons referred to – personalise the conversation as far as possible.
- Be patient -allow the child a sense of control.
- Be aware of your own values and reactions to children.
- Remember that each child's experience is unique.
- Be aware of your non-verbal communication including personal space, eye contact, seating (don't stand or sit higher than the child), facial expressions and voice tone.
- Avoid 'why' questions -they are threatening and increase the child's resistance.
- Avoid using adult language concepts, such as figures of speech.
- Avoid using suggestive statements and leading questions.

# ALTA-1 SYSTEM® THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

## Overview

The Alta-1 System® Therapeutic approach that is applied within Alta-1 College was developed by Registered Psychologist and Alta-1 Co-founder, Garfield Thompson and is based on over 30 years of experience working with at-risk children, young people and families. The aim of the Alta-1 System® therapeutic approach is to empower students to understand human nature, and to rise above difficulties so they can reach their full potential. This therapeutic approach aims to achieve this through:

- Offering students, a clear pathway for recovery;
- Offering a relevant, coherent and engaging therapeutic approach in line with evidence-based psychological practices;
- Ensuring interventions reflect the overall goal of a safe, supporting and nurturing environment to promote student recovery; and
- Encouraging collaboration with faith-based organisations that can support and strengthen student recovery.

## Guiding Principles

Three guiding principles underpin the therapeutic approach: psychology, theology and spirituality. This approach is best delivered by Christians and works alongside the Holy Spirit to help restore students to wholeness.

## Psychology Personal Recovery and Community Building Course

The Personal Recovery and Community Building course is a classroom based psycho-education program rooted in the psychological intervention. There is a senior school and middle school course available for students.

Students work through the course as part of the curriculum in the classroom. The course plays an important role in helping students to identify and understand the causes and effects of some of the problems they face. Once the causes and effects of the problem have been identified, the students have access to therapeutic tools to help them to acknowledge, confront and resolve issues so they can move forward and reach their full potential. The senior school course is an endorsed subject and is recognised both in Western Australia and Queensland.

## Therapeutic Interventions

Supervised by Psychologists or Counsellors, these interventions work complementarily to the Personal Recovery and Community Building course. The interventions are evidence-based and utilize cognitive restructuring, cognitive therapy, and psychodynamic therapy.

## Theology

The trichotomy of a human being: having a spirit, soul and body underpins the Alta-1 System® therapeutic approach: 'Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

The therapeutic approach also brings the individual to a place of engaging with the human conscious which can challenge all negative (unhelpful) thoughts of the mind.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2.

## Spirituality

The therapeutic approach acknowledges the condition of the human heart, keeping this concept in students' thinking.

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.' Romans 7:15-20."

"For the flesh desires, what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want."

Galatians 5:17

Patterns of thinking can produce strongholds – these can develop into anger, depression, worry/anxiety and fear. Continuing to produce certain patterns of thinking can intensify these feelings. These feelings can be destructive to the human body and soul, and may cause long-term harm if not addressed.

The therapeutic approach encourages students to acknowledge, confront and resolve issues which allow strongholds to exist. This may be through the classroom based programs (i.e. Personal Recovery and Community Building program), Tutorials, therapeutic interventions with an Alta-1 trained Psychologist/Counsellor or a combination of these.

### **What is Personal Recovery?**

PRCB assists students to acknowledge, confront and resolve negativity in their lives.

The Personal Recovery and Community Building course (PRCB) is a program endorsed by the School Curriculum Standards Authority enabling senior secondary students to work towards their Western Australian Certificate of Education. PRCB is targeted at 15 to 17-year-old students who are disengaged from mainstream education due to complex emotional or behavioural needs.

The course supports students in their personal recovery journey by:

- Helping them identify cycles of negative thoughts and emotions.
- Recognising the link between drivers and behaviour.
- Creating new pathways for managing thoughts and emotions.
- Providing opportunities for engaging in a supportive network.

## Introduction to Personal Recovery - Part 1

### The Vicious Circle

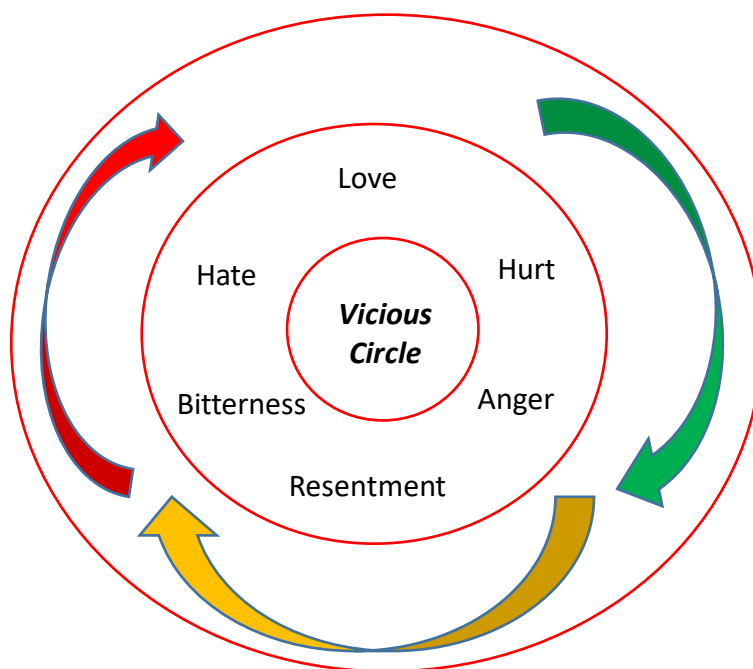


Figure 2.0

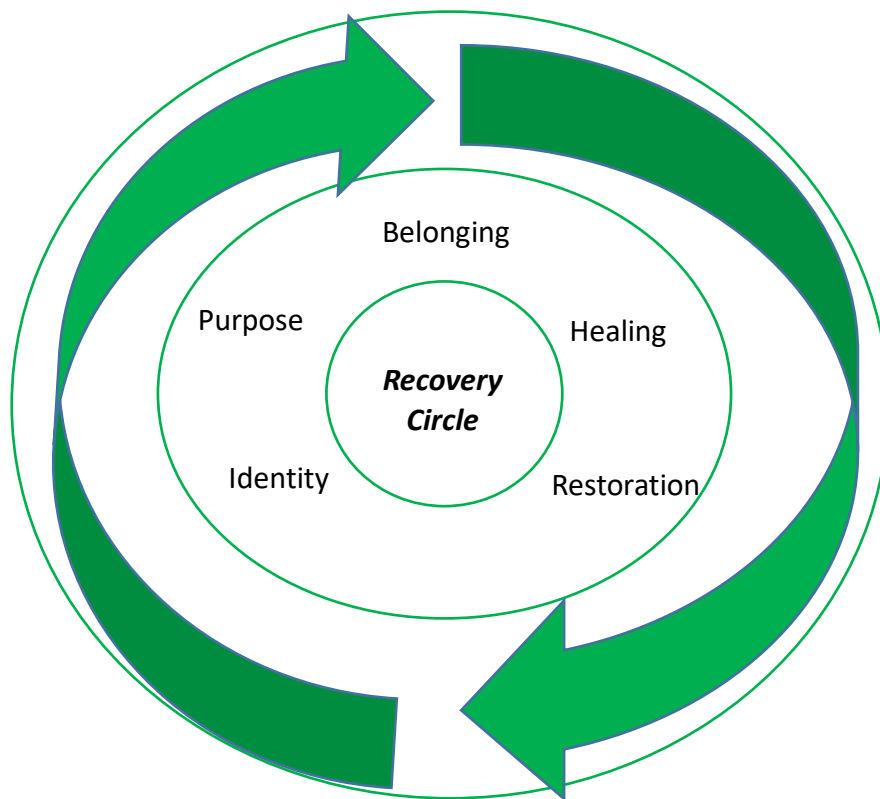
The Vicious Circle begins when someone is hurt and is unable to process and resolve the pain of that hurt. Over time this hurt causes a person to become frustrated. The frustration leads to anger, which can turn into resentment, which eventually leads to bitterness. All of this results in a person who is filled with hatred, and because they are filled with hatred, they go through the same cycle over and over again.

- **Love:**  
When you care about someone and they care about you.
- **Hurt:**  
When an individual is hurt she/he can feel emotions including sadness, rejection, loneliness, hopelessness and despair.
- **Anger:**  
When hurt feelings are not managed or processed, then this can lead to angry emotions. While anger in itself is a normal emotion, if the individual does not address the cause of the hurt and anger it can lead to resentment.
- **Resentment:**  
To resent literally means to "re-feel". If emotions of hurt and anger are not dealt with, the individual can continue to 're- feel' these emotions and this can result in negative feelings.
- **Bitterness:**  
Bitterness has been described as 'anger that is retained'. If the individual does not deal with the above emotions, bitterness can develop.
- **Hatred:**  
Hatred has been described as 'anger that is hardened'. It can be the most damaging of emotions leading to destructive behaviour and continuance of negative emotional thought patterns. This often results in more hurt.



## Introduction to Personal Recovery - Part 2

### The Recovery Circle



To get out of "The Vicious Circle", they will need to begin "The Recovery Circle"

The Recovery Circle starts when an individual chooses a community of people to help them with the recovery process. This process can happen with the help of a coach or mentor. A successful recovery process happens when the individual feels safe and secure within the community that has been chosen.

When an individual is in a safe and supportive community, encouragement to engage in the Recovery Circle begins.

- **Belonging:**  
This is the start of the process and can be formed when the individual becomes connected with another person. This person can be professional or non- professional.
- **Healing:**  
This process starts when the individual has someone who is able to help them identify events and circumstances, which have impacted their thoughts, feelings and interpretations. Once these things have been talked about, then the person is encouraged to talk to someone else about those issues. Once the individual begins to face and confront their issues with the support of the community that they have chosen, healing begins. This can include professional or non-professional people.

- **Restoration:**  
When the individual has been sharing openly with other individuals or groups, restoration begins. The person begins to have a sense of renewal, feeling like they have a 'fresh start', and the ability to let go of negative emotions.
- **Identity:**  
With the caring support and encouragement of individuals or groups the individual is able to gain an understanding of who they are. This may mean finding out about his/her special skills, unique qualities and a building sense of self-worth and self- esteem.
- **Purpose:**  
Most people have a passion about something. With the support the individual's community, the person is encouraged to identify and pursue their passion either on leisurely basis or as a career path.

### **Where do Volunteers fit into the PRCB therapeutic approach?**

At Alta-1 we aim to inspire and facilitate a journey of change in the lives of our students.

Literacy and Numeracy are great, work placement, VET in schools, good staff and volunteers like yourself, are all great. But without getting to the triggers and drivers impacting young people lasting change is not possible.

Our students have emotional wounds that can be just as debilitating as physical ones.

The PRCB course is like our first aid for emotional hurts. It is the first step in our therapeutic approach. Assisting our students to heal from their emotional wounds is a major priority.

As a volunteer, its important you are familiar with the terms within the PRCB course so you can support students in both the theory and practice of it.

The way Volunteers can support Staff and students in this process is simple:

- Provide a listening ear and genuine care.
- Be understanding of the process of change in a young person's life.
- Use consistent language that aligns and encourages students in Personal Recovery.
- Share positive lived experiences where appropriate and relevant.
- Manage personal Self-care when volunteering
- Inform College Staff of any major concerns
- Pray regularly for the Students and Staff

### **Personal Recovery Terms and College Culture**

Alta-1 College culture is designed to be intimately linked to the Personal Recovery course.

It is a culture that is centered around building a community in which students can undertake personal recovery. Use of shared language creates a framework within which students and staff can express important information and be understood.

**Some Common language you will hear regularly in Alta-1 are:**

- Safe person
- Traffic lights
- Triggers & Drivers
- Unconscious and Conscious
- The Vicious Circle
- The Recovery Circle
- Change

**Change. What do we mean by change?**

Students come to Alta-1 as an alternative to a mainstream education because they need what we offer.

Change means that what they were doing was not working for them and some differences need to be made in their situation, and/or in their person. This process of change is best seen as a young person goes through the stages of the recovery circle. For volunteers your consistency of support helps demonstrate that they are not alone on that journey of change and reinforces the need for positive and safe people in their lives. Always remember as a volunteer that a caring and safe relationship is the key to supporting a young person in their pursuit to change.

Alta-1 College undertakes to provide recovery based education for young people with a diverse range of needs. Our students come from a variety of family and educational backgrounds, socio-economic status, worldviews and beliefs.

- **What causes mental health issues?**

Mental health issues arise usually as a result of the combination of biological and genetic factors on the one hand, and environmental and social experiences and influences on the other. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have a lasting impact on the overall development and well-being of the young people in our community. Developmental trauma in particular, which occurs during infancy and early childhood, can have a detrimental effect on how the brain develops and how neurological pathways are created, forming maladjusted and often self-destructive ways of thinking and coping strategies.

- **What places students at risk?**

There is no universal definition of the term “high-risk youth”, but for the purposes of this document these young people are at risk of not achieving positive life outcomes due to a combination of their circumstances, stage of development and barriers to participation. Table 1 outlines some risk factors.

Table 1: Level 1 – All young people - Risk managed through family, recreation, social and cultural support			
<b>Risk Factors:</b> - Traumatic life events (eg.death of family/friend)  - Difficulty with peers	<b>Level 2 - Young people experiencing additional problems – risk managed through early interventions</b>		
	<b>Risk factors:</b> - Low level truancy - First contact with police - Emerging mental health problems - Experiment with alcohol or other drug use - Family conflict - Unstable peer group - Isolated from community - Pregnant/teenage parent	<b>Level 3 - Highly Vulnerable – risk managed through comprehensive, co-ordinated interventions</b>	
		<b>Risk Factors:</b> - Left home / homelessness --- - Disengaged from family - Significant alcohol or other drug use - Not working or enrolled in education - Mental health - Frequent truancy - Family violence - Sexual abuse	<b>Level 4 – High Risk</b>
			<b>Risk Factors:</b> - Co-occurring chronic problems - such as alcohol and other drug use AND mental health issues - Criminal orders from youth or adult court - Out-of-home care - Multiple high-risk behaviours

## Levels of Need

**Level 1:** Most young people transition through adolescence without experiencing any significant stress or crisis. For these young people, most problems are managed by existing familial, material, social and cultural supports.

**Level 2:** For these young people external supports are limited and they would require early intervention responses.

**Levels 3 & 4:** For these groups, the level of risk is so high that additional, ongoing intervention is required to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Young people may move from one level to another over time. \*As a volunteer / mentor you will most often engage with a young person at levels 1 & 2. However, on case by case intervals certain students may present with higher needs, in which case it is advised to bring these to the attention of a staff member particularly where disclosures of abuse or harm to self or others maybe

## Principles for supporting high-risk young people

The following approaches are suggested when working with high-risk young people.

### 1. Build trusting relationships based on respect for human rights

As young people develop their identities and transition to independence; they can experience increased difficulty in relationships. This experience can be compounded for young people who have experienced significant loss and trauma in their lives, and lack supportive relationships. Young people must be able to trust the services that they access and feel confident that their right to privacy will be respected and their information treated confidentially. This is critical to engaging young people and empowering them to achieve long-term outcomes.

### 2. Build on strengths and enhance protective factors

Understanding young people's strengths and capabilities are critical for accurately assessing needs and risks, and reducing high-risk behaviour. Workers can build on young people's unique skills, interests, abilities, experiences and competencies in ways that strengthen their protective factors and build their skills to actively participate in the community. Young people's family, friends, teachers, community and cultural connections, and networks are the primary sources of support in their lives. Young people should be actively involved in planning and working towards the goals they decide to achieve. A focus on strengths enables young people to view themselves and their experiences more constructively and achieve the changes they wish to make.

### **3. Be responsive and flexible**

Be flexible – this will allow you to respond to changing needs and circumstances.

Be innovative in the way you build relationships with young people – be aware that not all young people will respond in the same way.

Use approaches that are relevant, innovative and responsive to the needs of young people, taking into account your role and ALTA-1's capacity. Responsiveness requires workers to take into account the young person's age, life experiences, beliefs, identity and circumstances when engaging with them.

### **4. Promote young people's participation**

It is important that young people have the opportunity to participate in making the decisions that affect them. Participation strengthens motivation and helps young people to commit to their documented plans. Allowing young people to participate in the process of change teaches them skills that promote personal development and empowers them to take responsibility. Young people have a right to voice their opinions, have their views listened to, and to be taken seriously.

### **5. Prevention and early intervention**

It is critical to support vulnerable young people and families as early as possible. Prevention usually means stopping a social or psychological problem from developing in the first place. Early intervention aims to stop their further development as early as possible. Prevention also refers to activities, which aim to avoid the need for more intrusive or intensive interventions such as income support or safe sex and contraceptive advice. These activities may be undertaken with young people already experiencing significant issues in their lives, or in anticipation of issues that they may be at future risk of developing, such as homelessness, offending, unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

### **6. Value and support families as a primary place of nurturing**

Strengthening family relationships and parents' capacity to supervise and support their children can reduce the risk of young people engaging in risk-taking and offending behaviour which is associated with a lack of supervision. Where parents are supportive, antisocial peers are less likely to exert a negative influence and this further reduces risk factors for negative behaviours. Young people should be encouraged to maintain connections or reconnect with their families where appropriate.

### **7. Respect and celebrate diversity**

Young people come from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, interests, cultures and languages. Your approach needs to be open to the needs of young people regardless of cultural, social or sexual identity. Engaging young people requires an inclusive, safe and respectful environment in which individuals are treated

fairly. Young people should be actively encouraged and supported to maintain their cultural, social and friendship connections.

## **8. Strengthen culture and connections**

Service responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people should ideally be delivered by an appropriate service or individual who is from the young person's community or language group. Where that is not possible or appropriate, responses should be delivered by a non-Indigenous person who has undertaken cultural awareness professional development, in consultation with a relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person / organisation.

Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have varied degrees of connection to their culture, both in Australia and in their home country. Each young person's story of arrival to and/or growing up in Australia is different and they may have suffered loss, conflict, trauma or abuse.

## **9. Be reflective and work with your team**

Understand that working with high-risk young people can be challenging and confronting. As you begin to develop safe, trusting relationships you will find that young people may begin to share more. Some information may be difficult to hear. Consider how this information may impact you and make an opportunity to debrief with your team.

At times, you may be challenged with difficult behaviours such as non-compliance, aggression and threatening behaviour. In these situations, it is always advised that you lean on your team for support and guidance. Use these as opportunities to reflect on your practices and guide on-going learning. Reflective practice allows you to recognise your own strengths and weakness. By reflection you will develop your skills in self-directed learning, improve motivation, and improve the quality of care you are able to provide.

## **10. Practice self-care**

Self-care is taking care of and honouring your body, mind, and spirit in a way that activates your best self. Self-care choices are those that improve your physical, mental, or emotional health, and move you towards your desired outcome. Examples of self-care: choosing nutritious food more often than not, exercising, resting, knowing your limitations

As a College we are bound by the law in regards to any action that might violate the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. As such it is the College's position on the matters of LGBTQI that all students are welcome regardless of sex/sexual preference or identified gender.

We believe that all people are made in the image of God and therefore worthy of dignity and respect.

We believe that all people are fearfully and wonderfully made by God with a created inherent worth and should therefore be treated with equal value and support.

The following approaches are the postures we expect of volunteers when engaging with young people around the subject of gender identity and sexuality:

1. Non-judgmental
2. Considerate
3. Empathetic
4. Listening
5. Respectful
6. Loving

## Glossary of Terms

- **Gender** - The sense of self associated with cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity.
- **Sexuality** - Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction.
- **Sexually** - Sexual in nature.
- **Diversity** - State of being diverse or different.
- **Sexual orientation** - A person's sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted.
- **Trans** - An umbrella term including transsexual and transgender.
- **Transgender** - A term used to describe a broad range of gender identities and/or behaviours. This usually includes all trans people, but some transsexual or other gender diverse people prefer not to use this term.
- **Intersex** - A person born with reproductive organs, genitalia, hormones and/or sex chromosomes that are not exclusively male or female.

Disclaimer: The material on this fact sheet is not intended to be legal advice. The Commissioner expressly disclaims any liability in respect to anything done or not done to any person in reliance upon any of the contents of this publication.

\*Further Resource: <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/sexuality-and-gender-based-bullying-schools-fact-sheet-staff>



## VOLUNTEERS CODE OF CONDUCT

The Volunteers Code of Conduct empower and inform those who work with the College in meeting high standards of personal conduct. They must:

- Carry out their duties conscientiously and honestly;
- Be courteous, reasonable and fair in their dealings with students, College staff and members of the community;
- Exercise particular care to ensure that their dealings with students and their friends and relatives are not open to abuse, misrepresentation or exploitation on either side; this includes grooming or any form of sexual mis-conduct;
- Not make use of their formal position to further their private interests;
- Take care to minimize the risk of harm to students and to maintain a safe working practice, which includes minimising the risk of physical, mental and emotional harm;
- Not engage in any activity that might bring discredit to the College.
- Inform the College immediately if charged with any criminal offence (excluding fixed penalty traffic offences), and take all reasonable steps to do so;
- Inform the College if they receive a Police caution for any offence other than a minor traffic offence, or if they are convicted of any criminal offence.
- Not transport students unless otherwise instructed by the consent of appropriate College staff and parental consent is given;
- Be open and transparent in dealings with students; including not being alone with a student in a private setting;
- No social media platform or private messaging service is to be used between volunteers and students or parents (i.e. Facebook Messenger, Gmail, Viber, WhatsApp) for the purpose of accountability, confidentiality and safety.
- Not individually connect with (i.e. "friend"), interact with, or post images on their own private social media page, of any student currently enrolled in the College, but maintain professional boundaries at all times.

- Volunteers have a duty to protect information that is held in confidence and the main areas of potential misconduct are set out in the section below;
  - Inappropriate relationships with members of staff or student, whereby the integrity (or the perceived integrity) of the College is jeopardised;
  - Offensive language or behaviour towards staff, students, colleagues or members of the community; this includes any form of racial or sexual harassment or discrimination.
  - Being unfit while volunteering due to inappropriate usage or influence of alcohol or any form of prohibited drugs.
  - Abuse of position and role through any form of falsification (e.g. claims, expenses), misuse of College property, corruption or disclosure of confidential information.
  - Inappropriate behaviour also includes failure to report known misconduct by other staff members and/or volunteers.
  - Some instances of misconduct will be so serious as to make any trust in that volunteer impossible. These fall into the category of gross misconduct and include but are not limited to;
    - Gross inappropriate conduct of any kind.
    - Any form of sexual misconduct or physical assault.
    - Serious acts of negligence causing significant loss, damage or injury to College staff or students.

## DUTY OF CARE

The term 'duty of care' is a legal concept that defines the duty a person has to use reasonable care towards others in order to protect them from known or reasonably foreseeable risk of harm and/or injury. The notion of duty of care is one that is contained in most school policies and procedures.

The school is under a duty to take reasonable care to ensure that it employs competent teachers and provides safe premises. The school will be vicariously liable for the actions of the teachers whilst they are acting in the course and scope of their duties as an employee of the school.

A teacher owes a duty to students to take reasonable care to protect them, from a known or a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm and/or injury. Discharge of this duty requires a teacher to take such proactive measures as are reasonable to prevent harm and/or injury to a student.

### Duty of care owed by Non-Teaching Staff, Volunteers and External Providers

The Department of Education and Training policy describes non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers as follows:

- Non-teaching staff – employees of the school who work on the school premises and are not part of the teaching staff. Eg. librarians, laboratory assistants, exam supervisors.
- Volunteers – an adult or organisation who/which offers services for School Activities, but receives no remuneration from the school for the services provided. Eg. parents/guardians and other relatives, community members, employers who accept students on work experience, student teachers.
- External Providers – a business/individual paid by the school to provide a venue, service and/or expertise appropriate to a particular school activity. Eg. private dance teacher, Perth Zoo, AQUA, Scitech.

Generally, non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers must take reasonable care to avoid doing things that could reasonably be foreseen as causing harm and/or injury to others (including students).

Non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers are not generally personally

responsible for students and do not have the same duty of personal care to students as do teachers. However, in certain situations and under certain conditions teachers may delegate their duty of care to non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers in which case they will then owe the same level of care to students as a teacher.

Before the school and/or the teacher delegate the duty of care responsibility to non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers, it is necessary for the school and/or the teacher to ensure the following are satisfied, as a failure to do so could result in a breach of the school and/or the teacher's duty of care to the student:

- That the non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers are suitable for the task being delegated.
- That the non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers involved are covered by either the school's insurance or have in place their own adequate insurance cover.
- That the non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers agree to assume this personal duty of care for the students.
- That the teacher has provided the non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers with clear instructions as to the level of care required.

It is recommended that these instructions for caring for students, the level of care required and the acceptance of this responsibility be recorded in writing and signed by the non-teaching staff, volunteers (eg. parents) and/or external providers.

The situation with respect to volunteers has changed in recent times. Previously, it was accepted that because there was no employment relationship between the school and the volunteer the school could not be held vicariously liable for the actions of a volunteer. The introduction of the Volunteers (Protection from Liability) Act 2002 has changed this situation. The Act provides that schools, that are an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporations Act 1987, are responsible for the acts of a volunteer (ie. the school is vicariously liable for the volunteer) where the work performed by the volunteer is done on behalf of the school and is done in good faith by the volunteer.

## MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

New mandatory reporting legislation became effective in WA from 1 January 2009. It is vital that Alta-1 staff members and volunteers to understand their obligations under this legislation.

### Principles

- The best interests of children and young people are paramount.
- Every child and young person has the right to be protected from sexual abuse.
- Children and young people have the right to be heard and believed.
- People with a concern have a responsibility to make a report.

On occasions where a student discloses any form of physical or sexual abuse to the volunteer, the volunteer must report this to the campus teacher as soon as practical. Failure to deal with this situation correctly may result in a fine towards the teacher or as well as further harm to the student.

\*Please see the Alta-1 Mandatory Reporting Policy for further information. It is imperative that all volunteers complete the compulsory Mandatory Reporting Training on Bridge and upload evidence of completion before commencing on campus.

### Special Note: Disclosure of Abuse

Throughout the course, students are encouraged to explore their past events, circumstances, thoughts, emotions and behaviours. This process may result in students disclosing previous or current abuse. If a young person discloses abuse that is or has occurred, it is important to follow Mandatory Reporting Policy guidelines.

These basic guidelines should be followed during any disclosure:

- Support the young person by believing him/her and providing reassurance that telling you was the right thing to do;
- Remember that your role is to support, not to probe or investigate;
- Listening calmly and with empathy helps the young person;
- Maintain a calm demeanour;
- Don't make promises you cannot keep (e.g. don't promise not to tell anyone);
- Thank the young person for helping you to understand;
- Let the young person know what you plan to do next.
- Following the disclosure it is important that organisational procedures are followed.

## **Rationale**

New mandatory reporting legislation became effective in WA from 1 January 2009. It is vital that Alta-1 staff members understand their obligations under this legislation.

It is a requirement of Alta-1 College that all teachers undergo regular Mandatory Reporting training with an accredited presenter such as AISWA.

## **Principles**

1. The best interests of children and young people are paramount.
2. Every child and young person has the right to be protected from sexual abuse.
3. Children and young people have the right to be heard and believed.
4. People with a concern have a responsibility to make a report.

## **Procedures**

Relevant procedures revolve around the following key questions:

### **○ Who must report abuse?**

By government legislation, teachers in Western Australia are required to report the sexual abuse of children. While not mandated by legislation, other Alta-1 College staff members who have a belief that a child is being subjected to any form of abuse or neglect are required to inform the teacher or Principal who will in turn make a report. Reference should be made to the flow chart that accompanies the Student Protection Policy. (See attached flow chart)

Mandatory reporters who fail to report a belief that a child is being sexually abused commit an offence which attracts a fine of up to \$6,000.

### **○ What must be reported?**

Mandatory reporters must report a belief, formed on reasonable grounds in the course of their work, paid or unpaid, that a child or young person has been the subject of sexual abuse or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse, to the Department for Child Protection.

### **○ When must a report be made?**

Mandatory reporters must report the belief that a child is being sexually abused, or has been sexually abused, as soon as practicable.

### **○ What proof of abuse needed?**

Reporters do not need to have proof that a child or young person is being abused in order to make a mandatory report. However, mandatory reporters must have formed a belief on reasonable grounds.

### **○ What information must be provided?**

Information that must be provided includes the:

- reporter's name and contact details
- name of the child, or if this is not known, a description of the child
- grounds on which the reporter's belief of child sexual abuse has been formed.

If known, the following must also be supplied:

- The child's date of birth.
- The child's current address.
- The names of the child's parents or other responsible persons.

○ **What are the grounds for belief that a child has been sexually abused?**

Mandatory reporters must specify the grounds on which they formed the belief that a child has been, or is being, sexually abused. It is important to provide as much detailed information as possible, including:

- what the child has said or done to suggest they are being sexually abused
- if the child has disclosed abuse, what they said happened and who they disclosed to and when
- a description of any behaviors/interactions with the child that are of concern, including frequency and severity of behaviors
- whether the child has any injury, or medical needs.

- **How should a report be made?**

In the first instance, the mandatory reporter who in the course of his or her involvement with Alta-1 has come to the reasonable belief that child sexual abuse has occurred may choose to inform the relevant Alta-1 Principal, through their line manager, that a report is going to be made, or move directly to making a report in the following manner:

A verbal report is the preferred method of reporting in the first instance. A verbal report enables the Mandatory Reporting Service to ask clarifying questions and gather as much information as possible to inform the assessment, and any future intervention and planning. However, all verbal reports must be followed by a written report. To make a verbal report, mandatory reporters can telephone the Mandatory Reporting Service on 1800 708 704.

A written report must follow a verbal report as soon as practicable, preferably within 24 hours. It is an offence to fail to provide a written report after lodging a verbal report and such a failure carries a maximum penalty of \$3,000. A form for mandatory reporters, Mandatory Report - Sexual Abuse can be completed online through the Department's mandatory reporting website at: [www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au). This form can also be downloaded from the website. Written reports can be lodged with the Mandatory Reporting Service via:

- email to: [mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au](mailto:mrs@dcp.wa.gov.au)
- fax to: 1800 610 614
- post to: PO Box 8146 PERTH BC WA 6849

Mandatory reporters can contact the Mandatory Reporting Service and request a blank mandatory report form to be sent via fax or mail if access to online facilities is not available.

The mandatory reporter should then inform the Principal that a mandatory report has been made, inform the Principal of the report receipt number and inform the Principal of the advice contained in the feedback letter received from the MRS following the report. The Principal should also be informed whether the alleged perpetrator is a student or staff member of the College.

The Principal is then to inform the Executive Officer via the Personal Assistant of the MRS receipt number, date and campus, and whether a student or staff member of the College was involved as an alleged perpetrator. If the alleged perpetrator is a student or staff member, the Principal is to complete a Critical Incident Report for the Executive Officer to submit to Non-Government Schools. Further action to be taken on advice from the EO.

- **Are confidentiality and protection from liability provided?**

The identity of a reporter is required to be kept confidential, except in limited circumstances. Reporters are also protected, when making a report in good faith, from breaching professional ethics or confidentiality. Mandatory reporters, making a report in good faith, also do not incur civil or criminal liability.

Note: Reporter is not obliged to inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child that a mandatory report has been made. If in doubt, contact MRS for advice.

SEQTA: It is important that records are kept. Given this is extremely confidential, any recording on SEQTA that mandatory report has been made must be password protected.

Mandatory FAQs: <https://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Training%20Modules.aspx>

\*Volunteer to complete the Training module section and final review and provide copy of the certificate once completed.

- **When might a reporter's identity be disclosed?**

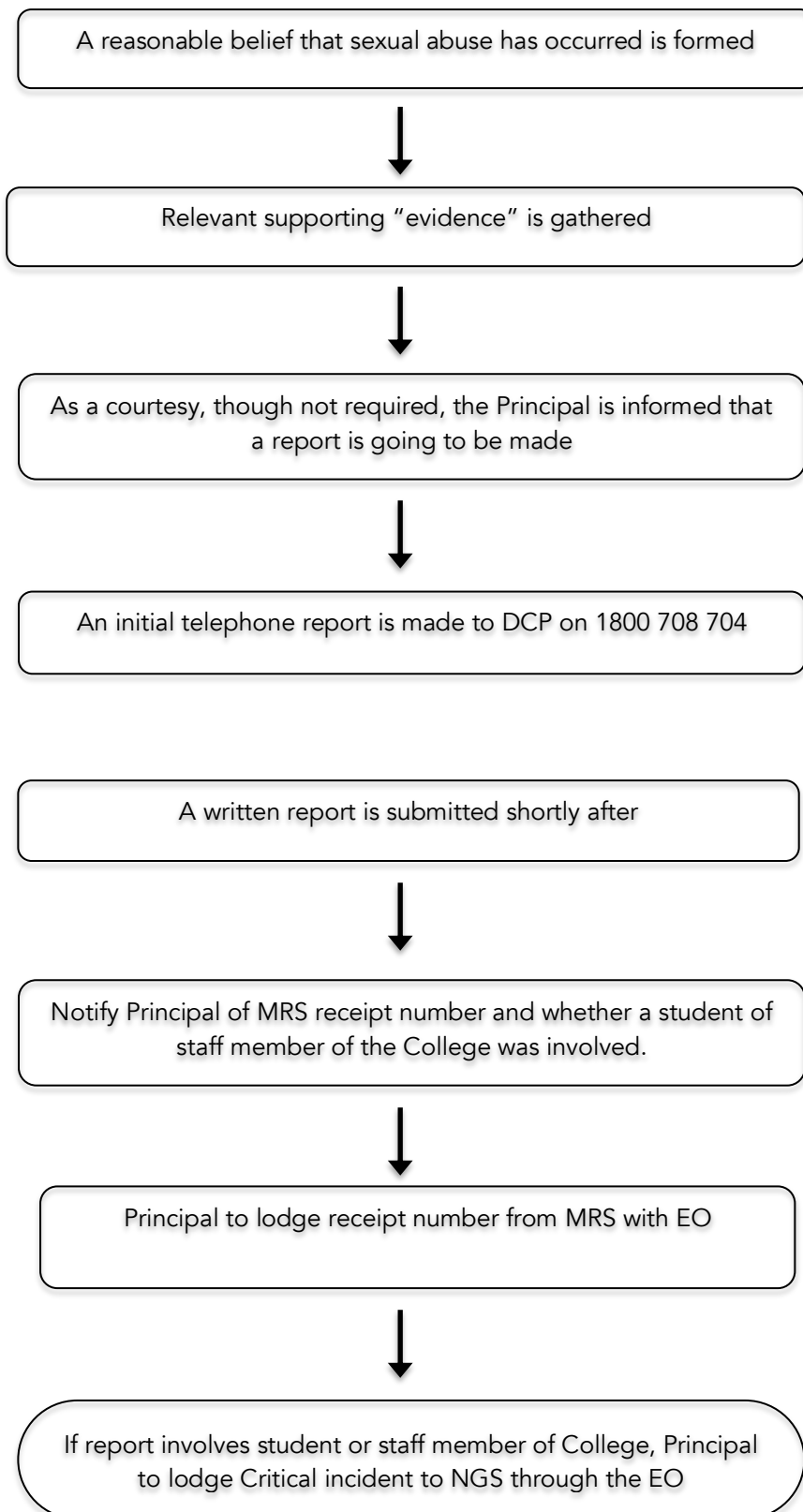
Revealing identifying information about a reporter or informant will be allowed where:

- The Department sends a copy of every written report to the Western Australia Police (as required by law), that includes the reporter's details.
- A person is performing functions under the Children and Community Services Act 2004.
- A Department officer finds it necessary to do so during child protection, family law or adoption proceedings relating to the child.
- A person is being prosecuted for an offence relating to mandatory reporting (for example, making a misleading report).
- The reporter consents in writing to the identifying information being revealed.

It is an offence to disclose the identity of the reporter, carrying a maximum fine of \$24,000 and imprisonment for two (2) years.



## Flow Chart



## CHILD SAFE SCHOOLS COMPLIANCE AND BOUNDARIES

Alta-1 College is a child safe school committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. Alta-1 College views child safety as paramount.

The College has developed policies and procedures which describe student welfare, care and protection. These have been endorsed by the Department on Education through the College's re-registration process. In 2018 and 2019 the Senior Management Team, inventoried our policy and practice, benchmarking against the nine domains in the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Child Safe Framework.

- The National Child Safe Principles have since been developed and published and the College is working to implement them. These include:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people. Alta-1 College insists on current Working with Children Checks and National Police Clearance for all employees and volunteers.

The Volunteer Code of Conduct covers the major boundaries that you are expected to uphold. The live training sessions will take a deeper look at the practical application of these boundaries within the Alta-1 context.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Alta-1 College. We trust that any questions that you may have, have been answered in this booklet. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate in contacting the Campus Teacher or College directly.

### **Volunteers have the RIGHT to:**

- Choice regarding the activities they take part in – to be able to say NO if they are uncomfortable with the task assigned.
- Be given feedback.
- Be recognised for their contribution.
- Work in a healthy and safe environment.

### **Volunteers have the RESPONSIBILITY to:**

- Be dependable – notify the Campus Teacher if unable to attend.
- Maintain confidentiality and be non-judgmental.
- Work in accordance with health and safety regulations.
- Work in accordance with the Alta-1's policies, procedures, instructions and rules.
- Say no when they cannot commit to a task.
- Respect the rights, privacy and dignity of students and staff.

### **Alta-1 has the RIGHT to:**

- Assess the volunteer's capacities, place them appropriately and expect assignments to be adequately completed.
- Plan and facilitate training for volunteers.
- Redirect volunteers determined unsuitable for placement or to say no to volunteers.

### **Alta-1 has the RESPONSIBILITY to:**

- Empower volunteers to meet their own and Alta-1's needs.
- Offer volunteers work opportunities appropriate to their skills, expertise and aspirations.
- Provide volunteers with clear duty statements and orientation to their work and the agency.
- Offer support for volunteers to achieve goals.
- Implement procedures to ensure volunteer safety and well-being.
- Recognise volunteers as valued team members with opportunities to participate in relevant classroom decisions.

Volunteers are sometimes placed in a position of trust and responsibility that includes working with young people who are vulnerable. It is imperative that volunteers do not disclose any information about people they work with and do not take advantage of the vulnerability or frailty of the individuals.

The following questions may help you identify when confidentiality is compromised:

- Would you feel compromised if information about you was disclosed to someone else without your permission?
- Could the person be identified from what you are saying about them?
- Does the information you are giving disclose issues about the person's health, finances, sexuality, legal issues or their family?
- Always consider how you would feel if you were the topic of discussion.

### Principles

- All volunteers must have the permission of the school to undertake volunteering activities at the school.
- Volunteers must be of good character as attested to by two referees.
- Any person having prior convictions relating to violent or sexually related offences will be denied permission to volunteer.
- Preference will be given to volunteers connected to Partner Churches and Organisations.
- An approved volunteer must sign an agreement with the College.
- All volunteers will be required to provide a current Working with Children Check and National Police Clearance.
- The College will register the details of the volunteer including: induction and training records; qualifications; driver's license details; references; WWCC.
- Under most circumstances, volunteers will undertake activities with a College staff member.
- Volunteers are protected from liability for work undertaken at the College when undertaken in accord with College policies and processes.



## VOLUNTEER TRAINING COMPLETION CHECKLIST

- [ ] About Alta-1 College
- [ ] History and Vision
- [ ] Alta-1 System / Personal Recovery
- [ ] The Value of Volunteers
- [ ] Alta-1 Statement of Values
- [ ] What do Volunteers and Mentors do?
- [ ] Volunteer and Mentor Expectations
- [ ] Volunteer and Mentor Roles
- [ ] Tips to remember when volunteering
- [ ] Strategies to build relationships
- [ ] Working with Youth-at-Risk
- [ ] Working with LGBTQIA+ Youth
- [ ] Volunteers Code of Conduct
- [ ] Duty of care
- [ ] Mandatory reporting
- [ ] Child Safe Schools Compliance and Boundaries
- [ ] Rights and Responsibilities

### Availability

Days: \_\_\_\_\_ Times: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: Weekly ☐ Fortnightly ☐

*\*I understand the training and agree to adhere by the policies, procedure and Volunteers Code of conduct*

Volunteer signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Alta1 Staff Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please remove from handbook and provide to your Alta-1trainer at the end of your live training. \*Alta-1 staff member to email copy to Regional Admin





**CHANGING LIVES ONE AT A TIME**

[www.alta-1.com.au](http://www.alta-1.com.au)