



**ST ANN'S COLLEGE**

## **Protocol for Responding to an Allegation of Sexual Assault**

The information in the protocol guides St Ann's College staff and student leaders through the process they are required to follow when a St Ann's student reports that they been sexually assaulted or indecently assaulted. Other forms of unwanted sexual behaviour, such as sexual harassment, are dealt with under other policies and procedures.

The term 'sexual assault' as used in this document includes indecent assault, rape, sexual abuse or other forms of sexual violence. 'Sexual assault' is the broadly accepted term within the community to refer to unwanted physical sexual activity. In the criminal law this term has a more specific meaning which varies across States and Territories. In SA, it principally refers to an actual or threatened assault with the intent to engage in sexual intercourse, or engaging in sexual intercourse without consent.

St Ann's strives to provide a safe, supportive and caring environment free from all forms of unwanted sexual attention. It provides "Responding to reports of sexual assault" training and support to key staff and to student leaders within the College. St Ann's supports campaigns aimed at preventing sexual assault and promoting safe and respectful relationships within the student community.

When an allegation of sexual assault is reported, the College will be active in providing support and information, including facilitating access to relevant counselling, medical, Police or legal services. Initially, the primary concern of the College is to ensure the safety of the student making the allegation.

St Ann's College respects the right of all survivors of sexual assault to be in control of the decisions affecting them, especially the student's right to decide whether to seek counselling or medical services or Police or legal intervention.

### **Step 1 – Establish immediate safety**

**If you or another person are in immediate danger call 000 now.**

Immediate risks to the student's safety might include an **imminent danger** from the alleged perpetrator or an immediate medical or physical emergency:

- **Call 000** and report the incident to emergency services
- then call the Tutor on Duty on **0407 711 247**, and/or the Principal on **0410 636 247**
- then follow the steps outlined in the Critical Incident Policy. (Appendix 1)

### **Step 2 – If a student tells you they have been sexually assaulted**

Be calm and provide an empathic response. If you are in a public place where privacy may be compromised, secure a private area to discuss the matter further. You may need to ask the Principal, Senior Tutor, Equity Officer, Tutor or other staff member for help. Contact Yarrow Place for advice on 8226 8777. After hours contact 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 7328 for advice 24/7.

Remember, sexual assault is an abuse of power and control by one or more people using sexual means over another person. It is a traumatic incident that can overwhelm a person's capacity to cope. Restoring power to the person who has been assaulted is an important part of recovery, and so ensure that the person who has been assaulted is supported to make their own decisions about the process – provide information, options, and allow them to choose, including choosing to do nothing for the time being.

In asking questions about the incident, focus on ensuring that the student is physically and medically safe and on collecting only what information is needed to facilitate access to medical, counselling or legal support as outlined in step 3.

Speaking clearly, calmly and compassionately can assist the student to begin to feel safe which will help them to begin the process of working out what they want to have happen next.

Supporting a student who discloses a sexual assault can have a major influence on their recovery and on their willingness to seek medical and counselling services and to proceed with legal action.

### **Step 3 – Provide information and facilitate access to counselling, medical and legal support**

#### **Counselling**

Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service has expertise in working with people who have made allegations of sexual assault. This includes providing crisis and ongoing counselling support, as well as information about medical options, legal options, and victim's compensation through to court preparation and court support. The student can use the services at Yarrow Place without reporting the allegations to the Police. The services are free and confidential.

Ask the student if they want immediate assistance from Yarrow Place and assist them to make contact on 8226 8777. Direct referral to Yarrow Place is possible 24 hours, seven days per week. After hours the phone will be routed to the 1800 RESPECT service on 1800 737 7328. This service can arrange for crisis medical or forensic assessment according to the wishes of the person who has been assaulted. The person may also wish to report directly to the Police (steps outlined later in this document).

If the student does not want immediate contact with Yarrow Place, provide printed information and contact details of the service.

**It is preferable that students are supported to access Yarrow Place as it is the specialist service within SA funded to support people who have experienced sexual violence. It is conveniently located 300m from the College. It provides support for female and male survivors of sexual assault. Yarrow Place also provides culturally appropriate counselling for Indigenous people who have experienced sexual assault.**

The University of Adelaide, UniSA and Flinders also provide on-campus counselling and referral for students who have experienced sexual assault. This can be complementary to counselling provided by Yarrow Place, or an alternative if the student prefers to seek counselling at their university. If a student attends the Counselling Centre the counsellor will:

- provide a safe, supportive environment for the student to discuss any concerns
- raise the student's awareness of their options for support
- provide information as required
- facilitate access to other services according to the student's decisions

- provide ongoing counselling if preferred by the student (within the guidelines of service).

University of Adelaide counselling centre – 8313 5663

UniSA Counselling Centre – 1300 301 703

Flinders University Counselling Centre – email your full name, phone number and student ID to [counselling@flinders.edu.au](mailto:counselling@flinders.edu.au) and a counselor will contact you by phone.

## **Medical support**

Communicate the importance of medical attention to the student and discuss whether assistance is needed at this time.

Medical attention for sexual assault victims is vital for detecting and treating a range of medical concerns, including sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and both visible and internal injuries. Ideally people who have alleged sexual assault should be seen by a medical professional as soon as possible to address these health concerns.

Yarrow Place or the Police can arrange for forensic and medical sexual assault care to people who have been sexually assaulted. A forensic medical examination may be conducted up to 1 week after a sexual assault, but is most useful if conducted within 72 hours.

Emergency contraception is extremely effective if given within 48 hours of unprotected sex. It may be given up to 120 hours after unprotected sex.

Medical examination is offered to all Yarrow Place clients. In addition, forensic examination can be arranged if the client presents within the appropriate time frame. Forensic specimens may be collected and stored by Yarrow Place for up to 12 months after their collection. This gives the client time to make a decision about whether to proceed with the legal pathway.

Ideally people who have experienced sexual assault should be seen as soon as possible after a sexual assault to address these health matters.

Yarrow Place provides a 24 hour, 365 days a year on-call service for reports of sexual assault.

If the student does not want assistance at this time, provide printed referral information from this SA Health page.

## **Making a complaint to the College**

The decision to proceed with making a complaint to the College is the decision of the student who has alleged the sexual assault. The Sexual Misconduct Policy provides guidance on what a student can expect when making a complaint of sexual assault. Residents who make a complaint to the College will be encouraged but not required to report the incident to the Police.

## **Police and legal support**

The decision to proceed with making a complaint to the Police is the decision of the student who has alleged the sexual assault.

Yarrow Place (8226 8777) can provide information for students considering reporting the sexual assault to the Police. Some students may prefer to go directly to the Police if they are clear that they wish to make a report. If this is the case contact the South Australian Police on 131 444.

A report of misconduct can also be made by a student of St Ann's College, under this policy. However, where a report is made to the Police any action under the Sexual Misconduct Policy may be suspended, as the Police are the appropriate body to deal with what would then be an allegation of criminal conduct.

## **Step 4 – Provide printed information containing referral numbers for assistance**

Even if the student does not want assistance at this time, provide printed referral information whenever possible.

## **Step 5 – Proceed to St Ann's College Critical Incident Policy**

Advise the student that you are required to report the anonymous details of the incident to the Principal. Request permission from the student to release their name and contact details to the Principal. This will allow the College to follow up with the student regarding their support needs. If the student does not give their permission you must not release their name and contact details unless there is a serious threat to the life, health or safety of the individual or others. There are many reasons why a student may not give their permission: they may be worried about not being believed, fear of reprisals, not wanting family or others to know, humiliation, shame and lack of faith in the Police and justice system, or they may have made a positive decision to

protect their own privacy. In any case, no judgment should be made where a student does not give permission to release their details.

If there are no serious health or safety issues and you do not have permission to release their personal details, then inform the student that you will report the incident to the Principal with no contact or personal identification details. The report will be used for statistical purposes and will contain only the nature of the incident and the location and date of occurrence. If there is a threat to the safety of the individual or others dial **000**, call the Tutor on Duty on **0407 711 247** and/or the Principal on **0410 636 247**, and then proceed as outlined in the **Critical Incident Policy**. (Appendix 2)

### **Step 6 – Debriefing**

Debriefing for any staff member or student leader responding to an allegation of sexual assault is available through their university counselling centre or through Neaves and Menne Clinical Psychologists **08 8267 3313**.

### **Other sources of support following sexual assault**

- University Counselors
- Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service – 1800 817 421
- National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence – 1800 RESPECT
- Neaves and Menne Clinical Psychologists – 08 8267 5466
- SA Police – 131 444
- Equal Opportunity Commission
- Legal Services Commission of SA
- Royal Adelaide Hospital
- Ambulance attendance – 000

With thanks to ANU for input to this document

**Review** – This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in January of each year, prior to publication of the student Handbook, to ensure that it is compliant with best practice management and the College’s legal obligations. It will be emailed to every resident student so they have an electronic copy.