Foundational statements

Overview
Lutheran schools are Christian schools under the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). The LCA and Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) define the vision for those schools and for all who work and learn within them. Policies sit within the educational framework for Lutheran schools and not only state how legislative requirements are fulfilled but also specify how the ethos and values of Lutheran schools are lived out.

‘In the Lutheran school the gospel is to inform all programs, relationships and activities (LCA and its schools statement). The love of God in Jesus Christ is to govern all that is done and, in response to this love, people in the school community are directed to their fellow human beings. When they love others, they love him. Christ’s promise is that whatever is done for others is done for him. Informed and transformed by God’s creative, redemptive and sanctifying love, God’s people are concerned with the total needs of their fellow human beings.’

The framework, Lifelong Qualities for Learners, defines the ethos of Lutheran schools: ‘As central to their mission and ministry, Lutheran schools seek to nurture individuals who are aware of their humanity, open to the influence of the Holy Spirit and growing in and living according to a cohesive worldview while living in community and reflecting characteristics of God through core values, especially love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation’.

God intends that people in Lutheran schools live out these values and work together to settle differences, resolve issues and restore relationships on the basis of biblical principles (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11), whilst also meeting the requirements of the law of the land.

The LCA Safe Place Policy defines power as the capacity to set and care for boundaries. Boundaries are the structures which support human development within community; boundaries may be personal, communal, spiritual, psychological or physical. In Christ, there is an empowerment by the gospel to recognise boundaries and prevent their destructive crossing and to care for those who have been violated. One responsibility of leadership is to care for professional boundaries through the establishment of structures that protect them. Structures provide for support, examination, and action to ensure that school leaders, staff and students act according to boundaries that help, protect and uphold the dignity and worth of each individual.

Guiding principles
From the LCA Safe Place Policy:
1) Each person has intrinsic value, given that all are created in the image of God
2) God wants us to love each other as he loves and not to abuse the relationships in which he has placed us
3) Personal, communal, spiritual, psychological and physical boundaries are symbols of God’s order and care within a community

From the National Safe Schools Framework:
1) A safe community is one where the right of each member to be safe at school and at any event supported by the school is upheld and where physical, social and psychological well being of each individual is valued and protected
2) Care, respect, cooperation and the value of diversity are to be promoted and supported
3) Quality leadership is an essential element that underpins the creation of a safe and supportive environment
4) Each school has a responsibility to develop and implement policies, programs and processes for nurturing a safe environment that are proactive, oriented towards prevention and intervention, and to engage the wider school community in doing so.
5) Roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in promoting a safe and supportive environment should be explicit, clearly understood and disseminated.
6) In-service professional development is critically important in creating a safe and supportive school environment.
7) Schools have a responsibility to provide opportunities for students to learn the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for positive relationships.
8) Policies and programs should be proactive, oriented towards prevention and intervention.
9) Policies and programs should be regularly monitored and evaluated so that decisions and improvements are based on evidence.
10) All staff have a responsibility to take action to protect children from abuse and neglect.
11) Healthy relationships develop over time and are based on trust and mutual respect. Fear of abuse or harassment allegations should not interfere with the development of healthy relationships.

Definitions
For the purposes of this program, the following definitions apply:

**Staff** all employees, paid workplace participants

**Volunteers** people who provide assistance in the school for less than 80 hours per annum

**School** preschools, kindergartens, early learning centres, out of school hours care and vacation care services, junior primary, primary, secondary, senior secondary schools and any associated boarding facilities

**Students** all children and young people enrolled at or attending the sites defined under school.