SHC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

Sacred Heart College Geelong holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of the College. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

> *'The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.'* (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n. 9).

The belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 27), and that the inherent dignity of all being recognised and fostered, is the basis for protection of children and young people. Our Mercy Values of Compassion, Justice and Respect compel us to act to assist others, especially the young and vulnerable.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Sacred Heart College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at the College. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures, actions and strategies that will be implemented to ensure that a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the College, to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the College.

This Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

This Policy applies to College workplace participants, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with the following related College policies and procedures:

1. PROTECT Policy: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Reportable Conduct Policy

Principles

As a Catholic school in the Mercy tradition, the College has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard, and they are safe and feel safe (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing:

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Our College works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and wellbeing and protection.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their families.
- All workplace participants at the College have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing, to identify and mitigate risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.

- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- All members of the College community (including students and their families) are kept informed of child safety and wellbeing matters (where appropriate) and are involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Workplace participants, families and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety and wellbeing, knowing these will be taken seriously by College leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally (including under legislated information sharing schemes being Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)) or pastorally.

Definitions

Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse includes:

(a)   any act committed against a child involving:
    (i)   a sexual offence
    (ii)   a grooming offence under section 49M(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)

(b)   the infliction, on a child, of:
    (i)   physical violence
    (ii)   serious emotional or psychological harm

(c)   serious neglect of a child.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Child neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health and physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Child physical abuse generally consists of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity and does not always involve physical contact or force (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. It can include communication and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Mandatory reporting: The legal requirement under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The Principal, registered teachers and early childhood teachers, school counsellors, religious clergy, medical practitioners and nurses at a school are mandatory reporters under this Act (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Reasonable belief – mandatory reporting: When school staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a reasonable belief. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Reasonable belief – reportable conduct scheme: When a person has a reasonable belief that a worker/volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct. A reasonable belief is more than suspicion and there must be some objective basis for the belief. It does not necessitate proof or require certainty.

> NOTE: the difference between the reasonable belief definitions under mandatory reporting and the reportable conduct scheme is the category of persons who are required to, or can, form the reasonable belief which forms the basis for a report.

Reportable conduct: Five types of reportable conduct are listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) (as amended by the *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017*). These include:

1. sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of a child)
2. sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of a child)
3. physical violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm
5. significant neglect.

School refers to the College, with both terms used interchangeably.

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the school
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorized by the College for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the College or through a third-part provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for school camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for Sacred Heart College in the school environment.

Workplace Participants means an individual working within a school environment who is:
- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a contracted service provider, consultant, student on placement or volunteer engaged to perform child-related work for the College
- a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the College (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Policy commitments

All students enrolled at the College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The safety and wellbeing of young people in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students.

Our commitment to our students

- We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
- We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We commit to listening to children and young people, and empowering them by ensuring that they understand their rights (including to safety, information and participation), and by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- We commit to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people enrolled in our school are met, including those who are most vulnerable.
- We commit to recognising the importance of friendships and to encouraging support from peers, to help children and students feel safe and less isolated.
- We commit to developing a culture that facilitates and provides opportunities for children and student participation, and that strengthens the confidence and engagement of children and students by being responsive to their input.
- We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

Our commitment to families

- We commit to communicating honestly and openly with families about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of families about our child safety and wellbeing practice, policies and procedures.
- We commit to transparency in our decision-making with families where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- We commit to open engagement and communication with families about our child safe approach and our operations and governance related to child safety and wellbeing.
- We commit to ensuring that relevant information relating to child safety and wellbeing is accessible to families.
- We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

Our commitment to College workplace participants

- We commit to providing all College workplace participants with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles, and to ensure that they are attuned to signs of harm and are able to facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.

- We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing, and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct, and workplace participant responsibilities to report concerns.
- We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by workplace participants about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We commit to providing opportunities for workplace participants to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

Responsibilities and organisational arrangements

All workplace participants at the College have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure a child safe culture in which the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

The College has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety and wellbeing as follows:

- Catherine Gulli - Child Safety Officer (Deputy Principal - Student Development)

Child Safety and Wellbeing Team Members:

- Lisa Fletcher - People and Capability Leader
- Marcelle Korth - Learning Culture Leader
- Lisa Carew - Inclusion and Diversity Leader
- Kirra Spence and Tanya Glessing - Student Empowerment Leaders
- Michelle Abbott - Pastoral Worker

Other staff members workplace participants can seek advice from:

- College Leadership Team
  - Tanya Malley
  - Laura Dillon
  - Luke Haitas
  - Catherine Middlemiss
  - Mark Pleasance

Guide to responsibilities of school leadership

The Principal, the College's governing authority and leaders at the College recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety and wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all workplace participants
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of workplace participants
- ensuring that workplace participants have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to, and ability to prevent, identify and address child safety and wellbeing matters
- ensuring that the College has in place appropriate risk management strategies and practices that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to children and young people's protection and wellbeing

- ensuring the College meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359
- ensuring the College takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and in line with <u>PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools</u>
- ensuring the College understands and reports all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in accordance with the College's reportable conduct policy
- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the College's prescribed role as an information sharing entity (ISE).
- ensuring that the College monitors and reviews the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, on an annual basis.

Guide to responsibilities of College workplace participants

Responsibilities of workplace participants include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal College policies, procedures and processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety, and the wellbeing of children and young people, including ways to prevent, identify and mitigate risks relating to child safety and wellbeing
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- where risks of child abuse are identified, ensuring that action is taken to mitigate against those risks and that risks and actions are appropriately recorded.

Organisational arrangements

The Principal has the overall leadership role in monitoring and responding to the policy, procedures and practices for child safety and wellbeing in the College in accordance with this Policy.

The College has appointed the Deputy Principal – Student Development as the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer is available to answer any questions that an individual may have with respect to the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Protection Program. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer can be a first point of contact for reporting child protection issues within the College. They receive special training that allows them to deal with child protection concerns both sensitively and effectively.

A Child Safety and Wellbeing Team has also been appointed. The College Child Safety and Wellbeing Team:

- Comprises the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer (Deputy Principal - Student Development), Learning Culture Leader, Inclusion and Diversity Leader, People and Capability Leader, Student Empowerment Coordinator, and Pastoral Worker
- Assists the Principal
- Works in preventing, identifying and mitigating risks in child safety and wellbeing
- Supports the Principal to monitor implementation of College policies, procedures and practices, and to monitor and review the risks associated with child safety and wellbeing (including by and to identify professional learning.

The College's website and Principal's Update provide information to keep families informed of child safety and wellbeing commitments, procedures and arrangements.

Expectations of our workplace participants - Child Safety Code of Conduct

The College expects workplace participants to proactively ensure the safety and wellbeing of students at all times, to identify concerns about child safety and wellbeing and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any child at the College. All workplace participants must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements. We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct, which recognises the critical role that workplace participants play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of workplace participants for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and/or neglect.

Our Code also protects College workplace participants through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Student safety and participation

The College actively encourages all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report their concerns. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their families, raise with us.

The curriculum design integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe, as well as their understanding of their rights to safety, information and participation. Teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge and support student agency and voice are implemented. We ensure that students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

We have developed appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending our school
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

We have also developed curriculum planning documents that detail the strategies and actions the College takes to implement its obligations to ensure that:

- children and students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation
- the importance of friendship is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated
- workplace participants are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- we have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students
- we provide opportunities for students to participate and is responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant information in an age-appropriate way.

Reporting and responding

The College creates records relevant to any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and maintains and disposes of those records in accordance with security and privacy requirements and Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards (including minimum retention periods). The College complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.), the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report.

Our school's PROTECT Policy: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

Our PROTECT Policy assists workplace participants and families to:
- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a reasonable belief is formed under the reportable conduct scheme as well as mandatory reporting
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law, and their legal obligations relating to child abuse and grooming under criminal law
- understand and comply with information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- comply with reporting obligations under the reportable conduct scheme including obligations to report and investigate allegations of reportable conduct.

The College has also established additional internal procedures and processes to help ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent, identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

If any member of our College community has concerns for a child's safety they need to discuss, they can notify the designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer, the Deputy Principal - Student Development. If the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer is not available, then it should be discussed with the Principal, a member of the College Leadership Team or member of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Team. Alternatively, any member of the College community may report directly to the responsible authority.

The workplace participant, supported by the designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer or relevant member of leadership will follow the step-by-step guide to making a report as outlined in the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

The College is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, it is able to share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the CISS or FVISS. If any member of our College community has concerns for a child's safety or has been approached for information under the CISS or FVISS, they need to notify the designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer, the Deputy Principal - Student Development.

Screening and recruitment of workplace participants

The College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of workplace participants involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing and our

screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Each position description for staff involved in child-connected work has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing for those in that position and the occupant's essential qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

When recruiting and selecting workplace participants involved in child-connected work, we ensure that we gather, verify and record the following information about any person we propose to engage:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We will also ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to the induction of new workplace participants into the College's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and wellbeing and child-connected work.

We have procedures and processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of workplace participants to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

The College implements the following CECV guidelines:

- *Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools*
- *NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools*.

Child safety and wellbeing - education and training for workplace participants

The College provides all workplace participants with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety and wellbeing matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

At least annually, our professional learning and training addresses:

- staff's individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
- preventing, identifying and mitigating child abuse risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- the reportable conduct scheme
- our College's current child safety standards (including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and any other policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing, including in relation to managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse)
- guidance on recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students

- guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations, including under the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

Diversity and equity - strategies and actions

The College is committed to ensuring that equity is upheld, and that diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. We aim to ensure that:

- all workplace participants understand the diverse circumstances of children and students
- the College provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students
- students, workplace participants and the College community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- the College pays particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students
- the College pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

The following resources inform the strategies and actions the College takes to implement their diversity and equity obligations:
- *Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne – Welcoming Each Other: Guidelines for Interfaith Education in the Schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne*
- *Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*
- *CECV – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives*
- *CECV – Assessing and Intervening with Impact*
- *CECV – Guidelines for Supporting New Arrivals and Refugees*
- *CECV – Intervention Framework*
- *CECV – Parent Guide to Program Support Groups*
- *CECV – Personal Care Support in Schools*
- *CECV – Positive Behaviour Guidelines*
- *Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) – Horizons of Hope – Vision, Context, Strategy, Practice*
- *CEM – Identity and Growth: A perspective for Catholic schools*
- *Catholic Education South Australia – Children: Close to the Mystery of God*
- *Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) – Live Life to the Full: EREA Safe & Inclusive Learning Communities Statement*
- *MACS – Allways: A guide to supporting all learners in all ways always*
- *MACS – Religious Education Curriculum*
- *National Catholic Education Commission – Framework for Student Faith Formation in Catholic Schools*
- *Victorian Curriculum F–10*
- *Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment*
- *Victorian DET – Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships, incorporating a Catholic context*

Family engagement - strategies and actions

The College ensures that families and other members of the College community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school. We aim to ensure that:

- families participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- we engage and openly communicate with families and other members of the College community about our child safe approach
- all members of the College community have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing
- families, and other members of the College community have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices

- families, and other members of the College community are informed about the operations and governance of the College in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Risk management

The College is committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and annually review our risks and risk management strategies for child safety and wellbeing, evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of our risk controls and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team, Emergency Management Team, and Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Team have been created to implement, monitor and review risks and risk management strategies to ensure continuous improvement of its child safety systems and practices. Policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

Relevant legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

   1. Failure to disclose offence: Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

   2. Failure to protect offence: This offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

   3. Grooming offence: This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

Related policies

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) guidelines
- CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools
- CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools
- CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools
- CECV NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools
- CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines

College Policies, Procedures and Documents
- Child Safety Code of Conduct

- Child Safety Policy – Student Friendly Version
- [PROTECT Policy: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations](#)
- Grievance Policy
- Student Positive Behaviour Policy

Other Policies, Procedures and General References
- Mercy Education Limited: Child Protection Policy
- Mercy Education Limited: Code of Conduct
- Mercy Education Policy 1.07A - Privacy Policy
- Catholic Education Melbourne Policy 2.20 - Complaints Policy
- Victorian Institute of Teaching: Code of Conduct
- Protect – Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools
- Protect – Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse (Infographic)
- Protect – Recording Your Actions: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse (Template for completion)
- Protect – Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending
- Protect – Responding to Student Sexual Offending (Infographic)
- Protect – Responding to Student Sexual Offending (Template for completion)
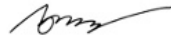- Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

General references
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) - Child Safe Standards
- Department of Family Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection
- Department of Education and Training (DEET)
- Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 2013, Betrayal of Trust
- Ministerial Order No 870 (2015)
- Ministerial Order No 1359 (2021)
- Office of the Children's e-Safety Commission ⌗SEP⌗
- Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships – Department of Education
- Creating Child Safe Institutions – Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2016)
- National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations – Consultation Draft – Australian Human Rights Commission (2017-2018)
- Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection)
- Department of Education and Training

VERSION CONTROL

Date Approved: _____22 June 2022_____

Name: Anna Negro, Principal

Signature: _____

Sponsor: Deputy Principal - Student Development

Date presented at Advisory Council Meeting:

Reviewed by:

- School Committee: Child Safety and Wellbeing Team
- Sub Committee of the College Council: Health and Wellbeing Subcommittee
- Student Leadership House Focus Team: N/A

Person responsible for implementation: Deputy Principal - Student Development

Location checklist: ☑ Staff Handbook   x Student Space   ☑ Parent Portal ☑ Website

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date approved	Next review
1.0	Aug 2016 (creation)	2017
2.0	Aug 2017 (update)	2018
3.0	Aug 2018 (update)	2019
4.0	Jul 2019 (update)	2020
5.0	May 2020 (update)	2021
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7.0	May 2022 (update)	2023