



Sacred Heart
College
GEELONG

CHILD SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT POLICY

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RATIONALE

At Sacred Heart College, our 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.

Catholic schools are entrusted with the holistic education of the child in partnership with families, who are the primary educators of their children. The College holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in 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: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9).

POLICY STATEMENT

As a Catholic learning community in the Mercy tradition, the College is strongly committed to a culture of child safety. This policy outlines the practices and processes aimed at keeping children and young people from harm, and considers the specific requirements of the seven Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#) (Dec 2015). The seven standards are:

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety including through effective leadership arrangements
2. A child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety
3. A child safety code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

The College has **zero tolerance** of child abuse and this is reflected in our policies and procedures in relation to any incident of child abuse and in our compliance with the Child Safety Standards. It is also reflected in our daily operations, staff recruitment and induction processes and staff professional development.

The College is committed to ensuring cultural safety for Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability, and will work within the parameters of the child safe standards in making reasonable efforts to meet this commitment.

This policy applies to all workplace participants at the College. Breaches will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and Clause 13 the Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement (VCMEA) 2018 which may result in disciplinary consequences.

PRINCIPLES

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments 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 at the College:

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Our school 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 protection.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their families.
- All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing 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.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

To assist the school to discharge its Child Safety responsibilities and duty of care, Sacred Heart College commits to taking all reasonable measures to protect their young people from risks of injury that should have been reasonably foreseen. This will include but is not limited to, adhering to an Occupational Health and Safety Program through which potential safety hazards are identified and analysed in terms of the likelihood of an event occurring, and the potential consequences if the event was to occur; following a similar risk based approach to prevent the abuse of any child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the College; and ensuring greater measures and precautions are undertaken to protect younger students and students with disabilities.

The College commits to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people at the College by:

- **Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people**

At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a safe and nurturing culture, the College will actively and continually develop and review all policies, processes and practices, informed by emerging thinking and evidence.

- **Empowering families, children, young people and workplace participants to have a voice and raise concerns**

The College, in partnership with families, will ensure children and young people are engaged and active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their safety. This means that

the views of workplace participants, children, young people and families are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Children and young people are also provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

- **Implementing rigorous risk-management and employment practices**

The College will systematically and continually identify and assess risks to child safety and will eliminate (where possible) or reduce all potential sources of harm. Effective risk management will be embedded in school life through effective, transparent and well-understood policies, procedures and practices. The College will employ highly competent and professional staff who are formed and challenged to maintain the safety of all students. The high-quality of staff appointments will be upheld through rigorous employment and staff review processes and practices. The College will stay abreast of current legislation and will meet legislative requirements to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Government 2016), mandatory reporting, grooming, failure to disclose and failure to protect requirements.

DEFINITIONS

Child: A child or a young person enrolled as a student at the College.

Child abuse includes:

- (a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - i) a sexual offence
 - ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - i) physical violence
 - ii) serious emotional or psychological harm
 - iii) serious neglect of a child. (Ministerial Order No. 870)

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 incidents or allegations of child abuse. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

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. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways including beating, shaking, burning or using weapons (such as belts and paddles). Physical harm may also be caused during student fights. [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. Sexual abuse can involve a wide range of sexual activity and may include fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exploitation through pornography or prostitution. [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)

Child emotional abuse or psychological abuse may occur when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats or the witnessing of family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological harm could

also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours. [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)

Grooming refers to predatory conduct undertaken by an adult (18 years or over) to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. 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 Report: A report made to DHHS Child Protection by a person mandated under the Act, that is based on a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical harm that results from abuse, neglect or harm caused as a result of sexual abuse.

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, teachers, 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: When workplace participants 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](#)

Reportable Allegation: Information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed— (a) reportable conduct; or (b) misconduct that may involve reportable conduct— whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment

Reportable Conduct: Child abuse and neglect by an organisation's employees and volunteers. There are five types of reportable conduct listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.). These are:

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child);
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child);
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child);
- behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm; and
- significant neglect.

School environment: any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- (a) a campus of the school
- (b) online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- (c) other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events). [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)

Sexual offence: occurs when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to the child's age and development. Sexual offences are governed by the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.). Sexual abuse can involve a wide range of sexual activity and

may include fondling, masturbation, oral sex, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exploitation through pornography or prostitution.

Wellbeing Advisory Group: A group consisting of the Principal or nominee, a Deputy Principal and a College Counsellor. The role of the Well-being Advisory Group is to discuss any concerns and observations recorded and to offer support to the workplace participant concerned. The Well-being Advisory Group will, in turn, provide relevant information to the disclosing workplace participant.

Workplace Participants: All College employees, contractors, consultants, ministers of religion, students on placement and volunteers (hereafter referred to as Workplace Participants), both inside and outside of the workplace. [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)

POLICY COMMITMENTS

All students enrolled at Sacred Heart College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children 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, and children with a disability.

The College's commits the following to our students:

- (a) Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all students enrolled at Sacred Heart College.
- (b) Providing students with positive and nurturing experiences.
- (c) Listening to students and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- (d) Taking action to ensure that students and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- (e) Teaching students the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- (f) Seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

The College commits the following to our families:

- (a) Communicating honestly and openly with families about the wellbeing and safety of their daughter(s).
- (b) Engaging with, and listening to, the views of families about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures.
- (c) Transparency in our decision-making with families where it will not compromise the safety of our students.
- (d) Acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- (e) Continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect students from abuse.

The College commits the following to workplace participants:

- (a) Providing workplace participants with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- (b) Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and responsibilities in reporting concerns.
- (c) Listening to all concerns voiced by workplace participants about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- (d) Providing opportunities for workplace participants to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incident of the abuse of a child or young person.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Sacred Heart College, all members of the Mercy Education Board, College Advisory Council and workplace participants have a shared responsibility to understand and contribute to the safety and protection of children ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

Guide to responsibilities of School Leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school 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. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for students to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all workplace participants
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and students based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff and other relevant workplace participants
- ensuring that workplace participants have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child 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. 870.
- ensuring the College takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three criminal offences introduced under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and in line with the [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)

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 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
- 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.

Organisational arrangements

Sacred Heart College has developed guidelines to ensure the implementation of the minimum child safety standards in accordance with the Ministerial Order 870. This will be reviewed annually.

The College has appointed Mrs Catherine Gulli, Acting Deputy Principal – Student Development as the College's Child Safety Officer. The Child Safety Officer is available to answer any questions that an individual may have with respect to our Child Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program. The Child Safety 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.

EXPECTATIONS OF OUR WORKPLACE PARTICIPANTS REGARDING THE COLLEGE'S CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

The College expects workplace participants to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the College. Workplace participants must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements. The College has 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 workplace participants through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. All workplace participants will be familiar with and regularly reminded of the important role they play in the protection of children and young people.

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 on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their families, raise with us.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING

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.) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements. The College acknowledges and adheres to its obligations in relation to reporting and responding and adheres to the following procedures for reporting and responding:

Mandatory Reporting

- Child Protection Obligations – SHC Reporting Procedures (Appendix 1)
- [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
 - [PROTECT: Recording Your Actions: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
 - [PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: Template for all Victorian Schools](#)

When a workplace participant forms a reasonable belief that a child needs protection or a criminal offence has been committed, they must follow the steps outlined in the above procedure. The College's Safety Officer will provide guidance.

Reportable Conduct

- Child Protection Obligations – SHC Reporting Procedures (Appendix 1)
- [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
 - [PROTECT: Recording Your Actions: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)

Where the College or a workplace participant forms a belief that a workplace participant is committing a reportable offence, they must follow the steps outlined in the above procedure. The Principal or delegate will provide guidance. Where the alleged reportable conduct relates to the Principal, the reporter must direct the matter to Catholic Education Melbourne's Employee Relations Unit on (03) 9267 0341 in the first instance.

Our College's Child Protection Obligations – SHC Reporting Procedures (Appendix 1) sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at the College is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report. The College records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements.

The Child Protection Obligations – SHC Reporting Procedures (Appendix 1) 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
- 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 criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Our College has internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following College policies:

- Complaints Resolution Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy

SCREENING AND RECRUITMENT OF WORKPLACE PARTICIPANTS

The College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety 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 school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy. Our practices in workplace participants are supported by:

- CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools
- CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Volunteers in Catholic Schools
- CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- 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 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 have 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 staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

CHILD SAFETY – EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR WORKPLACE PARTICIPANTS

The College provides relevant workplace participants with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety 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.

As part of the College's professional learning program, employees are required to complete a selection of training modules on child safety and are supported by additional child safety training annually. Workplace participants are supported and supervised to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child protection.

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 periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

It is the responsibility of the College Leadership Team to regularly review our Child Safety implementation guidelines and processes to ensure that they continue to achieve intended goals and needs and that the College is meeting its legal and regulatory obligations relating to child protection.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) Three criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:
 - (a) 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.
 - (b) Failure to protect offence: The 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.
 - (c) 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, PROCEDURES AND REFERENCES

Catholic Education Melbourne Policies, Procedures and References

2.19 Child Protection – Reporting Obligations YES
2.19a Police and DHHS Interview Protocols YES
2.20 Complaints Policy YES
2.26 Pastoral Care of Students YES
2.30 Sexual Orientation
2.31 Pastoral Care for Students Experiencing Gender Dysphoria
CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines
CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety
Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement (VCEMEA) 2018
PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools
CECV Reportable Conduct Scheme
CECV Statement of Principles Regarding Catholic Education
CECV Addressing the Principles of Inclusion - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children guide
CECV Addressing the Principles of Inclusion - Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds
CECV Addressing the Principles of Inclusion - Children with Disabilities
CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools
CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Volunteers in Catholic Schools
CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools

College Policies, Procedures and Documents

Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct
Child Safety Policy – Student Friendly Version
Child Protection Obligations – SHC Reporting Procedures (Appendix 1)

Other Policies, Procedures and General References

- Mercy Education Limited: Code of Conduct
- 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)

General references

- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) - Child Safe Standards
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) 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)
- Office of the Children's e-Safety Commission
- 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

BREACH OF POLICY

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, the College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2018* (VCEMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact Mercy Education. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Where any **other workplace participant or member of the school community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the College will take appropriate action, including in accordance with relevant legislation and any policies and/or documents referred to or referenced in this policy. The College will also contact Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

DOCUMENT CONTROL

The College is committed to continuous improvement of its child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

Date Approved: _____

Name: Anna Negro

Signature: _____

Sponsor: Deputy Principal - Student Development

Date Presented at Council Meeting: _____

Person Responsible for Implementation: Deputy Principal – Student Development

Last Amended: March 2019

Next Review Date: March 2020

Location Checklist: Staff Handbook Students Parent Portal Website

APPENDIX 1: CHILD PROTECTION OBLIGATIONS - SHC REPORTING PROCEDURES

This procedure is to be read in conjunction with the Child Safety Policy.

College Child Safety Officer: Mrs Catherine Gulli, Acting Deputy Principal – Student Development.

In the absence of the Child Safety Officer, the Principal is to be consulted.

Workplace Participant: All College employees, contractors, consultants, students on placement, volunteers and allied health practitioners (hereafter referred to as Workplace Participants), both inside and outside of the workplace.

Mandatory Reporting Procedures

When a workplace participant forms a reasonable belief that a child needs protection or a criminal offence has been committed, they must follow the steps outlined below. The College's Child Safety Officer will provide guidance or in the absence of the Child Safety Officer, the Principal.

Step 1:

- Refer to [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#) – or – [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- Where necessary, ensure the child or young person's immediate safety and preserve evidence
- Take note of any actions taken
- Notify the College Child Safety Officer as soon as possible

Step 2:

Reporting will be undertaken with the Child Safety Officer. Steps will be strictly adhered to in accordance with the [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#) – or - [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#) and their associated templates:

- [PROTECT: Recording Your Actions: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- [PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: Template for all Victorian Schools](#)

Reportable Conduct Procedures

Where the College or a workplace participant forms a belief that a workplace participant is committing a reportable offence, they must follow the steps outlined below. The College's Child Safety Officer will provide guidance or in the absence of the Child Safety Officer, the Principal. Where the alleged reportable conduct relates to the Principal, the reporter must direct the matter to Catholic Education Melbourne's Employee Relations Unit on (03) 9267 0341 in the first instance.

Step 1:

- Refer to [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
- Where necessary, ensure the child or young person's immediate safety and preserve evidence
- Take note of any actions taken
- Notify the Child Safety Officer as soon as possible

Step 2:

- Reporting will be undertaken with the Child Safety Officer. Steps will be strictly adhered to in accordance with the [*PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools*](#) and [*PROTECT: Recording Your Actions: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools*](#).