

Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

Context

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Sacred Heart College Geelong against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

All workplace participants, clergy and board/school council members at Sacred Heart College Geelong are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

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

Acceptable behaviours

All workplace participants, clergy and board/school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the College's Child Safety and Empowerment Policy and upholding the CECVs Commitment Statement to Child Safety, which the College adopts, at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- adhering to the Student Positive Behaviour Policy
- treating everyone in the College community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that safety measures are in place when adults are left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal or Deputy Principal – Student Development (designated Child Safety Officers), or member of the Leadership Team and ensure any allegation of physical or sexual abuse is reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal or Deputy Principal – Student Development, or member of the Leadership Team
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe and follow relevant College procedures for reporting allegations or concerns, including to external bodies where required
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant College activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.



Unacceptable behaviours

All workplace participants, clergy and board/school council members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- use inappropriate language or engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without school leadership's or the child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lesson or sport coaching; accidental contact such as seeing people in the street is appropriate)
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc) or their family (unless necessary, for example by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a student or their family
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- possess, use/consume or be under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol when working with or in the presence of children
- Workplace participants must also avoid impressing their personal views on children in respect to cultures, race or sexuality.

School Counsellors, Social Workers, Psychologists and College Pastoral Workers:

In their dealings with students, School Counsellors, Social Workers, Psychologists and Pastoral Care Workers should also consider their professional obligations as set out in the code of ethics, conduct or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of the following non-exhaustive list:

- The Australian Psychological Society
- The Australian Association of Social Workers
- National School Chaplaincy Programme
- Australian Counselling Association

The professional obligations of School Counsellors, Psychologists, Social Workers and Pastoral Care Workers as set out in the professional codes to which they are bound are overridden by their obligations as employees of the College, as noted in clause 25.3 of Independent Schools Council of Australia and National Catholic Education Commission's Privacy Compliance Manual.



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Sports and Recreation

Workplace participants, coaches, parents and community members involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should also adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and not abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be "good sports"
- if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sport or other recreational activity then explain the reason for the contact and ask for the student's permission
- avoid, where possible, situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle

First Aid Officers

First Aid Officers have a responsibility for maintaining their professional and personal boundaries when providing care to an individual. The care provided by First Aid Officers is likely to involve personal physical contact with a student, such as touching and holding. In particular, First Aid Officers are expected to:

- practice in accordance with the standards of their profession
- respect the dignity, culture, ethnicity, values and beliefs of people receiving care and treatment
- treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as private and confidential
- promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in their relationship with those in their care

Acknowledgement

By observing this code of conduct, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Principal, member of the College Leadership Team or Human Resources. If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

In electronically signing this document, you are confirming that you agree to abide by the Sacred Heart College Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct.



