



Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy

1. Purpose

St Catherine's School is committed to being a Child Safe organisation and embedding a child safe culture into our practices and processes to ensure that all children who attend the School are safe at all times. All children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability sexual orientation, or family or social background have equal rights to protection from abuse. St Catherine's School is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability.

St Catherine's School recognises that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse's Final Report identified specific groups of students being at heightened risk, including Boarders and International Students. Consistent with the requirements of the National Code 20189, VRQA Guidelines, and their intersection with the Child Safe Standards, the School is committed to mitigating risk for all students, with specific policy addressing the needs of these students.

St Catherine's School has zero tolerance for child abuse and all staff employed by St Catherine's School are responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and to report information about suspected child abuse.

This policy exists to provide a framework to ensure that St Catherine's School is able to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken so that students are safe from sexual abuse and can feel safe at all times.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct policy outlines a commitment by the School to ensure that all staff, volunteers and members of School Council observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children as noted below. All such personnel will be required to sign a copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct to acknowledge they have read and understood it, and agree to abide by it.

Failure to observe the Child Safety Code of Conduct is considered misconduct and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension while matters are investigated and could ultimately result in dismissal.

In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, the School will report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any conduct deemed to have violated its Codes of Conduct and Ethics. The School will report to the police all instances in which a breach of the law has, or may have, occurred.

2. Scope

The Child Safety Code of Conduct policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and members of School Council of St Catherine's School.

3. Definitions

Aboriginal child: A person under the age of 18 who:

- is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and
- is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.

Child abuse: For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:

- physical violence
- sexual offences
- serious emotional or psychological abuse
- serious neglect.



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Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds: A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.

Child: A person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child safety: In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.

Child safe organisation: In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.

Cultural competency: A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Cultural abuse: Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children: The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.

4. Policy Statement

All staff, volunteers and School Council members of St Catherine's School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to the St Catherine's School Child Safe Policy at all times / upholding St Catherine's School's statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all time
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone 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
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal 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 of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to one of the St Catherine's School Child Safety Officers or the Principal, and ensure any allegation be reported to the police or Child Protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to St Catherine's School Child Safety Officers or the Principal
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- 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. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children



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- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate)
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters)
- photograph students or visiting students unless within the context of a school program. (Photographs should be uploaded only to the Portal and immediately deleted from personal devices.)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to one of the St Catherine's School Child Safety Officers or the Principal.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.



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Acceptance of Code of Conduct

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct and to report any Child Safety Concerns to the Principal or a nominated Child Safety Officer:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Breach of Policy

Breach of this Policy shall be considered either misconduct, serious misconduct or gross misconduct (depending on the circumstances) and may result in disciplinary action which may lead to termination of employment.

If staff are aware of any potential breaches of policy that are advised to speak with either the Principal, Head of Junior School and ELC, Director of Business or the Human Resources Manager.

5. Responsibility

All St Catherine's staff, volunteers and members of School Council must abide by the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct

If clarification of this policy or related policies is required, staff should discuss the matter with the Human Resources Manager.

6. Compliance requirements

Federal

Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005

Victorian

Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe) Act 2015 (Vic)

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment Act 2015 (Vic)

7. Associated Documents

- Child Safety Policy
- St Catherine's School Staff Code of Conduct
- St Catherine's School Professional Guidelines for Teaching Staff
- The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- Reportable Conduct Scheme