



St Catherine's School



Child Safe Strategy

VERSION 3

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From the Principal

A message from our Principal, Mrs Michelle Carroll

The protection of children and young persons is the responsibility of everyone who works at St Catherine's School, including all staff, contractors, parents and volunteers. We all share responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children.

St Catherine's has a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and keeping them safe at all times. St Catherine's School and the St Catherine's School Council are committed to implementing the following minimum child safe standards:

- a) Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety;
- b) A Child Safe Policy
- c) A Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- d) Screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse;
- e) Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
- f) Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse; and
- g) Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment.

The Child Safe Standards fall under the Ministerial Order 870 – *Managing the risk of child abuse in schools* which were implemented from August 1, 2016. All Victorian schools are required to operate within a child-safe environment; St Catherine's has met all required standards for child safety and will continue to embed these important policies and practices within our School.

This Child Safe Strategy is a comprehensive and overarching document that provides an overview of the key elements of St Catherine's School's approach to creating a child safe organisation and to embed child safe practices into our School culture. It is a dynamic, multifaceted and ongoing developmental process of learning, monitoring and reviewing. St Catherine's School will incorporate annual review information, compliance with Standards, training, policy updates and mandatory reporting requirements in the School's annual report.

St Catherine's School Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

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 providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

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

Background to the Child Safe Standards

The Betrayal of Trust report

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p.6) documented that in April 2012, the Victorian government initiated an inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and other non-government organisations. The inquiry's final report, *Betrayal of Trust*, made a number of recommendations that have been acted on by Victorian governments. These included:

- **Criminal law reform** – offences relating to grooming, failure to protect and failure to disclose.
- **Creating child safe organisations** – mandatory child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme. The standards are compulsory for all organisations working with children. The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires centralised reporting of abuse allegations to the Commission for Children & Young People.
- **Civil law reform** – removal of the time limit on legal action. Legislation has removed the previous 12-year timeframe in which victims (including family members) needed to have commenced civil legal action for damages due to wrongful death (brought by dependants of a deceased victim) or personal injury resulting from child abuse. This reform applies to both past and future cases of child abuse.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

A cornerstone of the development of universal child safe procedures is the rights that are outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC). CROC specifically recognises that children have a right to be protected from physical and mental harm and neglect and to be able to enjoy the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

The Charter of Human Rights

Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) outlines the basic human rights of all people. It was introduced in Victoria through the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) has investigated how institutions or organisations, such as schools, churches, sports clubs and government organisations, have responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse.

The Royal Commission's research and recommendations on best practice aim to provide guidance to protect against the occurrence of child sexual abuse and to respond appropriately when any allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse occur, including holding perpetrators to account and providing justice to victims.

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Following the release of the *Betrayal of Trust* report the Victorian Government acknowledged that 'while the majority of children are safe in organisations, there are inadequate and inconsistent approaches to child safety in organisations across Victoria. It provided 15 recommendations, including the introduction of the Child Safe Standards in Victoria, to ensure child safe environments in organisations that work with children'. (Department of Human Services, 2015)

The Victorian Government introduced the compulsory minimum standards that apply to organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from abuse. The Child Safe Standards were passed by the Victorian Parliament on 26 November 2015. The Child Safe Standards apply to organisations from 1 January 2016. The Victorian Education Minister issued a Ministerial Order No.870 on 7 January 2016, that required all Victorian Non-Government Schools to comply with the Ministerial Order from 1 August 2016, as a requirement of registration.

At the commencement of 2016, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) provided a Child Safe Readiness Tool which allowed the School to assess their current level of readiness to comply with the new requirements. St Catherine's School completed the tool and was able to identify areas to be actioned in preparation for compliance with the Ministerial Order requirements. The School has acted on the key areas highlighted during the completion of the readiness tool and these actions have been included in this Child Safe Plan.

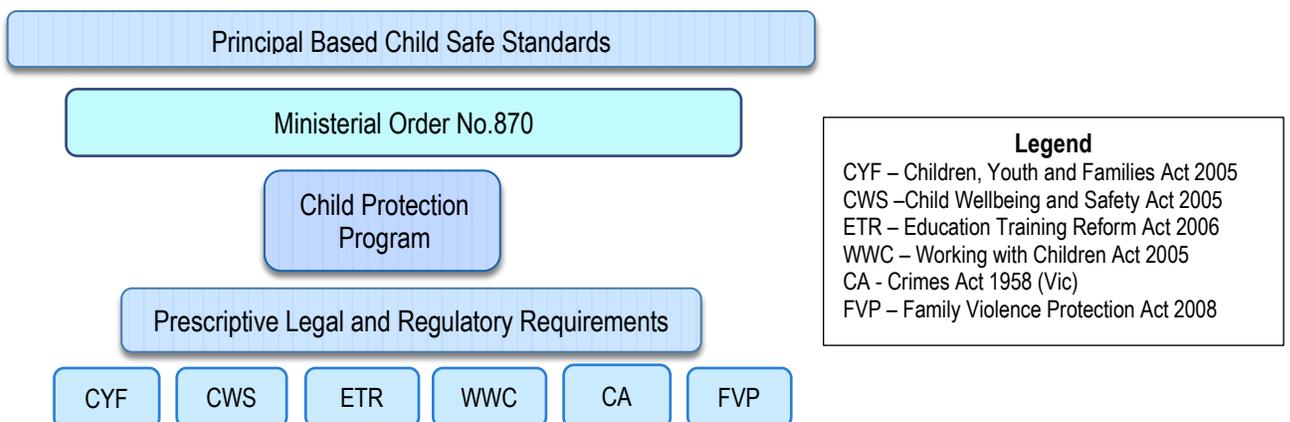
To comply with the compulsory Child Safe Standards, the School must include the following principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, the School must have:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements
2. a Child Safe Policy
3. a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. processes 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.

Victoria's Child Protection Framework Overview



Child Safety and Diversity

St Catherine's School respects cultural differences and variations in child rearing practices due to a family's personal, cultural or religious beliefs. Cultural diversity refers to people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs or views.

The Royal Commission advises that 'some children are more vulnerable to abuse, based on various factors including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and prior abuse or neglect'.

Respecting diversity means:

- valuing and respecting people's beliefs;
- building responsive relationships;
- communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs;
- examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs and respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another;
- acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance.

Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal Children

A child safe organisation respects cultural differences and variations in child rearing practices due to a family's personal, cultural or religious beliefs. The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) (2015, p.12) defined cultural diversity as 'people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs of views'. The CCYP defines a child safe organisation as one that recognises that these differences do not reduce a child's right to be safe or the organisation's responsibility to protect the child from harm'.

Every Aboriginal person and every Aboriginal child needs to feel that their sense of self and their identity is 'valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them'. Cultural identity and safety is fundamental to a child's overall wellbeing. It affects how the child sees themselves in relation to others and how the environment impacts upon their sense of safety.

To create a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture, St Catherine's School ensures that the Aboriginal flag is flown each day. An acknowledgement of Traditional Owners also occurs at the commencement of each assembly and the School features Aboriginal art around the campus.

Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

The Child Safe Standards require organisations to consider cultural safety of culturally and/or linguistically diverse children across the implementation of all the standards. The Victorian community includes people of many backgrounds, countries and languages, including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others. These families have experienced varied journeys. Some have experienced trauma, violence and harm. Others have lost the support of their extended family.

The School will promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

- ensuring the School clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination;
- being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds;
- recognising times of importance to different cultures;
- ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of recognition and artwork;
- employing staff that are representative of the local community;
- actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved;
- asking about the best way to provide information to children and families
- issuing International Students with Student Safety cards as part of their Orientation

Promoting the safety of children with a disability

St Catherine's School acknowledges that people with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community and to be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities. People with a disability have the same rights as other members of the community to live free from abuse. The Child Safe Standards require the School to consider the safety of children with a disability across the implementation of all the standards.

Education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (the Act). The Standards give students, and prospective students with a disability, the right to education and training opportunities on the same basis as students without a disability.

Strategies that promote understanding and acceptance of diversity, including disability, and policies for identifying risks and responding to concerns are a vital component of a child safe organisation. An inclusive environment is beneficial to all, both people with, and without additional needs. Children with a disability can be vulnerable to abuse. Reasons for this include:

- communication difficulties;
- personal care requirements;
- limited provision of developmentally appropriate sexual and relationship information;
- social isolation.

The Commission for Children and Young People has highlighted a range of strategies that schools can implement to promote the safety of children with a disability. St Catherine's School can promote the safety of children with a disability by:

- acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure our risk assessment process considers their needs;
- ensuring our School clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children;
- making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties;
- being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability;
- supporting staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability
- thinking about how we can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families.

Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

The St Catherine's School Council has the responsibility to embed a culture of child safety and ensure that policies and procedures demonstrate zero tolerance of child abuse in the School.

Ministerial Order requirements:

The School governing authority must:

- a) Develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school;
- b) Allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
- c) Inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;
- d) Put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and
- e) Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

Action Completed to meet the Ministerial Order requirements

a) Develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at St Catherine's School

Creating a culture of child safety is vital to lowering the risk of harm to children. Child abuse must be acknowledged, expectations of behaviour must be clearly explained and accepted, and strategies must be in place. St Catherine's School is committed to child safety and is expected that all staff, volunteers and carers will support the School in achieving this objective.

In response to the Ministerial Order the School has:

- Introduced a Child Safe Policy
- Introduced a Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Delivered Child Safety Staff Training
- Revised the School's Recruitment and Induction processes
- Conducted a Child Safe Risk Assessment (*Appendix 1: Child Safe*)
- Implemented a Child Safe Action Plan (*Appendix 6: Child Safe Action Plan*)

b) Allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies

The School's Child Safety Policy outlines the key roles and responsibilities for achieving the Child Safe Strategies. However there are staff with delegated responsibilities for aspects of the School's Child Safe Strategy including:

The Principal

The Principal of St Catherine's School is responsible for:

- dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse
- ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, School policies and procedures and the School's Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
- ensuring that all adults within the School community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child, in accordance with these policies and procedures
- ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

Staff/Volunteers/Contractors

All staff/volunteers/contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, the Child Safety Policy and procedures in relation to child protection and comply with all requirements;
- report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to relevant authorities (such as the police and/or state based child protection services) and fulfill their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to one of the School's Child Safety Officers or the Principal; and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

c) Inform the School Community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities

St Catherine's School will communicate the Child Safe Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct and the Child Safe Strategy through the School's website, the Parent Portal, the Blue Ribbon e-Newsletter and other key communication channels throughout the School.

d) Put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices;

The School's Child Safe Strategy will be a key resource for the School to communicate to the School community the strategies that are being implemented to create and develop a Child Safe culture at St Catherine's School.

e) Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies

The Senior Leadership Team review the Child Safe Plan twice per year and conduct the Child Safe Risk Assessment at the commencement of each School year and prior to the commencement of Term 3. This will ensure the School maintains its commitment to a Child Safe environment.

Standard 2: A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The School's policies and procedures provide the foundation for and commitment to child safety in the School.

Ministerial Order requirements:

The School governing authority must ensure that the School has a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

- a) The values and principles that will guide the School in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- b) The actions the School proposes to take to:
 - i. Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the School's adherence to its child safety policy or statement of commitment
 - ii. Support, encourage and enable School staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
 - iii. Support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse

The school governing authority must inform the school community about the policy or statement, and make the policy or statement publicly available

Action taken to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

St Catherine's School has developed a Child Safe Policy (*Appendix 2: Child Safety Policy*) that outlines the School's commitment to Child Safety. The Child Safe policy applies to all staff members, volunteers, students aged 18 years and over, School Council members and the School parent community. The Child Safe Policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of the School's approach to child safety. The policy outlines the processes for reporting concerns and allegations and refers people to where these processes can be found.

The School Induction process ensures that all new staff are taken through the School's Child Safe Policy.

The policy was devised by members of the Senior Leadership team, representing all areas of the School, and has been endorsed by the School Council.

The Policy is published on the School website, the mystcatherine's Staff and Parent Portals and is provided to staff as part of the Induction process. The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Standard 3: A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

All School staff must be covered by a Code of Conduct, which addresses child safety. Schools should recognise and consider existing professional codes of conduct when developing child safety codes of conduct.

Ministerial Order requirements:

The School governing authority must develop, endorse, and make publicly available a code of conduct that:

- a) Has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment;
- b) Sets standards about the ways in which the School staff are expected to behave with children;
- c) Takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff) and the needs of all children; and
- d) Is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

Action taken to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

St Catherine's School has a Child Safety Code of Conduct (Appendix 3). The Child Safety Code of Conduct was developed by the Senior Leadership team and is communicated to staff and volunteers via the School website, Parent and Staff Portals and is included in the Induction process for staff and volunteers. The School has undertaken training sessions to educate staff in the Code of Conduct and ensure they are familiar with the expectations outlined within the document.

The St Catherine's School Child Safety Code of Conduct 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 behavior, towards and in the company of children. The Child Safe Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

The School Induction process ensures that all new staff are taken through the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Schools must ensure that recruitment processes are in place to manage and reduce the risk of child abuse. In addition, processes must be in place to ensure that there are appropriate staff induction programs, staff professional development and staff supervision arrangements to ensure a child safe environment.

Ministerial Order requirements:

The school governing authority must develop, endorse, and make publicly available a code of conduct that:

1. Subject to the requirements of the ETR Act, the school governing authority must ensure that the school implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this clause.
2. Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
 - a) the jobs requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
 - b) the job's occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.
3. All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed of the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).
4. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
 - a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
 - b) Proof of personal identify and any professional or other qualifications;
 - c) The person's history of work involving children; and
 - d) References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
5. The School need not comply with the requirements in clause (4) if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in clauses (4) (a) to (4) (d) about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
6. The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
 - a) The induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work; and
 - b) Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child-connected work.
7. The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Action taken to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

St Catherine's School is committed to following fair and just recruitment standards in the selection of staff or volunteers however our primary consideration is the safety and wellbeing of children The School has developed Recruitment and Selection guidelines that outline the processes the School will follow in its recruitment of staff.

Position descriptions

St Catherine's School has clear position descriptions that outline the role and responsibilities of each position, particularly when they involve working closely with children. The School's position descriptions include a clear outline of

the role and outline the School's expectation that staff must provide a child safe environment. The position description outlines:

- the organisational context
- duties and tasks of the role
- qualifications, experience and attributes a person must have
- the level of responsibility and supervision associated with the position

Promotion of child safety in recruitment advertisements

St Catherine's School recruitment advertisements state that the School is committed to child safety. This statement is included in all advertisements, position descriptions and employment contracts. The Employment page on our website outlines the School's commitment to Child Safe recruitment standards.

Assessment of potential staff or volunteers

The School conducts face to face interviews with applicants, where possible, to ensure their suitability to work within the School.

In the recruitment of new staff or volunteers, the School assesses the following in relation to individual applicants;

- motivation to work with children (personal and/or professional)
- relevant and verifiable experience
- understanding of children's physical and emotional needs
- understanding of professional boundaries
- communication skills
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness, and non-discrimination)
- responses from referees.

Reference Checking

The School's Recruitment Selection guidelines outline the School's processes for reference checking. The School recognises that screening potential staff and volunteers is essential and reference checks must occur for all potential employees, prior to an offer of employment being made.

Reference checks should address the following:

- how long the applicant and referee worked together
- whether the referee was the applicant's direct supervisor
- the specifics of the role previously and/or currently held by the applicant
- whether the referee would employ the applicant again
- whether the referee has directly observed the applicant engaging in child related work
- whether the referee has any concerns about the applicant engaging in child related work
- whether the referee is comfortable knowing that the applicant might sometimes be working alone with children
- the applicant's ability to perform the key skills and abilities required by the role.

Staff Induction Program

All Staff must complete the School's Induction Program upon their commencement. This involves completion of the Induction Checklist that covers the School's commitment to Child Safety, the School's Code of Conduct, and the School's Child Safe Policy. Staff will be instructed on the School's processes for reporting child safety concerns.

Policies

The School has updated the following policies in order to meet the Ministerial Order 870:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Induction Policy
- Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy

The School has also created a Child Safety Policy to assist us to fulfill our commitment to a Child Safe environment.

Privacy

The School acknowledges that criminal histories, outcomes of professional disciplinary proceedings and any other information considered during background checking may include sensitive personal information. This information will be treated with respect for the privacy of all individuals. This information is restricted to the access of the recruitment panel for the particular position being recruited. Information will be stored in a confidential and secure manner at all times.

Compliance checks prior to commencement

The School's Recruitment and Selection guidelines outline the School's expectations in relation to Compliance checks prior to commencement.

All Teaching staff employed at St Catherine's School must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

All General Staff must provide evidence of a Working with Children Check and Police Record Check prior to commencement.

The School utilises the online compliance system BlueQ to record staff compliance checks, BlueQ runs weekly crosschecks with the Department of Justice database and the Victorian Institute of Teaching database to ensure continued compliance and the HR Manager monitors the system weekly to ensure all staff are compliant.

Working with Children Check

The Working with Children Check helps protect children from physical and sexual harm. It does this by screening people's criminal records and professional conduct and preventing people who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them.

A Working with Children Check is valid for five years. It is transferrable between employers or volunteer organisations, as it remains the property of the individual. An exception to this is if someone is moving from a volunteer to an employee position, as you are not permitted use a volunteer card to engage in paid work.

A Working with Children Check differs from a police check as cardholders are monitored on an ongoing basis for any new relevant offences or adverse professional conduct reports from prescribed professional bodies. New charges, convictions or findings relevant to the Working with Children Check will instigate a re-assessment of the person's eligibility to hold a card.

The School acknowledges that a Working with Children Check is just a starting point and does not assess someone's suitability to work with or care for children in a particular role. It is the School's responsibility to assess if a worker is suitable to work with children and to monitor their behaviour around children.

What is checked?

The Working with Children Check screens the person's lifelong criminal history records, from Victoria Police, police in other Australian states and territories, and the Australian Federal Police.

Individuals are screened for sexual, violent and drug offences and adverse professional conduct reports made by agencies listed in the Act.

Who needs a Working with Children Check?

Anyone who intends to do child-related work, and who does not qualify for an exemption, needs a Working with Children Check. A list of occupational fields who require Working with Children Checks is provided in *Appendix 4: Working with Children Check occupational fields*.

The Working with Children Act includes some exemptions, Some examples are:

- a person who is under the age of 18 years
- a parent volunteering in an activity in which their child participates (please note that St Catherine's School does not accept this minimum standard but requires all parent volunteers in the ELC to have a current WWC Check.
-

The complete list of exemptions is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website - <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>.

To keep the children at St Catherine's School safe, the School must know:

- that everyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children has a Working with Children Check
- if applicants are legally permitted to work while their application is processed (people with serious sexual, violent or drug offences, or who are subject to orders listed under Schedule 3 of the Working with Children Act cannot work with children while their applications are assessed)
- when a staff member's Working with Children Checks expires
- what to do if one of our staff members:
 - has their Working with Children Check card suspended or revoked
 - is issued with an Interim Negative Notice
 - fails the Working with Children Check and is issued with a Negative Notice.

In addition to being aware of these legal obligations, the School must also:

- keep a record of the Working with Children Check receipt or card number of all staff members doing child-related work in your organisation. This information is recorded on the School's Synergetic database on each staff member's electronic profile
- look carefully at staff members' Working with Children Check cards and record the number, expiry date and card type ('E' for paid employees or 'V' for volunteers)
- keep and secure all correspondence you receive from the Department of Justice and Regulation about your staff members'
- make sure staff members notify the Department of Justice and Regulation within 21 days of commencing child-related work with your organisation and whenever their personal and contact details change

Police checks

The School acknowledges that a Police Check differs from a Working with Children Check. A Police Check is not an assessment by a government agency. It is only a list, at a given point in time, of the offences a person has committed. The School requires that all employees undertake a Police Record Check prior to the commencement of employment and the School also reserves the right to request any member of staff to obtain a Police Record check at any point in time, as per the terms and conditions specified in the staff member's contract of employment.

Ongoing training and professional development

St Catherine's School will provide ongoing training to staff to ensure they understand their obligations and expectations to ensure a Child Safe environment.

All new staff will undertake training to ensure they understand their expectations.

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

The School's policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse must enable individuals to take the appropriate course of action to protect the safety of students.

Ministerial Order requirements:

The School governing authority must ensure that the School has a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that details:

1. The school governing authority must have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with this clause and other legal obligations
2. The school governing authority must ensure that the procedure is:
 - a. sensitive to the diversity characteristics of the school community
 - b. made publicly available; and
 - c. accessible to children, school staff and the wider community
3. The procedure must:
 - a. cover all forms of 'child abuse' as defined in the ETR Act;
 - b. apply to allegations or disclosure of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment
 - c. identify the positions of the person or persons responsible for:
 - i. promptly managing the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously;
 - ii. responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse;
 - iii. monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure; and
 - iv. managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if the person allocated responsibility under clause (3)(c)(i) cannot perform his or her role;
 - d. include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse;
 - e. Clearly describe the actions the school will take to respond to an allegation of child abuse, including actions to:
 - i. inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including but not limited to mandatory reporting);
 - ii. protect any child connected to the child abuse until the allegation is resolved; and
 - iii. make, secure, and retain records of the allegations of child abuse and the school's response to it.
4. The procedure must not:
 - a. Prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
 - b. State or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation
 - c. Require staff to make a judgement about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
 - d. Prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosures of child abuse.

Action taken to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

St Catherine's School has a Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy that outlines the procedure for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with the Ministerial Order and other legal obligations, including criminal offences regarding grooming, failure to disclose and failure to report.

This policy, in conjunction with the Child Safe Policy and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse, applies to all staff involved in child-connected work at St Catherine's School, including outside of school hours.

The policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse at St Catherine's School enable individuals to take the appropriate course of action to protect the safety of students.

Guidelines for Making a Report of Suspected Child Abuse

The following guidelines exist to guide staff in making a report.

What concerns should be reported?

Concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children can range from an uncomfortable feeling through to a direct observation or a disclosure by a child. People are encouraged to speak to someone and be proactive rather than wait until it is too late. Staff and volunteers need to be aware of their duty of care to children and of their legal responsibilities.

Examples of child safety concerns include:

- concerns about a physical environment that may pose a risk to children (this includes health and hygiene issues)
- inappropriate or special relationships developing between staff or volunteers and children
- inadequate staff-child supervision ratios
- breaches of the Code of Conduct, particularly if they are persistent
- feelings of discomfort about interactions between a staff member or volunteer and a child
- suspicions or beliefs that children are at risk of harm
- observations of concerning changes in behaviour
- children's disclosures of abuse or harm, which must be reported to Child Protection or the police.

When should concerns be reported to the police?

Physical or sexual abuse of children is a crime and must be reported to the police.

When should concerns be reported to Child Protection?

Anyone may make a report to Child Protection if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection.

Child Protection is part of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. It provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children and young people from significant harm caused by abuse or neglect within the family. It also aims to ensure that children and young people receive services to deal with the impact of abuse and neglect on their wellbeing and development. It is the Child Protection practitioner's job to investigate significant harm.

How to make a report

To make a report of child abuse, contact your regional Child Protection office as soon as possible. Staff are encouraged to notify either the Principal or one of the School's Child Safety Officers prior to making the report so the School can provide support to the staff member and ensure the safety of the child(ren) involved.

Staff are advised to use the Child Safety Incident report (*Appendix 5: Child safety incident report*) and forward a copy to either the Principal or one of the School's nominated Child Safety Officers.

Contact numbers are provided in the Resources section of this document. After hours notifications can be made by calling 13 1278.

Mandatory reporting

Although everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse, some professionals are legally required to make a report to Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

As an example, doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers and school principals, police, youth workers, social workers and psychologists are mandatory reporters under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.

As long as a report is made in good faith, the report is not unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics and the reporter cannot be held legally liable. Confidentiality is provided for reporters in the Children, Youth and Families Act, and prevents the disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with the legislation, except in very specific circumstances.

Criminal offences

Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years

Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposely create relationships with victims, their families or carers in order to create a situation where abuse can occur. The grooming offence applies where a person over 18 years of age communicates, by words or conduct, online or face-to-face, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for a child, with the intention of later sexual activity with a child.

Failure to disclose

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age has an obligation to report that information to police, unless they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing, or exemptions apply. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

Failure to protect

The failure to protect offence commenced on 1 July 2015 and applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but did not act to protect the child.

Maintain accurate and secure records

St Catherine's School maintains records of any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct and stores these records in accordance with security and privacy requirements.

Child Safety Officers

St Catherine's School has appointed the following staff to the position of Child Safety Officers:

- Ms Sarah Bethune Head of ELC
- Mrs Karen McCardle, Head of Junior School
- Ms Merran O'Connor, Director of Student Wellbeing
- Ms Amelia King, School Counsellor

Reporting a Child Safety Concern

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------|---------------------------|
| Who can report? | Parent | Child | Staff member or volunteer |
| What to report? | Any child safety concerns, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• disclosure of abuse or harm• allegation, suspicion or observation• breach of Code of Conduct• environmental safety issues | | |
| | Call 000 if child is in immediate danger | | |
| How? | Face to face verbal report, letter email, telephone call meeting | | |
| Who to? | Child Safety Officer or a member of Senior Leadership Team | | |
| What happens next? | The Child Safety Officer or a member of Senior Leadership Team will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer• initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required)• decide in consultation with the Principal and in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care whether the matter should/must be reported to the police and/or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible• determine whether an allegation which applies to an employee or volunteer meets the "Reputable Allegation Criteria"• if deemed to meet the Reputable Criteria, the Principal will abide by the "Reportable Conduct" obligations within 3 working days. | | |
| Outcome | Investigation; outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child and where appropriate the Commission for Children and Young People notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures updated where necessary. | | |

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

The School governing authority must develop, implement, monitor and evaluate risk management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

Ministerial Order requirements:

1. The school governing authority must develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environments.
2. The school's risk management strategies regarding child safety must identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.
3. If the school governing authority identifies risks of those risks and specify the actions(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls)
4. As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school governing authority must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls
5. At least annually, the school governing authority must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:
 - a. individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
 - b. child abuse risks in the school environment; and
 - c. the school's current child safety standards.

Action taken to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

Child Safety Action Plan

As part of the School's response to the Ministerial Order the School has developed a Child Safety Action Plan (refer Appendix 6) that assesses our progress towards meeting the Child Safe Standards. The Action Plan is designed to assist the School to implement a Child Safe Culture and provide a Child Safe environment.

Risk Management for Trips, Camps and Excursions

St Catherine's School provides many opportunities to students to extend their learning by travelling overseas and within Australia. St Catherine's School has a Risk Management checklist that must be completed prior to all Trips, Camps and Excursions. Any potential risks are identified and appropriate risk control methods are implemented to mitigate or eliminate the risk. The document is presented to the Internal Risk Committee.

The School also requires that organisations such as The Outdoor Education Group (OEG) provide the School with a copy of their Child Safety Policy (*Refer Appendix 6: Outdoor Education Group Child Safety Policy*).

Child Safe Risk Management Assessment

St Catherine's School has a duty of care to protect all students. To ensure a child safe environment, St Catherine's School has developed a Child Safe Risk Management Assessment. The Senior Leadership Team will complete the Child Safe Risk Management Assessment at the commencement of each Semester (twice per year). Any potential Child Safety risks will be identified and appropriate risk control methods will be implemented to mitigate or eliminate the risk.

| Potential Risks to Children | |
|--|--|
| Unintentional/accident harm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor physical environment leading to injury • Poor supervision • High-risk activity • Lack of risk mitigation strategies in place | Physical abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical punishment • Pushing, shoving • Punching, slapping, biting, kicking |
| Psychological abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying • Threatening language • Shaming • Intentional ignoring and isolating (either face-to-face, online or via other technology) | Cultural abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of cultural respect • Racial or cultural vilification or discrimination • Lack of support to enable a child to be aware of and express their cultural identity |
| Neglect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of supervision • Not providing adequate nourishment • Not providing adequate clothing or shelter • Not meeting the specific physical or cognitive needs of children | Sexual abuse <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual abuse, assault and exploitation • Grooming • Inappropriate touching • Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature (either face-to-face, online or via other technology) • Crossing professional boundaries |

Online School Environment

The School recognises that whilst the use of technology provides enormous opportunities, children are particularly vulnerable in the online environment. They can be very trusting of what they are told, and may not yet understand how their own online behaviour can harm other people. To ensure the safety of our students the School has an ICT policy that details acceptable use of technology.

The School recognises that there are many technologies used for communication and they are evolving all the time. Children move to new and emerging technology quickly and can be a step ahead of their parents, carers and organisational staff. New technologies include:

- text or SMS messaging
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- smartphone applications

The School reviews and monitors the effectiveness of the ICT usage policy on a regular basis and also has in place firewall protection to prevent students from accessing unsafe websites and technologies whilst in attendance at the School.

Cyberbullying

The School recognises that there is a high level of risk to our students of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is using an internet service or mobile technologies with the intention of harming another person.

Cyberbullying includes:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, images or videos
- imitating others online

- excluding others online
- nasty online gossip and chat.

Resources

A range of video and text Cyber Safety resources are placed on the Student Wellbeing page on mystcatherine's Portal. These resources are used as class materials in Level and Form time but can be accessed by students independently. They include clips on Staying Safe Online, Online Photo Etiquette, How to Beat Cyber Bullies, Safe Web Surfing and a range of materials from the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner.

Online grooming

Online grooming of children is the illegal act of an adult or adults making online contact with a child under the age of 16 with the intention of facilitating a sexual relationship. Online grooming includes:

- asking a child inappropriate or personal questions
- sending a child offensive, confronting or obscene content
- asking a child to send intimate pictures or do things online that make them feel uncomfortable

Staff are briefed on the potential risk of online grooming as part of the Induction process and students are educated on the risks associated with online grooming.

Trolling

Trolling describes a user anonymously abusing or intimidating others online for fun. Trolls post inflammatory or nasty statements to watch the reactions of others.

Students are educated in level time about responsible use of the internet and encouraged to report any abusive or intimidating content to their parents and their Head of Year.

The Student Wellbeing page includes video content related to educate students about 'Trolling' and 'Catfishing'

Profile privacy settings

The School ensures that students know not to have online profiles set as 'public' in Year Level Cyber Safety lessons and also seeks to educate parents about this through Cyber Safety parent information nights and resources on the Parent Portal.

Emergency Management

The School has developed an Emergency Management plan that details the way the School will respond to potential emergency situations. All staff and students are briefed on the School's emergency management procedures and the School holds trial emergency scenarios each term. These scenarios are conducted in the ELC, Junior School and Senior School, to ensure that staff and students know what they need to do in an emergency situation.

Management of visitors to the School

The School has a process for the management of visitors to the School, including contractors, volunteers, parents and other members of the general community. All visitors are required to sign in at either the Junior School or Senior School Reception area and are given a badge to wear whilst on site. There is provision for recording Working with Children's checks on arrival. Signage is placed around the school to alert visitors to report to Reception on arrival. The School has Closed Circuit TV cameras at various locations around the site and signs are posted on the main gates to advise visitors to the School that they may be monitored whilst onsite.

High risk areas such as the Early Learning Centre are protected with password access gates and access is restricted to staff and parents or carers of children enrolled in the Centre.

The Boarding House also has added security measures as boarding houses are recognised by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse as being a vulnerable area.

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

Schools must ensure that children feel safe to report abuse and have processes in place to ensure that students are empowered to raise any child safety concerns.

Schools must support students to develop appropriate knowledge and skills so that children can identify and communicate when they don't feel safe.

Ministerial Order requirements:

1. The school governing authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
 - a. standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
 - b. healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
 - c. resilience; and
 - d. child abuse awareness and prevention.
2. The school governing authority must promote the child safety standards required by this Order in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user friendly to children.

Action taken to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Order:

The *weThrive: Wellbeing @ St Catherine's* Program, in conjunction with the Health and Personal Development Curriculum, educate and inform students in order to involve and empower them.

We outline expected behaviour standards in order to facilitate a secure, respectful and inclusive school environment for all students in the:

- Student Code of Conduct (printed in the Homework Record Book)
- Anti-Harassment Policy
- ICT Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

St Catherine's raises awareness of children's rights by:

- using age-appropriate literature, including children's story-books, to instigate conversation about body parts, privacy, stranger danger etc.
- discussing differences between 'rights' and 'wants' in Prep to Year 4
- discussing the idea of Rights and Responsibilities in Year 5 and 6
- teaching about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Year 7 & 8 Curriculum
- educating students about children's rights relating to sexuality in the Year 7 & 8 Health and Personal Development and Curriculum
- reinforcing children's rights in discussions relating to human rights, moral codes, etc in Year 9-12 Humanities and English curriculum

We promote the participation of children by:

- students drawing up their own Code of Conduct in the Health and Personal Development Curriculum or the Junior School classrooms
- asking the students to nominate when and where they feel safe in the school and explaining the concept of physical and psychological safety
- building the communication and leadership skills of children through developing verbal competency, teaching assertiveness and ensuring that students feel respected, valued and listened to
- encouraging participation via a Wellbeing Suggestion Box

We build cultural understanding and inclusivity by:

- celebrating cultural diversity through lunchtime activities, the International Club and Boarding House activities
- we communicate with families regarding cultural expectations and needs upon enrolment
- we show respect for the Indigenous culture by flying the Aboriginal Flag, acknowledging the traditional owners in Assemblies, celebrating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC and promoting Aboriginal culture in the curriculum; including through our relationship with 'Indigate' and 'Yalari'.

We raise the profile and visibility of child safe policies and practices with children via:

- A clear, child friendly and well-publicised Reporting Policy and Process, which appears on the Student Wellbeing Page, the School Website and in the Health and Wellbeing Centre, to encourage students to speak up if they are uncomfortable or concerned
- Videos and links to relevant sites are posted on the Student Wellbeing Portal page and the Parent Portal page
- Posters and other resources displayed around the School and in the Boarding House
- Inclusion of Child Safety in the International Student handbook
- Child Safety section in the Student Record Book
- The Year 12 students are informed in a Year Level Assembly of their adult responsibilities due to the introduction of Failure to Protect, Failure to Disclose and Grooming Criminal Laws.

Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisation's responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme is established by the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

The Commission for Children and Young People is responsible for administering the scheme. The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the Commission will be aware of every allegation of certain types of employee misconduct involving children in relevant organisations that exercise care, supervision and authority over children. The Commission will also be able to share information where appropriate, including with the Working with Children Check Unit, relevant regulators and Victoria Police, to better prevent and protect children from abuse.

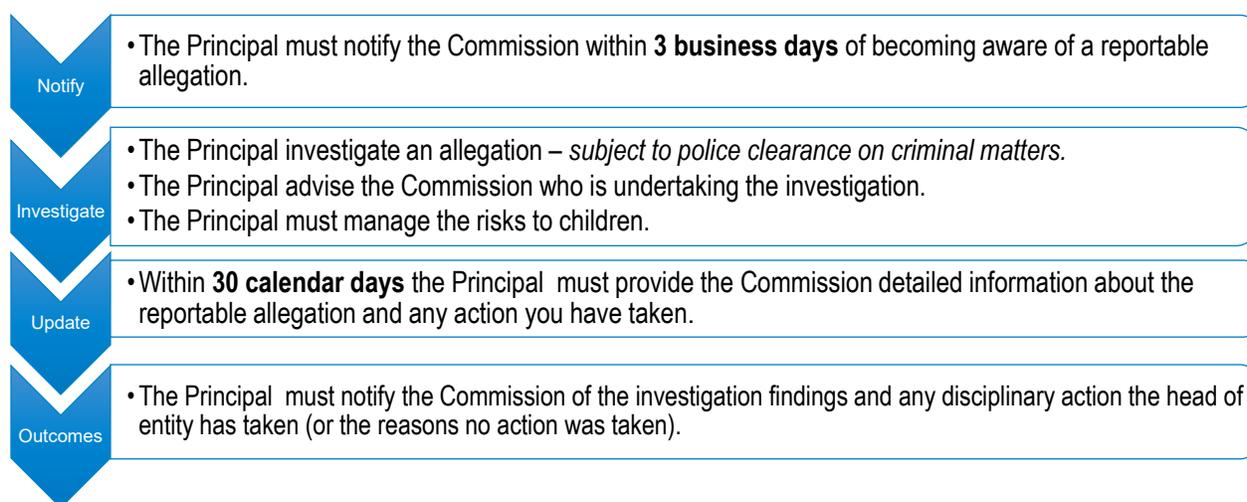
Requirements of heads of organisations

The Reportable Conduct Scheme imposes new obligations on heads of organisations that are within the scheme. This includes requirements to:

- have in place systems to prevent child abuse and, if child abuse is alleged, to ensure allegations can be brought to the attention of appropriate persons for investigation and response
- ensure that the Commission is notified and given updates on the organisation's response to an allegation.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not replace the need to report allegations of child abuse to Victoria Police.

A snapshot of a head of organisation's obligations under reportable conduct



What does the Commission do with the allegations it receives?

The Commission will carefully consider each allegation that it receives under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Based on the information available, the Commission may decide to:

- give the organisation responding to the allegation support and guidance
- check that the organisation is handling the allegation in a timely manner
- refer a substantiated allegation to Working With Children Check or a professional accreditation body.

Who can an allegation be made about under the scheme?

A reportable allegation can be made about any person over 18 years of age who is an employee (including a religious leader), volunteer, contractor or office holder of an organisation covered by the scheme.

Allegations can be made about the conduct of people even if:

- they do not have direct contact with children
- the conduct occurred outside of their work.

What types of conduct are reportable?

There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*:

- 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
- significant neglect.

What are sexual offences?

In Victoria, it is an offence to engage in certain sexual behaviours against, with or in front of, a child. Many of these behaviours are reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

This includes:

- sexual assault
- indecent acts
- possession of child abuse material
- 'grooming' a child in order to commit a sexual offence.

A full list of the relevant sexual offences is set out in clause 1 of Schedule 1 to the *Sentencing Act 1991*.

A person does not need to be charged with, or found guilty of, a sexual offence for their behaviour to be reportable conduct.

What is sexual misconduct?

'Sexual misconduct' captures a broader range of inappropriate behaviours of a sexual nature that are not necessarily criminal.

Examples of sexual misconduct include:

- developing an intimate relationship with a child, for example, through regular contact with the child without the knowledge or approval of the organisation's management
- inappropriately discussing sex and sexuality with a child
- other overtly sexual acts that could lead an organisation to take disciplinary or other action.

What is physical violence?

Physical violence includes an act that causes physical injury or pain. Examples of physical violence can include:

- hitting/kicking/punching
- pushing/shoving/grabbing/throwing/shaking
- using an object to hit or strike
- using inappropriate restraint/excessive force.

Physical violence does not include lawful behaviour.

For example:

- reasonable steps taken to protect a child from immediate harm, such as taking a child's arm to stop them from going into oncoming traffic
- medical treatment given in good faith by an appropriately qualified person, such as a senior first aid officer administering first aid.

Threats of physical violence that do not cause physical injury or pain may be covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme as behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm (see below).

What is behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm to a child?

For behaviour to be reportable under this category:

- a child must have suffered significant emotional or psychological harm
- there must be a clear link between the alleged conduct and the harm suffered.

The behaviour must cause emotional or psychological harm that is 'significant'. This is discussed below. Signs that a child may have been emotionally or psychologically harmed may include:

- patterns of out-of-character behaviour
- regression in behaviour
- distress and anxious behaviours
- other physical symptoms, such as self-harm.

Emotional or psychological harm may also occur where an existing mental health disorder has been exacerbated or aggravated.

A professional psychological or medical assessment of the child may assist to determine whether a child has suffered emotional or psychological harm. However, a clinical diagnosis will not be required in every case. For example:

- the alleged conduct is so serious and/or occurred over such a sustained period, that it can be reasonably inferred that the child has been harmed
- requiring a child to be assessed may unreasonably re-traumatise or otherwise further harm the child.

It is also important to stress that there must be a clear link between the emotional or psychological harm and the alleged conduct. In deciding if there is a clear link, organisations should consider the likelihood that the child would have been harmed, if the alleged conduct had not occurred.

Examples of emotional or psychological harm may include:

- exposure to violence or threats of violence
- self-destructive behaviour
- antisocial behaviour
- persistent hostility/rejection
- humiliation/belittling
- scapegoating.

It will not be reportable conduct if:

- a person takes reasonable steps to protect a child from immediate harm
- a person with responsibility for discipline takes lawful and reasonable disciplinary action, such as sending a child to sit in 'time out' for a period of time, in line with organisational policy
- an appropriately qualified person gives medical treatment in good faith, such as a senior first aid officer administering first aid.

What is neglect?

Neglect occurs when a person does not meet their obligations and responsibilities to keep a child safe and well.

The neglect:

- must be more than minor and insignificant
- does not need to have a lasting or permanent effect
- may be an ongoing situation or a one off incident, as long as it is not minor in nature.

Examples of different types of neglect include:

- supervisory neglect, which is the absence or inattention of a person which places the child at risk of physical harm or injury, sexual abuse or allows other criminal behaviour towards the child
- physical neglect, which is the failure to provide basic physical necessities for a child, such as adequate food, clothing and housing
- medical neglect, which is the failure to provide for appropriate medical care for a child, including a failure to acknowledge the seriousness of an illness or condition, or deliberately withholding appropriate care.

What does 'significant' mean?

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is concerned with significant allegations about worker behaviour or actions towards a child. Accordingly, allegations can only be made about emotional or psychological harm or neglect that is significant. Allegations may be made about serious forms of harm or behaviours that have a lasting or permanent effect, however, this does not always need to be the case. It is enough that the alleged conduct is more than *trivial* or *insignificant* to fall within the definition of *significant* under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

We encourage organisations to consult with the Commission for Children and Young People if they need assistance to determine if the alleged conduct meets the level required to make a reportable allegation report.

What is a reasonable belief?

A reportable allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that **may** involve reportable conduct. This includes where a reportable allegation is made against the head of the organisation.

A reasonable belief is more than suspicion. There must be some objective basis for the belief. However, it is not the same as having proof and does not require certainty.

For example, a person is likely to have a reasonable belief if they:

- observed the conduct themselves
- heard directly from a child that the conduct occurred
- received information from another credible source (including another person who witnessed the reportable conduct or misconduct).

Heads of organisations do not need to agree with or share the belief that the alleged conduct has occurred. However, they do not need to notify the Commission about the allegation if it is plainly wrong or had no basis at all in reality.

Where to get help

Organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme should contact the Commission for clarification and guidance, and to talk through any issues of concern.

- Telephone: 8601 5281
- Email: childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au
- Commission for Children and Young People's website at www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

When does the Commission need to be told about a reportable allegation?

Three business day notification

When the head of an organisation becomes aware of a reportable allegation against a worker or volunteer, they must notify the Commission for Children and Young People within three business days.

30 calendar day update

Within 30 calendar days after becoming aware of a reportable allegation, a head of an organisation must provide the Commission with detailed information about the allegation, disciplinary or other actions undertaken, and the response of the worker or volunteer to the allegation.

Advice on investigation

The allegation must be investigated as soon as practicable after the head of organisation becomes aware of it. The investigation may be conducted by the organisation, their regulator or an independent investigator. The head must inform the Commission of who will conduct the investigation.

Outcomes of investigation

At the conclusion of an investigation into a reportable allegation, a final investigation report must be prepared. The final investigation report should set out the findings, reasons for the findings and recommendations made at the conclusion of the investigation. A copy of the final investigation report should be provided to the Commission as soon as practicable.

What information does the Commission need?

The types of information that the Commission will seek are set out in the diagram below

| Three business day notification | 30 calendar day update | Advice on investigation | Outcomes of investigation | Additional documents |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of the worker or volunteer• Date of birth• Police report• Organisation contact details• Head of organisation's name• Initial advice on the nature of the allegation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of the allegation• Details of your response to the allegation• Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed• Any written response from the worker or volunteer about the allegation and the proposed disciplinary or other | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name of investigator• Contact details• As soon as practicable | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copy of findings and reasons for the findings• Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed• Reasons for taking or not taking action• As soon as practicable | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Commission may request further documents from the head of the organisation |

How do I give the Commission information?

The Commission will operate an online form for heads of organisations to notify of a reportable allegation, which will guide them through the notification process. Supporting documentation can be submitted through the online form. The Commission requires that heads of organisations use the online form.

If you are not the head of an organisation you can still tell the Commission about a reportable allegation by using the online form, calling or writing to the Commission.

If you are in doubt about how to complete the online form, we encourage you to contact the Commission for advice and support.

What matters should be reported to Victoria Police?

All suspected criminal behaviour should be reported to Victoria Police. If the reportable allegation involves suspected criminal behaviour, both Victoria Police and the Commission must be notified.

If you are unsure of how to proceed, contact the Commission or Victoria Police for guidance.

If an organisation becomes aware that Victoria Police will investigate a reportable allegation, they must not begin or continue their own investigation. Organisations should wait until police advice that its investigation has concluded or that the organisation's investigation may be conducted simultaneously.

How Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme work together to keep children safe from abuse

The Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme are part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing these recommendations. The Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme create distinct sets of responsibilities for organisations, but have been designed to complement one another. Together, Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme strengthen the capacity of organisations to prevent and respond properly to allegations of child abuse.

Child Safe Standards

Broader scope of organisations

Focuses on organisations and preventative systems

Flexible in their application

Enables reportable conduct to be identified and reported

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Narrower scope of organisations

Focuses on employee conduct
Prescribes specific actions that must be taken by the head of entity

Ensures reportable conduct is properly investigated and responded to

A system to promote child safety, prevent child abuse and respond properly to suspected child abuse.

A system to independently oversee responses to suspected child abuse.



The Commission for Children and Young People has oversight and regulatory responsibility for both Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Where organisations have an existing funding and/or regulatory relationship with the Victorian Government or statutory bodies, the Commission will work collaboratively with and through these bodies. The Commission will work closely with those sectors not currently subject to regulation.

Child Safe Standards

Child Safe Standards focus on organisations and what they do to promote child safety, prevent child abuse and respond to suspected child abuse. They apply to a broad range of organisations and businesses that provide services to children. The standards provide a framework for organisations to develop policies, procedures and strategies that embed a culture of child safety into everyday thinking and practice, and reduce the risk of child abuse being perpetrated by an employee, volunteer or contactor. They are flexible, allowing organisations to develop an approach to compliance that is relevant and sustainable. The Commission is able to monitor and enforce compliance with the standards.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focused on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children, but do not have a criminal record. The scheme applies to some organisations required to meet the Child Safe Standards – those with a high level of responsibility for children – and sets out specific obligations for the heads of these organisations.

Definitions

Aboriginal is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

CCYP means the Commission for Children and Young People

Child

The words 'child' and 'children' refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years. This definition is consistent with the national framework, Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers, the Commission for Children and Young People Act, the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* and the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

The term 'child' is inclusive of anyone under 18 years of age. For the purposes of this Child Safe Plan this definition excludes Children enrolled in the School's Early Learning Centre.

Child Abuse includes:

- (a) any act committed against a child involving—
 - (i) a sexual offence; or
 - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of—
 - (i) physical violence; or
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) serious neglect of a child.

Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds refers to 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 parent's identification on a similar basis.

Children with a disability

A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be more obvious than others.

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 diversity refers to people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs or views.

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.

ETR Act means the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 as amended from time to time

Harm and abuse

The use of the word 'harm' is often used to describe an event that is seen as possibly less detrimental than 'abuse' but is clearly not in the child's best interest or promoting their safety and wellbeing.

There is a continuum of abuse of children and views all such events, regardless of whether they are seen as 'harm' or 'abuse', as damaging. All abuse harms children. Even injuries that are not visible can be profound. They can strike at a child's sense of identity, make them fearful or ashamed, and reduce their ability to participate in their community. Abuse can take the following forms:

– **Physical**

This means intentionally causing, or threatening to cause, physical injury to a child, or inadvertently causing injury as a consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

– **Sexual**

A child is sexually abused when any person uses their authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity including fondling genitals, masturbation, vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis or any other object, voyeurism and exhibitionism. Sexual exploitation is considered a specific form of sexual abuse because children, by virtue of their age and development, are unable to give informed consent. Sexual exploitation of children takes different forms. It can include children being involved in sexually exploitive relationships, exposing a child to pornography, receiving money, goods, drug or favours in exchange for sex with one or more adults, or being exploited in more 'formal' forms of sex work. In all cases, those exploiting the children have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, physical strength, economic or other resources, such as access to drugs or gifts.

– **Emotional and psychological**

This occurs when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours, such as rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening or verbally abusing a child, or allowing others to do so. Because this kind of abuse does not leave physical injuries, it is often hidden and underestimated.

– **Neglect**

This means failing to meet a child's basic needs, such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene and medical attention.

– **Racial, cultural, religious**

This is conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

Organisation

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as:

- an incorporated body or association
- an unincorporated body or association (however structured)
- an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities.

School environment means 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); and
- 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).

School governing authority means:

- a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
- b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
- c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

Resources

| | |
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| <p>Australian Childhood Foundation PO Box 525 Ringwood Victoria 3134 Tel: (03) 9874 3922 National Free Call: 1800 176453 Web: www.childhood.org.au Email: info@childhood.org.au Web: www.safeguardingchildren.com.au Email: safeguardingchildren@childhood.org.au</p> | <p>Commission for Children and Young People Level 20/570 Bourke Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Tel: 03 86015884 Web: www.ccp.vic.gov.au Email: childsafes@ccyp.vic.gov.au</p> |
| <p>Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc. Level 5/50 Market Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Tel: 03 9614 1577 Web: www.cfecfw.asn.au Email: admin@cfecfw.asn.au</p> | <p>Children's Protection Society 70 Altona Street Heidelberg West Victoria 3081 Tel: 03 9450 0900 Web: www.cps.org.au Email: cps@cps.org.au</p> |
| <p>Child Family Community Australia Australian Institute of Family Studies Level 20 South Tower/485 La Trobe Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Tel: 03 9214 7888 Web: www.aifs.gov.au/cfca</p> <p>Child Protection After Hours Crisis Line: 13 1278 (24 hours, 7 days a week) During business hours contact your local Department of Health & Human Services Division office.</p> <p>Southern Metropolitan Division 122 Thomas Street Dandenong Victoria 3175 Tel: 1300 655 795 Web: www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/southern/</p> | <p>Child Wise PO Box 1117 South Melbourne Victoria 3205 Tel: 03 9645 8911 National Helpline: 1800 991 099 Web: www.childwise.org.au Email: office@childwise.org.au</p> <p>Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection Level 6/121 Exhibition Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Tel: 1300 666 444 Web: www.cdp.vic.gov.au Email: privacy@cpdp.vic.gov.au</p> <p>VicSport Level 3/375 Albert Road South Melbourne Victoria 3205 Tel: 03 9926 1376 Web: vicsport.com.au Email: admin@vicsport.com.au</p> |
| <p>ChildSafe PO Box 7127 Banyule Victoria 3084 Tel: 03 9037 6415 Web: www.childsafe.org.au</p> | <p>Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team Melbourne: 03 8690 4056 Dandenong: 03 8769 2200 Box Hill: 03 8892 3292 Knox: 03 9881 7939 www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?document_id=36448</p> |
| <p>Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre Flemington Road Parkville Victoria 3052 Tel: 03 9345 5085 Web: www.rch.org.au/safetycentre Email: safetycentre@rch.org.au</p> | <p>Victorian Institute of Teaching Level 9/628 Bourke Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Tel: 1300 888 067 Web: www.vit.vic.edu.au Email: vit@vit.vic.edu.au</p> |
| <p>Victoria Police Contact your local Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team or call 000 and ask for police.</p> | <p>Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Level 2/180 Flinders Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Tel: 03 9267 3799 or 1300 727 176 Web: www.yacvic.org.au Email: info@yacvic.org.au</p> |
| <p>Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Level 3/204 Lygon Street Carlton Victoria 3053 Tel: 1300 891 848 Web: www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au Email: information@veohrc.vic.gov.au</p> | <p>Working with Children Check Department of Justice and Regulation GPO Box 1915 Melbourne, Victoria 3001 Tel: 1300 652 879 Web: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au Email: workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au</p> |

Appendix

Appendix 1: Child Safe Risk Assessment

| St Catherine's School Child Safe Risk Assessment | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------------|
| Completed by: | Merran O'Connor and Cassie Monahan | Original Version: August 2017 | Reviewed annually by Child Safe Standards Sub-Committee | | |
| Mandatory child safe standard | Child safety criteria | Do you meet the criteria? Yes/No | How does your organisation perform against the criteria? | What needs to be done to better meet the standards? | Review completed |
| Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety through effective leadership arrangements | Do you have appropriate governance arrangements in place? | Yes | The School has a Governance Committee that reports to School Council. A number of staff in Leadership positions have clearly delegated responsibilities for areas of Governance | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Is the commitment to child safety modelled by your leadership? | Yes | School Council and Senior Leadership team are committed to ensuring that all standards are met and role model Child Safe behaviour | Ensure Child Safety appears as a periodic agenda item on School Council and Senior Leadership agendas | Complete |
| | Do you welcome all children and acknowledge that some children are particularly vulnerable? | Yes | The School promotes an inclusive environment and acknowledges that children with special needs, disabilities and from some cultural backgrounds are more vulnerable | Student Review process undertaken at the beginning of the School year and revisited in pastoral Review meetings | Ongoing |
| | Do you recognise, respect and promote the belief that cultural identity is fundamental to a child's safety and wellbeing, and provide training for staff on this? | Yes | Staff are trained on the relationship between cultural identity and Child Safety | Ensure continued staff training regarding particular cultural needs and expectations | Ongoing |
| | Do you encourage children with special needs and from different backgrounds to participate, and do they participate? | Yes | Children with special needs and from different backgrounds are encouraged and do participate in activities throughout the School which focus on celebrating cultural differences and cultural respect | Review School programs to ensure they meet the needs of children with special needs and from different backgrounds to encourage participation | Ongoing |
| | Do you raise awareness about child abuse? | Yes | The School has run training for all staff and has communicated the School's Child Safe Strategy to the School Community via various online communication channels. | School will ensure ongoing education of our School Community around Child Safety | Complete |
| | Is it clear that discrimination is not tolerated in your organisation? | Yes | The School has a Staff 'Discrimination and Sexual Harassment' policy that is communicated to all staff through the Induction process. The School also has an | Ensure biannual training occurs to remind staff of their responsibilities | August 2020 |

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|---|---|-----|--|--|-------------|
| | | | Anti Harassment and Bullying Policy available and has a clear process for staff and students to raise any concerns related to discrimination in the workplace. | | |
| A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety | Is there a clear and public commitment to child safety in the form of a Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety that all staff members know about and are required to uphold? | Yes | The School has a Child Safe Policy that is communicated to all staff via training sessions. This Policy is also communicated through the formal induction process | Ensure ongoing staff training | ongoing |
| | Does the Child Safe Policy specifically address the risks that have been identified in your risk assessment? | Yes | The School Child Safe Policy has been designed based on the findings of the Risk Assessment. | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do you undertake regular Child Safety Reviews to inform your policy? | Yes | The School conducts an annual Child Safety review that includes a Risk Assessment and review of the current Child Safe Policy | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Are children consulted about how safe they feel and what ideas they might have to promote safety in your organisation? | Yes | Children are consulted in an age appropriate manner regarding their feelings about safety in the School via an annual Child Safety Presentation and Survey and also in Health lessons | Complete- survey will be in Term 4 in 2020 (when back on campus) | August 2020 |
| | Does your Child Safe Policy promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability? | Yes | The Child Safe Policy promotes the need for cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability | Complete | August 2020 |
| | Do your organisation's policies include requirements relating to Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislative requirements? | Yes | The School Child Safe Policy addresses the requirements for Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislation | Complete | August 2020 |
| A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children | Is there a Code of Conduct that explains acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of staff, volunteers and children? | Yes | The School has a Child Safe Code of Conduct that outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of staff, volunteers and children | Complete | August 2020 |
| | Is the Code of Conduct well known by your organisation's staff, volunteers, children and families and are they required to comply with it? | Yes | The Child Safe Code of Conduct is outlined to all staff, volunteers, children and their families | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do your policies clearly explain how concerns regarding the Code of Conduct can be raised and how breaches of the Code of Conduct will be responded to? | Yes | The Policies detail how concerns can be raised and how they will be addressed | Complete | August 2020 |
| | Have you considered if additional Codes of Conduct are required (such as applying to parents or children)? | Yes | The School has a specific Child Safe Code of Conduct in addition to its Staff Code of Conduct and Community Code of Conduct | Complete | August 2020 |

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|---|---|-------------|--|--|-------------|
| Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel | Do you have clear duty and position statements (job descriptions)? | Yes | The School has position descriptions for all positions that clearly outline staff expectations in relation to Child Safety and the requirement to adhere to all School policies and procedures at all times | Complete | August 2020 |
| | Have you determined which employee or volunteer positions require a Working with Children Check and ensured those checks have been undertaken? | Yes | The School uses the Everproof compliance system to monitor and ensure all employees have either a Working with Children Check and Police Check or have registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (includes a Criminal Record Check). All volunteers who supervise children are required to have a volunteer Working with Children Check | Complete | August 2020 |
| | Do you have documented recruitment procedures including interview processes, referee checks, Working with Children Checks and other screening requirements? | Yes | The School has a documented Recruitment and Selection handbook that outlines the School's interview processes, referee checks, Working with Children Checks and other screening requirements | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do you have a staff development strategy to maintain and develop skills and capabilities, including understanding the risk of harm to children, the different types of harm, how to identify child abuse and relevant legislative requirements? | Yes | The School has developed an annual staff development strategy that will ensure that staff are educated on Child Safety and are able to understand the risk of harm to children, the different types of harm, how to identify child abuse and relevant legislative requirements. Staff will complete training on an annual basis to ensure they understand their responsibilities. All Staff complete the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do you have a robust staff and volunteer performance management strategies in place? | In progress | The School has robust performance management processes and is currently reviewing performance management strategies for volunteers | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse | Do you have a process for reporting and acting on disclosures or concerns about child safety? | Yes | The School has a clear process for reporting and acting on disclosures and concerns about Child Safety. This is detailed in the Child Safe Policy and is also detailed in the Mandatory Reporting and Child Protection Policy | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Are your staff and volunteers aware of their responsibility to report concerns of harm? | Yes | Staff training is undertaken to ensure they are aware of their responsibility to report concerns of harm. Staff are also educated on the process to make reports. | Volunteer training to be integrated into our Volunteer Induction process | August 2020 |

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|---|---|-----|---|--|--------------|
| | Do you have policies and procedures concerning record keeping requirements and confidentiality and privacy? | Yes | The School has a Privacy Policy that outlines how the School will maintain records and manage confidentiality and privacy | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do you have a complaints process that is accessible for children and families? | Yes | The Child Safe Policy is available via the Parent Portal and children are educated on how to make a complaint | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do you have child friendly processes in place to ensure children know who to talk to if they feel unsafe or have a concern? | Yes | Along with the school support structures, an age appropriate Reporting Flowcharts have been created with student input and are displayed around the school and within student documentation. | Policy will be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness | Term 4, 2020 |
| Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse | Do you undertake risk assessments and have an organisational Risk Management Plan? | Yes | The School has detailed Child Safe Risk Register, inclusive of international Students and a Risk Management plan. Regular reviews are undertaken. | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Is undertaking, monitoring and reviewing the risk management plan the designated responsibility of a specific staff member? | Yes | The Child Safe Standards Sub-Committee includes 4 members of the Senior Leadership Team and reports to the Risk Committee. The Committee have delegated responsibility for developing, monitoring and reviewing the risk management plan. The School strongly believes that the effectiveness of embedding the Child Safe strategy lies in assigning responsibility to several staff rather than one individual | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | In undertaking your risk assessment, do you specifically consider the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability? | Yes | Risk assessment processes are being updated in order to specifically address cultural diversity and disability. We have specifically addressed the risks to International Students in the Child Safe Risk Register | Ensure ongoing review. CRICOS Audit approval in 2019 | August 2020 |
| Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children | Do you consult with children about decisions that affect them? | Yes | In line with Strategy 7, students are empowered to understand their rights and responsibilities. Programs are designed to enable greater student participation in decision making. A Student Charter and Boarders' Charter have been created in consultation with students | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do you create opportunities for participation that incorporates planning, preparation, action and feedback? | Yes | We involved students in drawing up their own Code of Conduct (Charters) and discuss their views about safety in small groups. | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |
| | Do you inform children of their rights and tell them how to raise any concerns? | Yes | Children are informed of their rights in the classroom and via the Portal, posters etc. The United Nations Rights of the Child are discussed with the students. | Ensure ongoing review | August 2020 |



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Commitment to Child Safety

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 St Catherine's School recognises that the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report identified specific groups of students being at heightened risk, including Boarders and International Students. Consistent with the requirements of the National Code 2018, the VRQA Guidelines, and their intersection with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the School is committed to mitigating risk for all students, with specific policy addressing the needs of these students.
- 1.3 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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- 2.1 To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within St Catherine's School
- 2.2 To work towards an organisational culture of child safety
- 2.3 To prevent child abuse within St Catherine's School
- 2.4 To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs
- 2.5 To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors/third parties as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation
- 2.6 To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors/third parties forbidding any such abuse
- 2.7 To provide assurance that any, and all, suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated
- 2.8 To ensure that appropriate support is available for any child disclosing abuse, suspected of being a victim of abuse, or otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to members of the School Council (as individual members of the board as well as to the board as an entity), the Principal, all school staff, volunteers, contracted service providers and ministers of religion working in the school environment.
- 3.2 The application of the policy also sets out the school's expectations of parents, visitors and older students and the part they play in ensuring the safety of children in the school
- 3.3 The school's duty of care is non-delegable. This policy applies when children are learning with an external provider or in contact with an affiliated organisation.
- 3.4 This policy applies to all staff members, volunteers, contractors, affiliated organisations, students aged 18 years and over, School Council members and the School parent community.
- 3.5 The child safe policy sets out the principles and framework governing the school's behaviours and activities that enact the child safe standards and which aim to keep all children safe from harm. The policy, together with the policy implementation documents listed, must be read and understood by all those connected to the school.
- 3.6 The school's duty of care is non-delegable. This policy applies when children are learning with an external provider or in contact with an affiliated organisation.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **[Child]:** [for the purposes of this policy a child is defined as 18 years and under]
- 4.2 **[Child Protection]:** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- 4.3 **[DHS]:** [Department of Human Services]: Government authority which takes responsibility for the protection of children and to whom reports are made.
- 4.4 **[Child abuse]:** means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.
- 4.5 **[Child sexual assault]** is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to, or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

- 4.6 **[Reasonable grounds for belief]** is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.
- 4.6.1 A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:
- the child is in need of protection,
 - the child has suffered or is likely to suffer 'significant harm as a result of physical injury' or
 - the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.
- 4.6.2 A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.
- 4.6.3 A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:
- a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
 - a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
 - someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
 - professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
 - signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- 4.7 **[Victorian Child Safe Standards]:** To create and maintain a child safe organisation, the Ministerial Order 870 outlines the Child Safe Standards that schools must implement:
- strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements
 - a Child Safe Policy
 - a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
 - screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
 - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
 - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
 - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

- 4.8 **[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 campus of the school;
 - online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
 - other locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events

5. Policy Statement

- 5.1 St Catherine's School is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 St Catherine's School has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at St Catherine's School is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.
- 5.4 Child protection is a shared responsibility between the St Catherine's School Council, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the St Catherine's School community.
- 5.5 St Catherine's School will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies
- 5.6 St Catherine's School will ensure that appropriate support is available for any child disclosing abuse, suspected of being a victim of abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- 5.7 St Catherine's School supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. St Catherine's School is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
- 5.7 St Catherine's School is committed to fulfilling our duty of care to all students and specifically students under the age of 16 in relation to the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* which was amended in 2014 to include offences of (i) failing to disclose a sexual offence, (ii) grooming for sexual conduct, and (iii) failing to protect a child from sexual offence.
- 5.8 The School will provide a framework to ensure that all persons in positions of authority, care or supervision; all employees of the School and where applicable, students of 18 years or over understand their role and responsibility in protecting the safety and



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

wellbeing of children and young people under the age of 16, in accordance with the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)

- 5.9 This policy is designed to ensure that individuals associated with the School, who have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk, take steps to reduce or remove any substantial risk that a student under 16 years of age will become the victim of a sexual offence, including the recognition of 'grooming'.
- 5.10 The School has a responsibility to ensure that all members of the School Community aged 18 years and over understand their reporting obligations in accordance with the *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* (Vic).
- 5.11 All members of the School Community aged 18 years and over (who are not Mandatory Notifiers), who form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age, are requested to discuss this concern with the Principal, who has an obligation to report that information to the police
- 5.12 St Catherine's School acknowledges its obligations to meet the provisions of Federal and State legislation; in particular the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) and the VRQA Guidelines for Enrolment of Overseas Students aged under 18 years
- 5.13 St Catherine's School implements risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk in the Boarding House and to develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the Boarding House
- 5.14 St Catherine's School implements risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk in Homestay Accommodation and conducts stringent child safety screening of Homestay families as outlined in the Homestay Policy.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 The Principal will:

- 6.1.1 ensure that all staff members, volunteers, third parties, students aged 18 years and over, School Council members and the School parent community are aware of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic);
- 6.1.2 ensure that, at least annually, appropriate guidance and training is provided to the members of School Council and School Staff about:
 - 6.1.2.1 Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
 - 6.1.2.2 Child abuse risks in the school environment
 - 6.1.2.3 The School's current child safety standards



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

6.1.2 ensure that all adults within the School Community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child under 16 years of age to the Principal who is obliged to report this to the police;

6.1.3 provide support for staff in undertaking their responsibility in this area

6.1.4 provide support for a child who discloses or is otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

6.2 All staff members will:

6.2.1 be aware of the School's Child Safe Policy, the Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy, the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Child Safety Incident Report;

6.2.2 report any reasonable belief of child sexual abuse to the Principal or one of the School's delegated Child Safety Officers so a report may be made to police or fulfil their obligation as Mandatory notifiers;

6.2.3 abide by the School's Child Safe Code of Conduct

6.2.4 provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety

6.2.5 complete the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting e-module annually, providing the Certificate of Completion to the PA to the Deputy Principal.

6.3 Parents/Guardians/Volunteers/Students aged 18 years and over will

6.3.1 be aware of the School's Child Safe Policy and Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy and Community Code of Conduct Policy;

6.3.2 understand their obligation to report a reasonable belief of a child sexual offence to the Principal so that a report may be made to the Police

6.3.3 If attending trips or excursions, complete the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting e-module and present a current Working with Children's Check which will be verified and reviewed regularly

6.4 Homestay Hosts, Homestay Service Providers, Local Contacts

6.4.1 be aware of the School's Child Safety Policy, Homestay Policy, Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy and Community Code of Conduct Policy;



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

6.4.2 understand their obligation to report a reasonable belief of a child sexual offence to the Principal so that a report may be made to the Police

6.4.3 Complete the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting e-module and present a current Working with Children's Check which will be verified and reviewed regularly

6.5 Child Safety Officers

6.5.1 The Child Safety Officers are able to act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety and liaise with the Principal and the Senior Leadership team to maintain the visibility of child safety.

6.5.2 Staff are encouraged to speak with one of the Child Safety Officers should they hold any concerns relating to child safety.

6.5.3 The School has nominated four Child Safety Officers:

- Ms Sarah Bethune, Head of ELC
- Mrs Karen McCardle, Head of Junior School
- Ms Merran O'Connor, Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing
- Ms Amelia King, School Counsellor

6.5.4 Child Safety Officers will provide support for a child who discloses or is otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

7 Specific Offences

Failure to Disclose

7.1 Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. The Failure to Disclose offence imposes a clear legal duty upon all adults aged 18 years and over to report information about child sexual abuse to police.

7.2 The School follows a process whereby all staff who may form a reasonable belief that a child has been sexually abused is required to report this matter to the Principal who will report this matter to police in collaboration with the staff member.

Definition

7.3 Under section 327 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), any person (including any staff member) over 18 years of age who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against any child under 16 years of age, must disclose that information to police, as soon as it is practicable to do so. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHS



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Child Protection. The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.

Forming a 'Reasonable Belief'

- 7.4 A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but it is more than mere rumour or speculation.
- 7.5 A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:
- a child states that they have been sexually abused;
 - a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
 - someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused;
 - professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused or is likely to be abused;
 - signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

Procedure

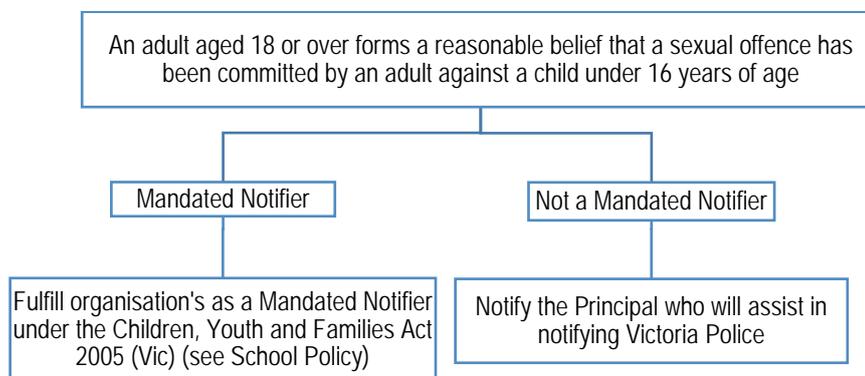
- 7.6 Any adult aged 18 or over who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to Victoria Police by dialling 000 (or otherwise to a Member of Victoria Police).
- 7.7 The School's process is for staff to notify the Principal prior to making a report so the Principal can assist the staff member through the reporting process and ensure the child's welfare is maintained throughout the process.
- 7.8 An adult will not be guilty of an offence if they do not report in the following circumstances:
- the victim is 16 years of age or older and does not have an intellectual disability that limits his/her capacity to make an informed decision; and he/she does not want the information reported to the Police;
 - the victim has disclosed the information in confidence in the course of a therapeutic relationship with a person as a registered medical practitioner or counsellor;
 - the victim turned 16 years of age before 27 October 2014.
- 7.9 Reasonable excuses for failing to comply with the requirement include:



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- a. a reasonable belief that the information has already been reported to Police or DHS Child Protection disclosing all of the information;
- b. a reasonable fear that the disclosure will place someone (other than the alleged perpetrator) at risk of harm.

8 Notification Requirements



- 8.1 A person in the school may have a mandatory reporting obligation under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic). In summary, this obligation requires Principals, Teachers (including pre-service and visiting teachers), Registered Nurses (including School Nurses) to report concerns about child welfare to child protection authorities within the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- 8.2 DHS passes all allegations of child sexual abuse to Police so it will be a reasonable excuse for not reporting to Police if a person has made a report to DHS or reasonably believes a report has been made to DHS. (Please refer to the school's Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy).

9 Grooming

- 9.1 Section 49B of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) relates to the offence of 'Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years'. The offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over.
- 9.2 Definition
- 9.2.1 The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct (including online) undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.



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9.2.3 The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's engagement in or involvement in sexual conduct, whether with the groomer or another adult.

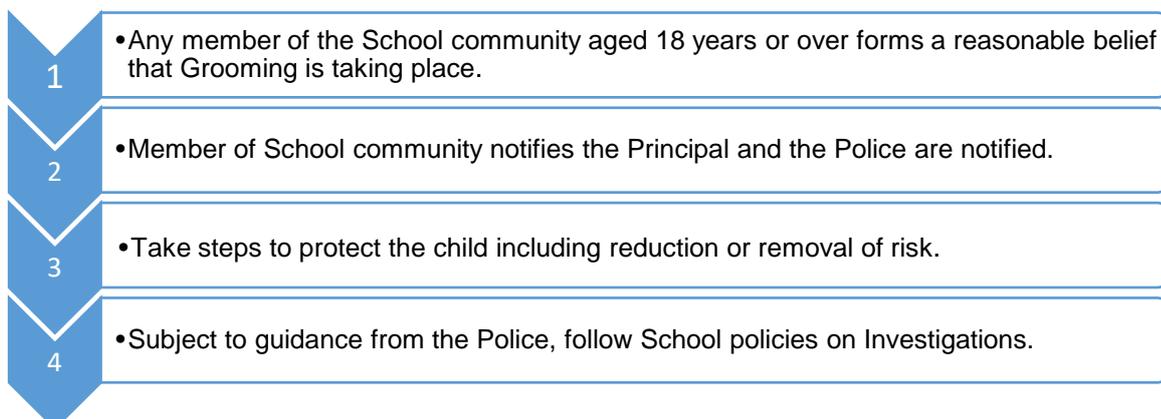
9.2.4 Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

9.2.5 The sexual conduct must constitute an indictable sexual offence. This includes offences such as sexual penetration of a child, indecent assault and indecent act in the presence of a child. It does not include summary offences, such as 'upskirting' and indecent behaviour in public.

9.3 Procedure

9.3.1 Should any member of the School community aged 18 and over become aware of grooming behaviour by a person aged 18 years or over, they should notify the Principal. The Principal will ensure that the Police are notified immediately.

9.3.2 It is the responsibility of the Principal and/or others associated with the School with authority or responsibility, to take action upon becoming aware of grooming behaviour to protect (so as to reduce or remove a substantial risk) in accordance with the 'failure to protect' offence (see below).



10

Failure to Protect

10.1 Section 49C of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) states that it is a criminal offence in Victoria for a person in authority to fail to protect a child under the age of 16 from criminal sexual abuse. This applies where there is substantial risk that a child under the care, supervision



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or authority of an organisation (including schools) will become a victim of a sexual offence by an adult associated with the school. The person in a position of authority may be guilty of an 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.

10.2 Definition

10.2.1 A person associated with the School, who by reason of their position has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the School, must not negligently fail to reduce or remove the risk.

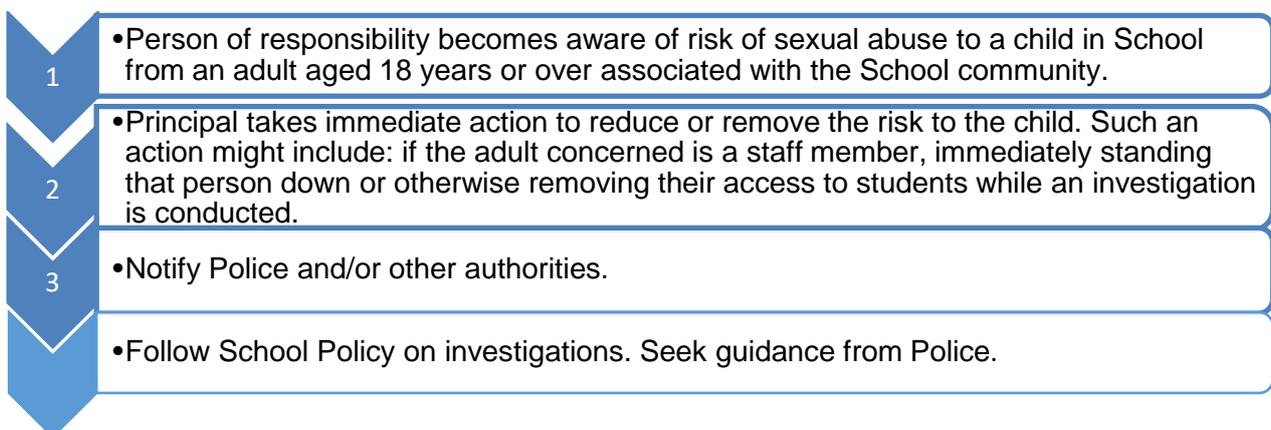
10.2.2 That is, as soon as a person in authority becomes aware of a risk of child sexual abuse, they will be under a duty to take steps to remove or reduce that risk.

10.2.3 A person who has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a risk will include the Principal, governing body members and senior staff, as well as teachers by virtue of their responsibilities.

10.2.4 For the avoidance of doubt, any member of staff or person associated with the School who knows of a substantial risk that a child will become a victim of a sexual offence should notify the Principal as soon as is reasonably practicable.

10.3 Procedure

10.3.1 When informed of a substantial risk of criminal sexual abuse to a child in the School from an adult aged 18 or over associated with the School, the Principal will act to reduce or remove the risk. The person will be removed from any child-related role pending an investigation.



11 Employment of New Personnel



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- 11.1 St Catherine's School undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:
- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
 - identify the safest and most suitable people who share St Catherine's School's values and commitment to protect children;
 - prevent a person from working at St Catherine's School if they pose a risk to children
- 11.2 St Catherine's School requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with St Catherine's School, including obtaining and verifying Working with Children's Checks using the online validation 'Status Checker' tool
- 11.3 St Catherine's School may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at St Catherine's School and during their time with St Catherine's School at regular intervals.
- 11.4 St Catherine's School will undertake thorough reference and personal identity checks as per the approved internal procedure.
- 11.5 Newly appointed staff will undergo a Child Safety Induction
- Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy and by agreeing to and signing the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

12 Risk Management

- 12.1 St Catherine's School will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.
- 12.2 The Child Safe Standards Sub-Committee reports to the Risk Committee which is a risk and compliance sub-committee which monitors the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and is committed to identifying and managing risks at St Catherine's School. Risk and compliance sub-committee members will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

13. Breach of Policy

- 13.1 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.
- 13.2 If staff are aware of any potential breaches of policy they are advised to speak with either a Child Safety Officer or Principal.



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14. Reporting

- 14.1 Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the Child Safety Officer or Principal about their concern.
- 14.2 In situations where the Principal is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level.
- 14.3 Child Safety Officers must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the Principal and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

15. Mandatory reporting

- 15.1 Although everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse, some professionals are legally required to make a report to Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.
- 15.2 As an example, doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers and school principals, police, youth workers, social workers and psychologists are mandatory reporters under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.
- 15.3 St Catherine's teachers, nurses, Principal and the School Psychologist are required to undertake and present their Certificate of Completion of the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting e-module annually.

16. Responding to, and providing support following a disclosure

- 16.1 The welfare of all children involved, their families, those making the allegations and the person against whom the complaint is made will be taken into account
- 16.2 In response to an allegation, the School will act immediately to provide appropriate support and protection for the alleged victim of abuse and all other children involved
- 16.3 In response to a disclosure the welfare of the child is paramount staff are advised to:
 - 16.3.1 listen carefully and control expressions of panic or shock
 - 16.3.2 reassure the child or young person that they are believed and that to disclose was the right thing to do
 - 16.3.3 reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame (if the child indicates this is what they believe)
 - 16.3.4 acknowledge that it is hard to talk about such things
 - 16.3.5 indicate that they will talk to someone about what should happen next



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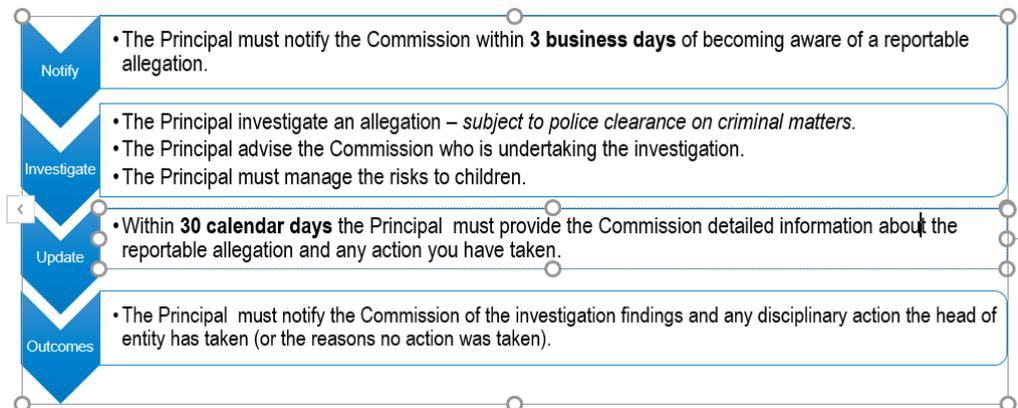
- 16.4 Where appropriate, advice regarding the form and source of support and protection will be sought from relevant external agencies, ensuring that the School is sensitive to the diversity of all children, including the needs of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and children who are vulnerable.
- 16.5 In consultation with the School Psychologist, a case management plan will be devised to provide support for a child making a disclosure of child abuse
- 16.6 A support staff member will be appointed to oversee the student's safety and welfare while at school, and to monitor the student's ongoing needs
- 16.7 Where appropriate, the School will work with the student's family to ensure the School's response is in the best interests of the safety and welfare of the student
- 16.8 Professional counselling will be offered to the person against whom the complaint is made and other personnel impacted by the allegations
- 16.9 Communications relating to the allegation will take into account the confidentiality and welfare of all children involved, their families and those making the allegations within the parameters of the reporting obligations.

17. Reportable Conduct Scheme

- 17.1 The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme is administered by The Commission for Children and Young People and is designed to ensure that the Commission will be aware of every allegation of certain types of employee misconduct involving children in relevant organisations that exercise care, supervision and authority over children.
- 17.2 Staff must report, immediately, to a Child Safety Officer or the Principal, any breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct arising from an action by an employee or volunteer within our organisation.
- 17.3 In response to any instance of 'serious' breaches which relate to abuse or neglect ('serious' being cases in which the abuse or neglect has resulted in, or is likely to result in, significant harm to a child or young person) the Principal will investigate and deal with allegations of inappropriate and unacceptable behavior towards a child in line with the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme.



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18. Investigation

- 18.1 An investigation into a reportable allegation is a workplace investigation aimed at gathering and examining information to establish facts and make findings in relation to allegations of child abuse against an employee. The investigation may also make recommendations about what disciplinary or other action should be taken (if any).
- 18.2 A reportable conduct investigation will apply the 'balance of probabilities' as the standard of proof. This means that an investigation should consider whether it is more likely than not that reportable conduct has occurred. This may involve comparing conflicting versions of events given by different witnesses in order to decide which version is the more probable.
- 18.3 During a reportable conduct investigation, the subject of an allegation may choose, but is not required, to give information or documents that support their version of events. However, the subject of an investigation is not obliged to prove or disprove any fact or issue that is being investigated.

19. Procedural fairness

- 19.1 Procedural fairness processes will apply and will usually include ensuring that, before any findings are made or disciplinary action is taken, the subject of an allegation:
- is notified of any adverse information that is credible, relevant and significant
 - The Commission will seek any response or submissions made by the employee in response to allegations or actions, preferably in writing.

20. Responding

- 20.1 If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.



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20.2 If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the St Catherine's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

21. Privacy

21.1 All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. St Catherine's School will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

22. Reviewing

22.1 Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the Child Protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the School's care.

23. Responsibility

23.1 The Principal is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered and that members of the School Community aged over 18 years of age are informed of their responsibilities.

24. Compliance requirements

- a. *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).*
- b. *Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe Schools) Act 2015 (Vic).*
- c. *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)*
- d. *Ministerial Order 870*
- e. *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)*
- f. *VRQA Guidelines for the Enrolment of Overseas Students under the age of 18 years*

25. Associated Documents

- a. Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- b. Child Safety Code of Conduct
- c. Child Safe Strategy
- d. Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
- e. Child Safe Standards Sub-Committee Charter
- f. Risk Committee Charter
- g. Community Code of Conduct



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- h. Homestay Policy
- i. Student Accommodation Policy
- j. International Student Welfare Policy
- k. Staff Induction Policy
- l. Staff Recruitment Policy
- m. Child Safety Incident Report
- n. Termination of employment and misconduct procedures
- o. [Department of Justice: Betrayal of Trust Factsheet: The new 'failure to disclose' offence.](#)
- p. [Department of Justice: Betrayal of Trust Factsheet: The new 'grooming' offence.](#)
- q. [Department of Justice: Betrayal of Trust Factsheet: The new 'failure to protect' offence.](#)
- r. [VRQA Newsletter 'New obligations to help protect children: Betrayal of Trust implementation' \(Edition 41\).](#)
- s. [Reportable Conduct Scheme- The Commission for Children and Young People](#)



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Failure to observe the Child Safety Code of Conduct is considered misconduct (or in some cases Reportable Conduct) and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension while matters are investigated and could ultimately result in dismissal.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Every person engaged in paid or voluntary child-related work with St Catherine's School is required to adhere to this Child Safety Code of Conduct. This includes teaching staff, non-teaching staff, coaches, contractors, third party providers, volunteers and School Council members.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Aboriginal child:** A person under the age of 18 who:
 - a. is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
 - b. identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and
 - c. is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.
- 3.2 **Child abuse:** For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:
 - a. physical violence
 - b. sexual offences
 - c. serious emotional or psychological abuse
 - d. serious neglect.



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 Child:** A person who is under the age of 18 years.
- 3.5 Child safety:** In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Cultural abuse:** Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 Victorian Child Safe Standards:** To create and maintain a child safe organisation, all staff must be aware of the School's obligations to implement the following standards outlined in Ministerial Order 870:
- strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements;
 - a Child Safe Policy;
 - a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children;
 - screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel;
 - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
 - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse;
 - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.
- 3.11 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 campus of the school;
 - online school environments (including email, remote learning platforms and intranet systems); and
 - other locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events.



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

4. Policy Statement

4.1 The Principal will:

- a. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
- b. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
- c. Nominate Child Protection Officers to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

Child Safety Officers:

- Ms Sarah Bethune, Head of ELC
- Mrs Karen McCardle, Head of Junior School
- Ms Merran O'Connor, Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing
- Ms Amelia King, School Counsellor

4.2 All staff, volunteers, contractors, third party providers, and School Council members must:

- a. Operate within the School policies and guidelines, upholding St Catherine's School's statement of Commitment to Child Safety in all School environments at all times;
- b. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- c. Maintain a duty of care in programs and activities;
- d. Be responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children;
- e. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- f. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
- g. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people.
- h. Be professional in their actions;
- i. Agree to cooperate with an investigation if an allegation is made against them;
- j. Maintain strict impartiality;
- k. Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children;
- l. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
- m. Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse, leaving doors ajar where possible and always unlocked;
- n. Meet students in an open plan area, a room with high visibility or the School Library;
- o. Listen to and respond 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 SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

- p. Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification);
- q. Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- r. Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- s. Report any child safety concerns to a St Catherine's School Child Safety Officer or the Principal;
- t. Report 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;
- u. If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- v. Encourage children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them;
- w. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

4.3 No person shall:

- a. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
- b. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
- c. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- d. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves (such as toileting or changing clothes);
- e. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
- f. Meet students in a secluded area or lock doors. Ensure the setting has glass windows and/or glass panes in doors;
- g. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person, for their own needs;
- h. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- i. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation's programs and activities;
- j. Have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without the Principal's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting or tutoring). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate);
- k. Have any online or phone contact with a child or their family (use of the Portal, school approved online educational applications, a school phone or school email for the purpose of school or emergency communications is permitted);



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

- l. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians; (if required to photograph students or visiting students within the context of a school program on a personal device, photographs should be uploaded only to the Media File shared folder and immediately deleted from personal devices);
- m. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- n. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example personal relationships or social activities);
- o. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- p. Transport a student in their car unless they have specific permission from the parents and the Principal as part of their professional role. In the event of an emergency, staff should attempt to obtain parental consent and also report the matter to a member of the Senior Leadership team, where possible prior to the journey commencing;
- q. Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- r. Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability;
- s. Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- t. Do anything in contravention of the organisation's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

4.4 **Some examples in relation to appropriate physical contact with students include:**

- a. assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching. An employee should advise the student of what they intend to do and, where possible, seek the student's consent;
- b. teaching sport, music and other activities may require the physical handling of a student to demonstrate a particular action or skill; and
- c. other physical contact with students which may be appropriate includes: comforting a distressed student; guiding a student in a non-threatening manner; gently tapping a student on the shoulder to gain her attention after verbal requests were unsuccessful; and protecting a student from imminent danger to himself or to others.

4.5 **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.**

5. Breach of Policy

What Happens if You Breach this Code?

- 5.1 If you breach this Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation.

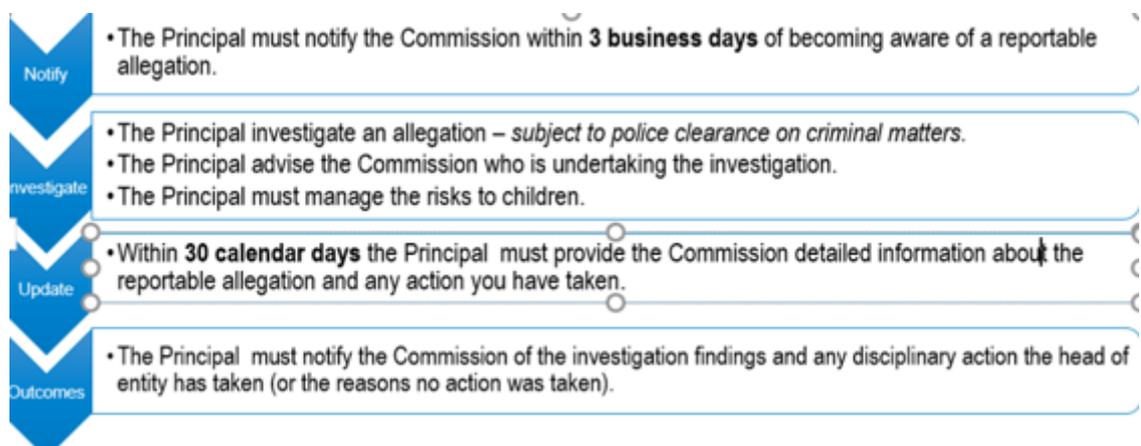


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- 5.2 In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, the School will report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any conduct deemed to have violated its Codes of Conduct and Ethics. The School will report to the police all instances in which a breach of the law has, or may have, occurred.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 If staff are aware of any potential breaches of policy that are advised to speak with either the Principal or a Child Safety Officer.

6. Reportable Conduct Scheme

- 6.1 The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme scheme is administered by The Commission for Children and Young People and is designed to ensure that the Commission will be aware of every allegation of certain types of employee misconduct involving children in relevant organisations that exercise care, supervision and authority over children.
- 6.2 Staff must report, immediately, to a Child Safety Officer or the Principal, any breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct arising from an action by an employee or volunteer within our organisation.
- 6.3 In response to any instance of 'serious' breaches which relate to abuse or neglect ('serious' being cases in which the abuse or neglect has resulted in, or is likely to result in, significant harm to a child or young person) the Principal will investigate and deal with allegations of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour towards a child in line with the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme.





CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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- 7.1 St Catherine's School undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:
- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
 - identify the safest and most suitable people who share St Catherine's School's values and commitment to protect children;
 - prevent a person from working at St Catherine's School if they pose a risk to children.
- 7.2 St Catherine's School requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with St Catherine's School, including obtaining and verifying Working with Children's Checks using the online validation 'Status Checker' tool
- 7.3 St Catherine's School may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at St Catherine's School and during their time with St Catherine's School at regular intervals.
- 7.4 St Catherine's School will undertake thorough reference and personal identity checks as per the approved internal procedure.
- 7.5 Newly appointed staff will undergo a Child Safety Induction.
- 7.6 Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy and by agreeing to and signing the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

8. Boarding House Code of Conduct

- 8.1 In addition to the above expectations, students in out of home care require particular protection.
- 8.2 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 2018, 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.
- 8.3 St Catherine's School acknowledges its obligations to meet the provisions of Federal and State legislation; including the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) and the VRQA Guidelines for Enrolment of Overseas Students aged under 18 years.
- 8.4 St Catherine's School implements risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk in the Boarding House and to develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the Boarding House.



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

8.5 St Catherine's School implements risk management procedures to identify, assess and mitigate risk in the Homestay Accommodation and conducts stringent child safety screening of homestay families as outlined in the Homestay Policy.

8.6 The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse noted the following risks to Boarders:

- a. more opportunities for perpetrators to be alone with children
- b. no parents to turn to for protection
- c. little external oversight of the institutions
- d. lack of privacy and eroded personal boundaries
- e. lack of supervision, supervision can be delegated to older students
- f. students of different ages being housed together

8.7 Additional Risks include:

- a. visitors in the Boarding House
- b. language and cultural barriers may impede understanding and lead to misplaced trust of strangers
- c. Culturally and/or linguistically diverse students may also experience communication barriers when it comes to reporting abuse and seeking support

8.8 All staff and visitors to the Boarding House must:

- a. take particular care to respect the privacy and personal space of students
- b. sign in at the Reception desk upon arrival
- c. wear a Visitor lanyard (visiting teaching staff must wear school identification in the Boarding House)
- d. remain in the downstairs common area and not enter the student residential areas unless accompanied by a Boarding House Staff member
- e. ensure that doors remain open when with students in the lounge areas, study, laundry to ensure clear visibility

8.9 Third Party Providers

In addition to abiding by the above regulations:

- a. Tutors must tutor only in the common areas
- b. Tutors are only permitted in the Boarding House for the duration of the tutorial
- c. Communication with International students must go via the Boarding House staff when arranging tutoring times
- d. Contractors may not enter the building when students are present
- e. Catering staff can enter the Kitchen and Dining Room only



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

9. Responsibility

- 9.1 All St Catherine's staff, volunteers, contractors, third party providers and members of School Council must abide by the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- 9.2 If clarification of this policy or related policies is required, staff should discuss the matter with the Human Resources Manager.

10. Compliance requirements

11. Federal

- a. Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005
- b. [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 \(National Code 2018\)](#)

Victorian

- a. Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe) Act 2015 (Vic)
- b. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- c. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment Act 2015 (Vic)
- d. [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#)
- e. Ministerial Order 870
- f. [The Victorian Teaching Professional Code of Conduct](#)

12. Associated Documents

- a. Child Safety Policy
- b. Staff Code of Conduct
- c. Child Safe Strategy
- d. St Catherine's School Professional Guidelines for Teaching Staff
- e. [The Victorian Teaching Professional Code of Conduct](#)
- f. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- g. Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
- h. Community Code of Conduct
- i. Homestay Checklist
- j. *VRQA Guidelines for the Enrolment of Overseas Students under the age of 18 years*

13. 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:

Role/Position:.....

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 4: Working with Children Check occupational fields

For an activity to be defined as child-related work under the Working with Children Act, it must be represented by one of the occupational fields listed below. However, not all work within the occupational categories is child-related work, and some people are exempt.

| Service or place of work | Details | Code |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Camps | All overnight camps for children | 10 |
| Child Care Services | Child care services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre based long day care • occasional care • family day care • in home care • outside school hours care | 14 16 18 20 22 |
| Child employment – supervisors | Supervision of a child (under 15 years of age) in employment under the <i>Child Employment Act 2003</i> | 76 |
| Child-minding | Babysitting or child-minding services arranged by a commercial agency | 12 |
| Child Protection Services | Child Protection Services | 24 |
| Children's services | Children's services including kindergartens or preschools under the Children's Services Act 1996 and Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria) Act 2010 | 26 |
| Clubs & associations | Clubs, associations, or movements of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature | 42 |
| Coaching & tuition | Coaching or private tuition of any kind specifically for children | 28 |
| Counselling services | Counselling or other support services for children | 40 |
| Educational institutions | Educational institutions for children, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state schools (including all primary, secondary, technical and special state schools) • non-government schools (all primary, secondary and special non-government schools) • TAFE colleges and TAFE divisions of universities providing VCE and/or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) subjects • Some adult education providers providing VCE and/or VCAL subjects • other institutions providing children's study or training programs. | 44 46 48 50 52 |
| Entertainment and party services | Commercial entertainment or party services for children unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities | 30 |
| Foster care | Fostering children | 54 |
| Gym or play facilities | Commercial gym or play facilities for children, unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities | 32 |
| Kinship care | Caring for a child placed by Child Protection under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 | 80 |
| Out-of-home care services | Out-of-home care services (under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>) | 38 |
| Pediatric wards | Pediatric wards of public, private or denominational hospitals as defined in the <i>Health Services Act 1988</i> | 58 |
| Photography services | Commercial photography services for children, unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities | 34 |
| Refuges | Refuges or other residential facilities used by children | 62 |
| Religion | Religious organisations | 64 |
| School crossings | School crossing services | 66 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----|
| Student exchange programs/homestay | Student exchange/homestay arrangement under Part 4.5A of the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> , including accommodation in a person's home | 78 |
| Talent and beauty competitions | Commercial talent or beauty competitions for children, unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities | 36 |
| Transport | Publicly funded or commercial transport services specifically for children | 60 |
| Youth justice | Youth remand, residential, or justice centres, supervision units and probation services within the meaning of the <i>Children Youth and Families Act 2005</i> . | 56 |

Appendix 5: Child safety incident report



St Catherine's School Child Safety Incident Report

This form is designed to assist staff to report any Child Safety concerns and should be handed either the Principal or one of the School's Child Safety Officers along completion to ensure this information is stored confidentially.

Incident details

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date of incident: | |
| Time of incident: | |
| Location of incident: | |
| Name(s) of child/children involved: | |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved: | |

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

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? *(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)*

No Yes, Aboriginal Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

| |
|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please describe the incident

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| When did it take place? | |
| Who was involved? | |
| What did you see? | |
| Other information | |

Parent/carer/child use

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Date of incident: | |
| Time of incident: | |
| Location of incident: | |
| Name(s) of child/children involved: | |
| Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved: | |

School use:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Date incident report received: | |
| Staff member managing incident: | |
| Follow-up date: | |
| Incident ref. number: | |

Has the incident been reported?

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Child protection | |
| Police | |
| Another third party (please specify): | |

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous? (Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes No

Appendix 6: Child Safe Action Plan

| Activity | In Place | Partially in place | Not in Place | Action | Timeline |
|--|----------|--------------------|--------------|---|----------|
| Child safety is a core part of internal and external communication | x | | | Promote the School's Child Safe Strategy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy | Ongoing |
| Policies and procedures exist that prioritise child safety and promote shared responsibility at all levels of the School | x | | | The School has developed a Child Safe Strategy that outlines the policies and procedures the School has implemented to ensure a Child Safe environment. | Ongoing |
| A culture exists of supporting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and the safety of children with a disability | x | | | The School will continue to update strategies and seek professional development and advice to ensure the cultural safety of culturally and linguistically diverse children and the safety of children with a disability. | Ongoing |
| The Child Safe Standards requires the School to consider the safety of children with a disability across the implementation of the standards | x | | | The safety of children with a disability has been considered across the Standards in the Child Safe Plan and discussions with parents, appropriate staff and organisations will continue to take place as appropriate. | Ongoing |
| A culture exists in which staff, volunteers, children and families feel comfortable and supported when discussing any child safety concerns | x | | | The School conducts regular surveys to allow students to provide feedback on their views towards safety in the School | Ongoing |
| The School has a child safe policy or statement of commitment, which is accessible to the public | x | | | The School has a Child Safe Policy that is available on both the Staff portal and the Parent Portal and is also available on the School website. | Ongoing |
| All staff and volunteers are aware of the School's commitment to child safety and their duty of care requirements | x | | | The induction process for staff and volunteers outlines the School's expectations and commitment to child safety and each individual's duty of care. The School is committed to providing ongoing training to staff in the area of Child Safety | Ongoing |
| Appropriate safe behaviour with children is clearly defined in a code of conduct which is accessible and understood by staff, volunteers, families and children | | x | | The Staff Code of Conduct has been updated to ensure that appropriate behaviour with children is clearly defined for employees and families. Annual student education and a child friendly Student Charter and Boarders' Charter has been created with the input of students. Volunteers need more oversight and education. | Ongoing |
| Interviews, reference checks and Working with Children Checks or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration is required for all staff and volunteers | x | | | The School Recruitment and Selection Guidelines outlines the School's processes for interviews, reference checks and Working with Children Check and Police Records Checks. | Ongoing |

| Activity | In Place | Partially in place | Not in Place | Action | Timeline |
|--|----------|--------------------|--------------|---|------------------------|
| Police records checks are conducted for all staff upon appointment | x | | | <p>The School's Recruitment and Selection guidelines outline the School's processes for Police record checks</p> <p>The HR Manager includes a clause in all offers of employment stating that staff are required to provide evidence of a National Police Record Check at the commencement of their employment. Employment is conditional upon staff providing this information to the School.</p> <p>All Teaching staff complete a National Criminal Record Check as part of their VIT registration. These checks are conducted every five years by the VIT. The School uses the Everproof system to monitor ongoing compliance.</p> | Ongoing Ongoing |
| Staff and volunteers are trained in child safety and understand and practice appropriate behaviour, including with Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability respectively. | x | | | All Staff will complete training on an annual basis in child safety to ensure they understand and practice appropriate behaviour, including with Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability respectively. | Annual |
| | | x | | Training will be implemented for volunteers to ensure that they understand and practice appropriate behaviour, including with Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability respectively. | In progress |
| Risk Management approaches are regularly reflected on and improved | x | | | The School has a Child Safe Risk Assessment that is conducted at the commencement to each Semester. Any potential risks are identified and risk control measures are implemented to either mitigate or eliminate the risk. | Twice per year |
| Reporting procedures are accessible for all children | x | | | The School is in the process of developing a child friendly reporting process. | Ongoing |
| Measures are taken to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability. | | x | | The School is in the process of promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability via obtaining resources and liaising with families and relevant organisations. | Ongoing |
| Staff briefing on the Child Safe Strategy | x | | | Staff have been briefed on the School's Child Safe Strategy and have access to the document electronically. | Ongoing |
| Staff briefing on updated School policies | x | | | Staff have been briefed on the School's Child Safe policies. Training sessions are undertaken regularly for new staff. | Ongoing |