



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Purpose of this Policy

The St Catherine's School *Child Safety Code of Conduct* sets out the expected behaviour of adults with, or in the presence of, children and young people in our school environments. The *Child Safety Code of Conduct* should be read in conjunction with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* which includes the School's Commitment to Child Safety, relevant definitions and key responsibilities.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all St Catherine's School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members, ministers of religion and any other adult present as a visitor in any of our school environments.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students, including the Boarding premises. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

3. Expected Standards of Behaviour

All St Catherine's School staff, volunteers, contractors, School Council members, visitors including visiting Ministers of Religion, and any other member of our school community are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding our St Catherine's School *Commitment to Child Safety* at all times and adhering to our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- treating students and families in our school community with respect within and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTQI+) students
- supporting students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- upholding the School's zero tolerance of racism and discrimination with appropriate consequences



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student who is not their own child – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult
- take all reasonable steps to provide a child safe environment
- comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical and online contact with students
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to a Child Safety Champion or the Principal

Child Safety Champions:

- Deputy Principal: Student Wellbeing
- Head of Junior School
- Head of Early Learning Centre
- Senior School Psychologist
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures*
- not displaying inappropriate behaviours towards, or in the presence of, or engaging with students in ways that are not appropriate or justified by the educational or professional context (including for example: sexual misconduct; inappropriate touching; speech or other communication of a sexual nature; physical or apprehended physical violence; behaviour that could cause significant emotional or psychological harm to a student; grooming type behaviour; or voyeurism)

Teachers

Teachers are also required to comply with the *Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct* published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and in particular the principles relating to relationships with students. These principles include that teachers:

- demonstrate their commitment to their learners by knowing their students and how they learn and respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- work to create an environment that promotes respect for everyone
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language and behaviour
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- must not violate or compromise their unique position of influence and trust in their relationship with students



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

- must not touch a student without a valid reason
- must not engage in communication with a student beyond the boundaries of a professional relationship without a valid reason, including via written, electronic or online means (including social media)
- do not show favouritism or bias towards students or their families.

School Counsellors & Psychologists

When dealing with students, school counsellors and psychologists should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in any code of ethics or guidelines to which they are bound, including:

- The Australian Psychological Society (APS) APS Code of Ethics (or any code of conduct for registered psychologists issued by the Psychology Board of Australia)
- Australian Counselling Association – ACA Code of Ethics and Practice.

Sports and recreation

Sports coaches, staff members and volunteers who are involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should also adopt practices that help make students to feel safe, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be "good sports"
- ensuring that any physical contact they have with student during a sport or other recreational activity is necessary and that they explain the reason for the contact and ask for the student's permission
- avoid where possible situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

Nurses

Nurses have a responsibility for maintaining their professional and personal boundaries when providing care to an individual. The care provided by nurses is likely to involve personal contact with a student, such as touching and holding. In particular, nurses are also expected to abide by the applicable code of conduct or standards of conduct for nurses, including the *Code of Conduct for Nurses* issued by the Nursing and Midwifery Board (as updated or replaced from time to time) which includes the following:

- practice in accordance with the standards of the nursing profession
- respect the dignity, culture, ethnicity, values and beliefs of people receiving care and treatment



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

- treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as private and confidential
- promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in their relationship with those in their care
- abide by the mandatory reporting legislation about child abuse and neglect
- remain alert to students who may be vulnerable and act on welfare concerns where appropriate.

4. Unacceptable Behaviours

St Catherine's School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, and School Council members **must not**:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- display inappropriate behaviours towards, or in the presence of, or engage with students in ways that are not appropriate or justified by the educational or professional context
- have any private online or phone contact with a child or their family in the absence of an educational context or emergency (except where there is an emergency, safety concern or an urgent need, use of the Portal, school approved online educational applications, a school phone or school email is required);
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- express racist or discriminatory views
- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the *Photographing, Filming and Recording Students Policy* or where required for duty of care purposes. (If required to photograph students within the context of a school program on a personal device, photographs should be uploaded to the Media File folder and immediately deleted from personal devices.)
- consume alcohol or take, or be in possession of, illicit drugs in the school environment, except where consumption of alcohol is permitted at school events
- do anything in contravention of the School's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

5. Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

Any St Catherine's School staff, volunteers, contractors or School Council members who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

Visitors and parents who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to restrictions or conditions by St Catherine's School, including in relation to their access to school premises, school functions and activities. In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to the Victoria Police.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the St Catherine's School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to a Child Safety Champion or the Principal.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, contact a Child Safety Champion or the Human Resources Manager.

6. Reportable Conduct Scheme

6.1 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.

6.2 Any breach of this Child Safety Code of Conduct that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that a St Catherine's School staff member, volunteer, contractor or School Council member has committed reportable conduct, or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, must report their belief immediately to a Child Safety Champion or the Principal in accordance with the *Reportable Conduct Policy*.

7. Boarding House Code of Conduct

7.1 In addition to the above expectations, students in out of home care require particular protection and St Catherine's School is committed to mitigating risk for all students, with specific policy addressing the needs of these students.

7.2 St Catherine's School also acknowledges its obligations to meet the provisions of Federal and State legislation in relation to overseas students; 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.



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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.
- 7.5 St Catherine's School recognises the potential for additional risk to the safety and welfare of boarding students arising from:
- a more opportunities for students to be alone
 - b no parents to turn to for protection
 - c reduced privacy and diminished personal boundaries because of community living
 - d students of different ages being housed together.
- 7.6 Additional Risks arise because of:
- 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
- 7.7 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
- 7.8 Third Party Providers
- In addition to the above:
- 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

8. Responsibility

- 8.1 All St Catherine's staff, volunteers, contractors, third party providers, members of School Council, and other adults present in any of our school environments must abide by the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- 8.2 If clarification of this policy or related policies is required, staff should discuss the matter with the Human Resources Manager.

9. Policy Review

This Policy has been endorsed by the School Council.

This policy will be reviewed for effectiveness:

- as part of St Catherine's School policy review schedule (every 2 years);
- as required, with changes to current legislation, research, policy and best practice;
- following issues raised through the Complaints and Grievances Policy;
- after any significant child safety incident; and
- upon receipt of staff and parent/guardian feedback.

10. Compliance Requirements

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 1359](#)

11. Associated Documents

- a. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- b. Staff Code of Conduct
- c. Reportable Conduct Policy
- d. The Victorian Teaching Professional Code of Conduct
- e. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- f. Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations and Procedures Policy



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

- g. Community Code of Conduct
- h. Homestay Policy and Checklist
- i. Volunteers Policy
- j. Contractors and Visitors Policy
- k. VRQA Guidelines for the Enrolment of Overseas Students under the age of 18 years.
- l. Protecting Children and Mandatory Reporting e-Module: [Information Sharing and Family Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management \(MARAM\) Learning Management System.](#)