

Principles

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard, and they are safe and feel safe (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing at St Mary MacKillop Primary School:

All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Our school works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and wellbeing and protection.

All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/carers.

All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing, to identify and mitigate risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.

The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.

Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.

All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

All members of the school community (including students and their families) are kept informed of child safety and wellbeing matters (where appropriate) and are involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety and wellbeing, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally (including under legislated information sharing schemes being Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Information Shari

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Child neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health and physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse](#))

5. significant neglect.

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours:

Guide to responsibilities of school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Mary MacKillop Primary School recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety and wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff and volunteers
- ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to prevent, identify and address child safety and wellbeing matters
- ensuring that the school has in place appropriate risk management strategies and practices that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to children and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359
- ensuring the school takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and in line with [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
- ensuring the school understands and reports all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in accordance with the School's reportable conduct policy
- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the school's prescribed role as an ISE
- ensuring that the school monitors and reviews the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, on an annual basis.

Guide to responsibilities of school staff

Responsibilities of school staff (school employees, contractors and clergy) and volunteers include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal school

following the school's Child

Our school has also established additional internal procedures and processes to help ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent, identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our school is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, it is able to share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the CISS or FVISS.

If employees or volunteers have any concerns about Child Safety, they are to notify the Child Safety Officer and/or the Wellbeing Leader and/or a member of the school leadership team immediately.

At St Mary MacKillop Primary School, if any member of our school community has concerns for a child's safety they need to discuss, they can notify the school Principal, the Deputy Principal or the designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)

Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

1. [Failure to disclose offence](#): Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
2. [Failure to protect offence](#): This offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
3. [Grooming offence](#): This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.).

