



Child Safe Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of St Joseph's School Coleraine (St Joseph's) to providing a safe environment and ensuring that children are able to experience the fundamental right to be protected from all forms of child abuse. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the school.

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#).

Scope

It is a shared and collective responsibility of all members of the school community to create a child safe culture and environment.

Legislative Context

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- VRQA Guidelines to Minimum Standards
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

Definitions

Term	Definition
Child	means a person under the age of 18 years.
Child abuse	child abuse can include physical or sexual harm, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, or family violence. It does not have to involve physical contact or force. Child abuse can include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually abusing or exploiting a child; • Talking to a child in a sexually explicit way; • Grooming a child for future sexual activity; • Forcing a child to watch pornography; • Being witness to family violence; • Engaging in sexual activity with a child under 16; • Failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision or medical care to the extent that the development of the child is placed at serious risk or is significantly impaired.
Child Safe Standards	<p>means the compulsory minimum standards (enacted pursuant to the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005) which apply to organisations in Victoria that provide services for children to help ensure the safety of children, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements; • A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety; • A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children; • Screening, supervision, training and other human resources 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.
Grooming	<p>when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating electronically or face-to-face and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their/parent carer.</p>
Mandatory reporting	<p>The legal requirement under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)</i> to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The principal, teachers, medical practitioners and nurses at a school are mandatory reporters under this Act.</p>
Reasonable belief	<p>a reasonable belief or a belief on reasonable grounds is not the same as having proof but is more than a mere rumor or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have</p>

	<p>formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused; • A report has been made of a sexual relationship with a child under 16.
Reportable conduct	<p>Five types of "reportable conduct" are listed in the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Children's Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017)</i>. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sexual offences (against, with, or in the presence of, a child) 2. sexual misconduct (against, with, or in the presence of, a child) 3. physical violence (against, with, or in the presence of, a child) 4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm 5. significant neglect.
Working with Children Check	<p>A legislative requirement and process of assessment as prescribed in the <i>Working with Children Act 2005</i> and subsequent Regulations as amended from time to time.</p>
School community	<p>The school community includes the following people and organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members; • Students; • Members of the school Council and other school bodies and committees; • Minister of Religion; and • All contractors and organisations engaged by the school, including subcontractors;

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • campus of the school • online school environments (including email and intranet systems) • 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 staff	means an individual working in a school environment who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority (b) a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) (c) a minister of religion. (<u>Ministerial Order No. 870</u>)

Policy Statement

St Joseph's has a 'no tolerance' approach to all forms of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with the policies and procedures in place.

St Joseph's is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children under the care and supervision of school staff, students, volunteers, contractors and subcontractors by:

- preventing all forms of child abuse, identifying risks early, and removing / reducing those risks;
- complying with the legal and moral obligations of the school community in reporting allegations of child abuse, and alerting the appropriate authorities if there is a reasonable belief a child is in need of protection;
- upholding the safety of all children, including Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability; and
- providing regular training and education to members of the school community on the risks of child abuse.

Promote Participation and Empowerment of Children

St Joseph's actively promotes the participation and empowerment of all students, including children. The following table outlines how the school implements this requirement of the Child Safety Standards.

Principle	Demonstrated by:
The school governing authority develops strategies to deliver appropriate education about: a) standards of behaviour for students attending the school;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent guides on the curriculum outlining the school's approach • Parent Handbook- outlines expectations and policy

<p>b) healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);</p> <p>c) resilience; and</p> <p>d) child abuse awareness and prevention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class/Pastoral meetings- to establish rules and for student to raise issue/ monitor student wellbeing and personal safety ● Student safety surveys ● Chaplaincy and student wellbeing services ● Engagement of students in learning is embedded across the school ● Cross-curriculum focus on issues of safety and forms of abuse that are developed through literature, social media, media, government and church documents, examples of scenarios that develop understanding of responsibilities and ethical choices ● Curriculum scope and sequence that outlines key focus for resilience and healthy and respectful relationships at year levels ● Implementation of RE units that reinforce and allow student to develop their understanding of respecting the dignity of each person, social justice, reconciliation and respecting diversity ● Different levels of student voice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student surveys to assist with informing policies ○ Student, staff and parent committees to review /collaborate on school initiatives ○ Staff/student council ○ Student Representative Council- across school ○ Curriculum planning- pre and post testing, student input on unit planning and directions ○ Student feedback on teaching practice and learning ○ Focus group and action research ○ Student led conferences ● Review and monitor curriculum and procedures for students ● Risk management register and strategies ● Professional learning on student
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	voice and creating a culture that promotes students to report issues on own and others personal safety
The school governing authority promotes the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student developed poster are developed and displayed throughout school • Student developed guidelines for child safety • Student code of conduct • Procedure for reporting any form of abuse- such as in student diary/school app- accessible to students.

Organisational Culture of Safety through effective Leadership Arrangements

St Joseph's aims to promote an organisational culture of child safety through effective leadership by:

- Ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards;
- Regularly reviewing, updating and providing information on policies and procedures related to child safety; and
- Monitoring and evaluating the operation of the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Identify and reduce risks of child abuse

St Joseph's aims to eliminate all risks of child abuse wherever possible. Risks to children are identified during initial risk assessments and are managed for the duration of the activity or service. See the Child Safety Risk Register.

Responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

The school's Child Safe Procedure outlines the school's framework for responding to, and reporting instances of, suspected child abuse (including mandatory reporting requirements).

Supporting Documents

Internal Documents

- Child Safety Procedure
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Security Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Recruitment Procedure
- Working with Children (WWC) Check Policy
- Working with Children (WWC) Check Procedure

External Documents

- [PROTECT Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- [An Overview of the Child Safe Standards \[DHHS\]](#)
- [A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation \[CCYP\]](#)
- Empowerment and participation of children ([CCYP - Tip Sheet for Child Safe Organisation](#))
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#): A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools.
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2013, [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013](#), CECV.
- Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), Vatican.
- Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 2013, [Betrayal of Trust](#)

Responsibility

Approval Authority	Policy Sponsor	Administration
Responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this policy	Responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by the Approval Authority	Responsible for the administration support for the maintenance of this policy as directed by the Policy Sponsor
Governing Authority	Principal	Compliance and Risk Manager

Promulgation

This policy will be communicated throughout the St Joseph's school community in the form of:

- policies section of the St Joseph's website;
- policy library section of the St Joseph's intranet; and
- distribution of email to all staff.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented throughout St Joseph's via:

- policy library section of the St Joseph's intranet;
- staff briefing session; and
- training sessions.