



# Child Safe Procedure

## Purpose

This procedure details how St Joseph's School Coleraine (St Joseph's) will embed a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse and implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

It covers material issues such as

- (i) what child abuse means
- (ii) the forms it can take
- (iii) the standards of behaviour expected
- (iv) the risk management strategies against child abuse and
- (v) how to report issues of concern.

This procedure will ensure that children experience the fundamental right to be safe from the following forms of harm:

- Physical violence;
- Sexual offences, including grooming with the intent to sexually abuse a child or engaging in sexual activity with a child under 16;
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse;
- Serious neglect; and
- Unfair treatment on the basis of disability, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation and/or religion.

## Scope

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

This procedure applies to all interactions with children regardless of whether the child or situation is associated with the school.

## 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 2015
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*

## Definitions

A complete list of definitions relevant to this procedure is contained within the Child Safe Policy.

## Actions

### 1. Applying a risk management framework to minimise the potential for child abuse to occur.

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Developing and implementing strategies to identify and remove or reduce risks of child abuse	Governing Authority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop and maintain the necessary risk management strategies to appropriately mitigate against the risks of child abuse.</li><li>2. Integrate these strategies within the Annual OHS Planning requirements that apply to schools.</li><li>3. Assist Principal in implementing these strategies within their school.</li></ol>
		Principal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Participate in training regarding the strategies outlined above against child abuse.</li><li>2. Implement these strategies in all school activities by:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identifying and mitigating the risk(s) of child abuse in the school environment of your school, taking into account the nature of that environment, the activities expected to be conducted in it (including the provision of services by contractors, partner providers or other outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment;</li><li>• making a record of any identified risks of child abuse occurring in the school; and</li><li>• specifying the action(s) you are taking or will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).</li></ul></li></ol>
		Principal/ School Advisory Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the risk management strategies against child abuse and of the implementation of risk controls.</li></ol>

B.	Utilising child safe recruitment practices	Principal/ Business Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure child safe recruitment practices are adopted in accordance the school's Recruitment Procedure and Working with Children Check Procedure.</li> <li>2. Ensure all new employees are provided with an overview of the Child Safe Standards, the school's commitment to child safety and their responsibilities as employees.</li> </ol>
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## 2. Adhering to the School's Child Safe Code of Conduct

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Adhering to the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct (Appendix One)	All members of the school community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adhere to the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct (Appendix One).</li> </ol>

## 3. Educating staff and students about their responsibilities in ensuring child safety

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Ensuring all new employees are provided with an overview of the Child Safe Standards and the school's commitment to child safety.	Principal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure the induction for new employees includes an overview of the Child Safe Standards and the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct.</li> <li>2. Monitor completion of the induction for all new continuing and fixed-term employees.</li> <li>3. Provide information on the Child Safe Standards and the school's commitment to child safety on the school's website. Advise managers and above to inform all staff (including casual and sessional staff) and also contractors within Victoria.</li> </ol>
B.	Training for all employees who are in positions that deliver education and services to children.	Principal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Source, develop and deliver mandatory training sessions for identified staff on:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) their legal reporting responsibilities</li> <li>(ii) warning signs that may indicate any of the following: physical, sexual, emotional</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

			<p>and psychological, racial, cultural, religious abuse and/or neglect</p> <p>(iii) acceptable and unacceptable behaviour under the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct</p> <p>2. Maintain records of attendance.</p> <p>3. Conduct regular refresher training.</p>
C.	Information session conducted for students and employees who are <b>not</b> in positions that deliver education and services to children	Principal	<p>1. Source, develop and deliver information sessions for identified staff and students.</p> <p>2. Maintain records of attendance.</p> <p>3. Conduct subsequent information sessions as required.</p>

#### 4. Managing child safety reports in a compliance and consistent manner

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Responding to an emergency on school grounds or in school activities where a child has just been abused or is at immediate risk of harm	Any person at the scene	<p>1. Separate the alleged victim(s) and other(s) involved if safe to do so.</p> <p>2. Administer first aid if required and qualified to do so.</p> <p>3. If the incident is taking place on school grounds, immediately call the applicable Emergency Services.</p> <p>4. If the incident is taking place at a location away from the school listed above, immediately call 000.</p> <p>5. Preserve any item that may amount to evidence of the abuse (scene of the incident, clothing and other physical items).</p> <p>6. Take reasonable precautions to prevent discussion of the incident between those involved in the alleged incident (including any other children who may have witnessed the incident).</p>
B.	Responding to an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse	Any member of the school community over 18 years	<p>1. You <b>must</b> act in accordance with this Procedure if you form a suspicion or reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed the child</p>

			abuse (e.g. if the victim or <i>another person</i> tells you about the abuse).
C.	Mandatory reporting to authorities by designated professionals where a reasonable belief is formed that a child is in need of protection	Designated professionals under the <i>Children Youth and Families Act 2005</i> , including doctors, nurses, midwives and teachers.	1. Any staff member and/or student who is a teacher has a mandatory obligation to report any reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection in accordance with point D below, unless the person reasonably believes that a report has already been made by another person.
D.	Reporting to authorities where a reasonable belief is formed that a child is in need of protection	Any member of the school community over 18 years	<p>2. <b>Staff</b> members who witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of being abused, even if unsure or have not witnessed the child abuse directly, <b>must report</b> to the Child Protection Officer in the first instance, who must seek advice from Catholic Education Office Ballarat regarding the reporting process.</p> <p>3. <b>Students</b> who witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of being abused, even if unsure and have not witnessed the child abuse directly, <b>must report</b> to a school staff member in the first instance. The staff member must seek advice from the Child Protection Officer who in turn must seek advice from the Catholic Education Office Ballarat regarding the reporting process.</p> <p>4. If the suspected abuse is alleged against a school staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder, then it must be reported to the Child Protection Officer <b>and</b> Victoria Police. The Child Protection Officer will then ensure the matter is reported in accordance with part 4H of this Procedure.</p>

			<p>5. If the suspected abuse is of a sexual nature (including grooming), then it must be reported to the Child Protection Officer <b>and</b> Victoria Police.</p> <p>6. If the suspected abuse comes from within the family or outside community, then the suspected abuse must be reported to DHHS Child Protection on 131 278 if a child is considered to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In need of protection from child abuse;</li> <li>• At risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability, or development.</li> </ul>
E.	Reporting to authorities where a reasonable belief is formed that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16	Any member of the school community over 18 years	<p><b>Staff</b> members who have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 <b>must report</b> this to their relevant Child Protection Officer in the first instance, who must seek advice from the Principal regarding the reporting process.</p> <p><b>Students</b> who have a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 <b>must report</b> this to a school staff member in the first instance. The staff member must seek advice from the Child Protection Officer who in turn must seek advice from the Principal regarding the reporting process.</p> <p>An adult who has a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 <b>must report</b> this to Victoria Police unless they have a reasonable excuse not to do so or an exemption applies. Failure to report this to police</p>

			<p>is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment.</p> <p>A <b>reasonable excuse not to report</b> to Victoria Police includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a fear for the safety of the victim or another person (except the alleged perpetrator) as a result of the disclosure; or</li> <li>• a reasonable belief that the information has already been disclosed to police (e.g. through a mandatory report made to DHHS).</li> </ul> <p><b>Exemptions</b> from reporting to Victoria Police are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the victim is 16 years or older at the time of providing the information and has requested confidentiality (except where the victim has an intellectual disability);</li> <li>• if the person comes into possession of the information when they were a child;</li> <li>• if the information is privileged (e.g. client legal privilege, journalist privilege or religious confessions);</li> <li>• if the information is a 'confidential communication' (written or oral communication of sexual abuse made by a child to a doctor or counsellor during treatment and assistance);</li> <li>• if the information is in the public domain;</li> <li>• if the person is a police officer acting in the course of his/her duty in respect of the victim of the alleged sexual offence; or</li> <li>• if the victim of the alleged sexual offence turned 16 years before 27 October 2014.</li> </ul> <p>A disclosure made in <b>good faith</b> does not constitute unprofessional conduct or breach of professional ethics and the</p>
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			person making the disclosure will not be subject to liability in respect of it.
F.	Contacting parents/carers	Child Protection Officer	<p>The Child Protection Officer will determine who will consult with DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police to determine if it is appropriate to contact the parents/carer, and if so, what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:</p> <p>Not to contact the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)</p> <p>To contact the parents/carer and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).</p>
G.	Removing someone from the school community who poses a substantial risk	Principal (in consultation with the Governing Authority)	<p>If there is a substantial risk that an adult within the school community may commit child abuse or a sexual offence against a child under 16, the school will take action to remove or reduce that risk.</p> <p>The Principal shall ensure that any employment action taken by the school against an employee complies with existing employment laws, including relevant legislation, industrial agreements and employment contracts.</p>
H.	Investigating allegations against a St Joseph's staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder	Child Protection Officer	<p>From 1 July 2017 allegations of child abuse against a St Joseph's staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder are subject to the Victorian reportable conduct scheme.</p> <p>When the Child Protection Officer receives sufficient details of an allegation of child abuse against a St Joseph's staff member, volunteer, contractor or officeholder then it shall cause the allegation to be reported to the Child Protection Officer (or the</p>



			<p>Principal if the allegation is against the Child Protection Officer) as soon as possible.</p> <p>Within 3 business days of the report to the Child Protection Officer, the Principal will report the allegation on behalf of the Child Protection Officer to the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People ("Commission") and ensure appropriate investigation of the allegation as directed by the Commission, unless it is subject to police investigation.</p> <p>Within 30 days of the initial report to the Commission, the Principal will update the Commission with further details of the allegations and investigation.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the investigation, any findings and reasons for the outcome of an investigation shall be reported to the Principal.</p>
I.	Providing on-going support	Child Protection Officer	<p>If a <b>student</b> is impacted by suspected abuse, and it is deemed appropriate in the circumstances, the Child Protection Officer shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establish regular communication between staff and the child's parent/guardian/carer (if this is appropriate) to discuss a child's progress, wellbeing, and the effectiveness of planned strategies</li> <li>• provide referral to counselling service (if this is appropriate)</li> <li>• convene a Student Support Group to plan on-going monitoring, support, and follow-up of the child's health and wellbeing (Student Support Groups usually comprise wellbeing staff, teachers, allied health professionals and where appropriate the student and/or their parent/carer)</li> <li>• develop and implement a Student Support Plan, which documents the</li> </ul>

			planned support strategies and includes timeframes for review (where possible, these support strategies should be informed by allied health and wellbeing professionals with expertise in addressing child abuse and trauma)
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## 5. Promoting of the involvement and awareness of children

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Increase staff and students' awareness of the school <u>Child Safe Policy</u> and Procedure	Child Protection Officer	<p>Create and display promotional materials as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poster to promote the awareness of the school's <u>Child Safe Policy</u> and Procedure (to be displayed in school buildings);</li> <li>• school website.</li> <li>• Insert a standard and consistent description of the <u>Child Safe Policy</u> and Procedure and management strategies into student information documentation e.g. website, student handbooks, student induction etc.</li> <li>• Promote the <u>Child Safe Policy</u> and Procedure through school Newsletters.</li> </ul>

## Supporting Documents

### Internal Documents

- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Risk Register
- 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 procedure 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 procedure will be implemented throughout St Joseph's via:

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

## Records Management

Document Title	Minimum Retention Period
Child Safety Risk Register	7 Years
PROTECT: Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools	Permanent Retention