



Child Safety - Code of Conduct

Introduction

Central to the mission of St Joseph's School Coleraine (St Joseph's) is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to:

- promote child safety in the St Joseph's school environment
- set standards about the way in which individuals working in the St Joseph's school environment are expected to behave with our students

It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

Scope

All staff and school advisory council members of St Joseph's are required to observe child safe principles and behave appropriately towards, and in the company of, children.

All individuals who are working in the St Joseph's school environment are required to comply with this Code of Conduct. Such individuals, referred to in this Code as "staff", include those who are:

- directly engaged or employed by St Joseph's, such as its teachers, non-teaching staff, chaplain, school advisory council members and coaches; and
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider including professional support services and clergy.

Responsibilities

All staff of St Joseph's are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to St Joseph's Child Safety Policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- treating everyone with respect;
- listening and responding 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;

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification);
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child, unless done so as a requirement of their position at St Joseph's and done so in an area that is visible to others;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the St Joseph's Child Safety Officer;
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- ensuring any allegation of physical or sexual abuse is reported to the police or child protection services;
- reporting any child safety concerns to the St Joseph's Child Safety Officer; and
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Standards of Conduct

All staff

All Staff of St Joseph's **must not**:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical or inappropriate;
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities);
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children, such as language that is offensive, profane, discriminatory or abusive;
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- discriminate against any child because of, and not limited to, culture, race, ethnicity or disability;
- engage in one-on-one contact with a child unless done so as part of their role at St Joseph's and in a public location with high visibility to others. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate;
- have a student in their residence unless accompanied by another student or employee (e.g. pairs of students may babysit in employee residences);
- become friends with students on social media (the use of wikis and blogs for professional use is permissible);
- communicate with students or their families online, except for the purpose of communicating information that directly relates to the employee's work with the child (e.g. employees may email students to communicate details regarding prep);
- disrespect the privacy of children;
- engage in covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with children;
- exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses;
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent/guardian;

- possess, use or be under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol when working with children; and
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. These principles include:

- work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect;
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language;
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm;
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters; and
- do not violate or compromise the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

School Counsellors

In their dealings with students, school counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- The Australian Psychological Society
- Australian Counselling Association

Sport and Recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should also adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

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

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to report immediately any breach of this code to one of the St Joseph's Child Safety Officer.

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

Acknowledgement	
I,	agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct
<div style="text-align: center;">_____</div> <div style="text-align: center;">(insert name)</div>	
_____	_____
(signature)	(date)