Standard Seven – Participation & Empowerment of Children

INTRODUCTION
St Joseph’s School endorses Catholic beliefs and practices and is committed to the protection of all students. As a faith community, we promote participation and empowerment of the young people who live, work and learn under our care.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

“I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE PARTICPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

St Joseph’s Primary School acknowledges that a significant power in balance exists between children and adults and actively engages students in conversations relating to Child safety to ensure their voice is heard.

The School seeks student engagement in conversations relating to Child Safety and development of effective strategies by:

» Consulting directly with students and young people about what they think makes their school safe.
» Giving students information about the standards of care that they are entitled to.
» Giving children information regarding their rights.
» Teaching students how to raise concerns and, make complaints or let someone know if they feel unsafe.
» Regularly checking with students & parents that they are aware of relevant Child Safety Policies & Procedures and that the Child Safety culture is visible.

St Joseph’s Primary School works with students to ensure that they are empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and encourage them to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or afraid.

Some strategies adopted by the school to engage student and young people in conversation regarding Child Safety include:
## Consulting & Talking with Students
### Establishing what safety means
- Ensuring that the physical environment is safe, warm & friendly towards students and young people.
- Discussing with student and young people what makes them feel safe and when do they feel unsafe.

## Child Safe Strategies
### Educating students & young people about their rights
- Running informal educational sessions on the 'Convention of the Rights of a Child'.
- Teaching students and young people that for every right that they enjoy they need to meet its corresponding responsibility.
- Undertaking activities on 'rights' as opposed to 'wants'.
- Ensuring that behavior management expectations are clearly communicated to all key stakeholders and are evidenced in policies and procedures.

### Including students and young people in policy development
- Seek input from students and young people on all aspects of Child Safety (surveys, forums, maps, etc).
- Incorporate their opinions and suggestions into key policy documents and, when applicable the school’s Code of Conduct.
- Running small discussion groups.

### Encouraging students and young people to develop their own Code of Conduct
- Asking students and young people to consider what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. This includes behaviours of adults toward students, of students towards adults and of students towards other students.
- Establish and maintain a child ‘friendly’ Code of Conduct, written by children for children.

### Implementing a curriculum to support student wellbeing
- Incorporate programs and resources such as ‘Bounce Back’, ‘Kids Matter’ and ‘Life Education’ to build resilience, social/emotional awareness and empowerment.
- Engaging professionals such as a Pastoral Care Worker and/or School Psychologist to support students, staff and families.
- Utilising CEO Ballarat’s, Religious Education resource,’Relationships and Sexuality Education’ policies and guidelines to assist with promoting healthy and safe relationships.

## Promoting Inclusion of All Students & Their Families from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities.

St Joseph’s School respects cultural differences and variance in parenting practices due to personal, cultural or religious beliefs. The School does not; however, accept that these differences reduce a child’s right to be safe or the School’s responsibility to protect them from harm.
St Joseph’s Primary School promotes safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

» Demonstrating a ‘zero tolerance’ to discrimination.
» Being respectful, inclusive & welcoming of families from a wide range of backgrounds.
» Recognising times of importance to different cultures.
» Ensuring the school’s physical environment incorporates a range of cultural elements that promote and embrace cultural diversity.
» Employing Staff Members that represent diversity within the local community.
» Actively seeking out and talking to families about how they can be involved in child safety.
» Providing incursions/excursions that allow students to interact with diverse cultural groups or individuals in a range of educational experiences.

St Joseph’s Primary School promotes the safety of children with disabilities by:

» Acknowledging that children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and ensures that its risk management process considers their needs.
» Demonstrating a ‘zero tolerance’ to discrimination.
» Ensuring that the physical environment does not pose access difficulties.
» Being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of children with disabilities.
» Supporting Staff Members, other children & their families to understand and be inclusive of people with disabilities.
» Considering how children with a disability and their families can be encouraged to participate in a safe environment.