



Star of the Sea College

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Star of the Sea College is a Catholic Independent Girls' school, founded by the Presentation Sisters in 1883. Since 2014, Star of the Sea College has been a member of Kildare Ministries.

At Star of the Sea College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of our students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. Our commitment is drawn from, and inherent in, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel: *CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety*:

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic School (*Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n.9*).

PURPOSE

The Code of Conduct has the specific focus on promoting child safety and wellbeing and safeguarding children and young people at Star of the Sea College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment, sets standards and clear boundaries about the way in which school staff are expected to behave with young people and helps the school, staff and volunteers to raise behavioural issues.

All Board members, Committee members, Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at the College are expected to actively contribute to a school culture of child safety. They are expected to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children as set out below, and sign/abide by this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct is intended to complement other professional and occupational codes.

The Code of Conduct is relevant to all staff working with children and includes all activities relating to the staff members' work at and outside the school.

PRINCIPLES

- staff are always in a professional relationship with their students whether at school or not
 - an adult's response to a young person's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with their age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the young person
 - an adult should not be alone with a young person unless there is line of sight to other adults
 - an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with young people outside school unless it is in the course of their professional relationship.
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ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Acceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, clergy, Board and Committee members are responsible for supporting the safety of young people by:

- adhering to Star of the Sea's *Child Safe Policy* and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect young people in our care from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect, modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe educational and pastoral environment
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or another young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another young person
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of young people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance for discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young people with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the reportable conduct scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the school's reportable conduct policy
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Leadership Team, specifically the Principal or Deputy Principal – Students
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the young person/people are safe
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or specific allegations or concerns about a registered teacher
- ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

The Principal is responsible for referring any allegations or concerns about an employee relating to child safety to the MACS Employee Relations Unit. The ER unit will deem whether a situation should be referred to the VIT, Police or CCYP. The Chair of the Board will be informed, as will Kildare Ministries.

Refer to: PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Abuse in Schools



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Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, clergy, Board and Committee members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
 - 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 (for example inappropriate physical contact)
 - put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
 - initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or 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 unless directly related to the curriculum (for example, personal social activities)
 - use inappropriate language in the presence of children
 - express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
 - discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
 - have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the College Leadership Team knowledge and/or consent (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Incidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
 - have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family unless that contact is necessary (for example, connected to the school work of the enrolled student)
 - use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account or personal phone number to make contact with a student
 - exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses to make contact with a student
 - photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents, guardians or carers except in the case of activities connected to teaching and learning
 - work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
 - consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children. The Year 12 Valedictory Dinner is an exception where alcohol is served at this event as the students are in the company and care of their parents. There are also other limited exceptions approved by the Principal eg. some functions attended by adults such as the opening of a new building.
 - use toilets designated for 'student only' use.
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Teachers

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

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

Some staff may have children enrolled at the College or know other children who are students. Staff commencing work at the College must disclose to the Principal any relationship with a student of the school that is in existence at the time the employment commences, or that later forms, which is outside of the context of the student/staff relationship eg. through social connections. The purpose of this disclosure obligation is for the protection of both students and staff. The College has a policy relating to staff who have students enrolled at the College.

Psychologists and school counsellors

In their dealings with students, psychologists and 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/registration through:

- their professional health practitioner National Board administered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- the Australian Counselling Association
- Speech Pathology Australia.

Sports and recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should 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'
 - explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity
 - avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.
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Compliance

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018 (VCEMEA 2018)* for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences, including in certain circumstances termination of their employment.

Concerns relating to child safety should be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal Students.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact the College Board Chair and/or the Executive Director of Kildare Ministries.

Where any other member of the school community, including volunteers and contractors, is suspected of breaching this code, the school is to take appropriate action, including (if applicable) in accordance with the *PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* policy.

In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body, such as the VIT.

In addition, there are separate reporting obligations in the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

I, _____, confirm that I have been provided with a copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

I have read and understand the contents and my responsibilities under the Code.

I agree to abide by the Code. I acknowledge that the Code may be amended or varied from time to time and I am expected to comply.

Signed: _____

Date: _____



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Responsible Officer	Principal
Approved By	Board
Approved and Commenced	1 July 2017
Last reviewed	June 2022
Review By	July 2024
Relevant Legislation	<p><i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i></p> <p><i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)</i></p> <p>Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises</p> <p><i>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</i></p> <p><i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
Related Policies & Procedures	<p>PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse - Reporting Obligations</p> <p>Child Safety – Reporting Obligations</p> <p>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</p> <p>Critical Incident Procedures</p> <p>Grievance Policy and Procedure</p> <p>ICT Staff Policy</p> <p>ICT Student Policy</p> <p>Kildare Ministries Child Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>Respectful Relationships Policy</p> <p>Pastoral Care Policy</p> <p>Volunteer Procedures</p> <p>Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors Checklist</p> <p>Visitors to the School Policy</p>
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