



# Star of the Sea College

## Child Safe Policy (student version)

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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.

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **What does our school value and why is child safety important in our school?**

At Star of the Sea College (Star) we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of our students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. Every person at Star has the right to be safe and protected from harm.

Star does not tolerate any form of child abuse. We will always act in the student's best interests in order to protect them from harm.

### **PURPOSE**

#### **Why do we have a policy?**

The purpose of our Child Safe Policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment that Star has to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. It provides information on how we 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.

There is a long tradition of staff giving students extra help when needed and/or requested.

### **PRINCIPLES**

#### **What are the important ideas that guide our actions?**

We believe:

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
  - All students have the right to an education in all aspects of personal safety.
  - All adults in our school have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
  - All our processes are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults, children and young people.
  - If harm is suspected or disclosed, all those involved must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
  - Everyone should be free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.
  - Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed.
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### **POLICY COMMITMENTS**

#### **What pledges do we make to our school community?**

- At all times the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision making.
- We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their opinions seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.
- All members of the community are encouraged to speak up when they are concerned about the safety of themselves or others. Their concerns will be taken seriously and addressed in a just and timely manner.
- We will identify and assess risks to student safety and work to eliminate or reduce the risks.
- We commit to providing regular professional learning for staff in relation to child safety including training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF OUR SCHOOL STAFF**

#### **Why do we have a Code of Conduct for adults working in our school?**

- We expect school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the school.
  - All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements.
  - Staff are expected to follow the PROTECT document for responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.
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### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

#### **How are students involved in child safety discussions and planning for improvements in our school?**

It is important that students have a shared responsibility for child safety in the school. SRC members, as representatives of the student body, are consulted by the Child Safety Committee to assist in the development of the Child Safety practices and processes and the way information is worded. Students can make individual suggestions about child safety to any staff member.

### **REPORTING AND RESPONDING**

#### **How do we report our concerns and how do teachers respond?**

If you have been abused or feel unsafe you can tell a teacher or any adult at our school. All school staff members have a responsibility to protect any child under their care. They will be able to help you.

If you think someone has been abused or is unsafe you should talk to an adult you trust. Any staff member at our school will be able to help. Help your friend by encouraging them to tell a trusted adult. Even if your friend has specifically asked you not to tell an adult, you still should. It is more important to make sure that your friend is helped and feels protected.

The school is obliged to record any child safety complaints. All school staff members have a responsibility to protect any child under their care. You will be helped.

- The adult will listen to your concerns and help you.
- The information will not be shared with the person who is making you feel unsafe.
- Information will only be shared with people who can support and protect you.
- In some cases the people helping you are required by law to tell the police, the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Protection services and/or your family to prevent any further abuse, or risk of abuse.

We also have specific people appointed as Child Protection Officers; these are the Counsellors (Ms Sarah Quin, Ms Fiona Baudinette and Ms Sam Donato) and Mr Chris Burn. Students can report concerns directly to them. These staff members also provide advice to staff in the area of child safety

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### **RECRUITMENT**

#### **How are staff selected to work in our schools?**

We have a thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and all new staff applicants are provided with copies of the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

All staff members employed by Star of the Sea College have undergone a National Police Check, VIT Registration and/or hold a Working With Children Check. We routinely check all employees to ensure they continue to meet Child Safety requirements such as Working with Children permits and identification checks.

### **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SCHOOL STAFF**

#### **How does our school support staff to develop their knowledge about child safety?**

All school staff are provided with our Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policies and are required to sign our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Child Safety training is provided as part of the school's annual training program and new staff induction.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

#### **How does our school identify possible risks, who is involved and what happens next?**

We are committed to identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise. The Child Safe Committee is involved in the review process and other school leaders.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

#### **What other information do we use to help us?**

The College has several policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing. Some of these are set out below in the Related Policies and Procedures Section at the end of this policy. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct are published on our College website.

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### COMMUNICATION

#### How does our school let everyone know about this policy and our plans?

The College will keep everyone informed through a variety of ways:

- College Newsletter
- Website
- Parent Access Module (PAM)
- Student and Staff Noticeboards
- Posters
- Whole school and Year level/House assemblies
- Emails
- SIMON student notices

Contacting the Student Counsellors:

The College currently has three student counsellors:

- Ms Fiona Baudinette
- Ms Sam Donato
- Ms Sarah Quin

The Student Counsellors can be contacted through email: [counsellor@starmelb.catholic.edu.au](mailto:counsellor@starmelb.catholic.edu.au)  
Students may self-refer or be referred by a teacher or parent.

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<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Deputy Principal - Students
<b>Approved By</b>	Principal
<b>Approved and Commenced</b>	2019
<b>Review By</b>	Last reviewed July 2023. The policy will be reviewed annually and will incorporate suggestions from students, teachers and other relevant bodies.
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and boarding premises Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
<b>Related Policies &amp; Procedures</b>	Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection – Reporting Obligations</li> <li>• MACS Police and DHHS Interview Protocols</li> <li>• MACS Pastoral Care of Students Policy</li> <li>• CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools</li> <li>• CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Volunteers in Catholic Schools</li> <li>• CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Contractors in Catholic Schools</li> </ul> <a href="#">PROTECT Reporting and Responding to all forms of abuse in Schools</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Star of the Sea College Policies Child Safety – Reporting Obligations</li> <li>• Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</li> <li>• Child Safety Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Grievance Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• ICT Student Policy</li> <li>• Pastoral Care Policy</li> <li>• Respectful Relationships Policy</li> <li>• Volunteer Procedures</li> <li>• Kildare Ministries Safeguarding Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Version</b>	2
<b>Amendments to Version</b>	Incorporated student feedback into the policy Updated policy section