



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

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 to 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 purpose of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Policy) is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Star of the Sea College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our College. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures, actions and strategies that will be implemented to ensure that a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the College, to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our College environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the College.

This Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the State of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

### **SCOPE**

Everyone employed or volunteering at our school has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure a child safe culture in which the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make ([CECV Statement of Commitment to Child Safety](#)).

This Policy applies to College staff, including College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. In addition, this policy applies to Kildare Ministries and the Directors of Star of the Sea College Ltd.

This Policy applies to all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by our school for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers.

This policy coexists and should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Reportable Conduct Policy.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Child safeguarding and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the College community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety, wellbeing and protection of students.

Specific responsibilities are summarised below.

---



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

### PRINCIPLES

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, have agency, their voices are heard and they both feel safe and are safe.

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing at Star of the Sea College:

- Star of the Sea College wants students to be safe, happy and empowered. All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- The College works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and wellbeing and protection. All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/carers.
- All adults in the College community, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors have a responsibility to:
  - care for children and young people
  - positively promote their wellbeing
  - identify and mitigate risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment
  - protect them from any kind of harm or abuse, and
  - encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Star of the Sea College is committed to equity and inclusion and recognising and respecting the diverse needs of all children.
- All adults in our school will take all reasonable measures to prevent child abuse and harm resulting from discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- All members of the school community (including students and their families) are kept informed of child safety and wellbeing matters (where appropriate) and are involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety and wellbeing, knowing these will be taken seriously by the Leadership Team.
- Appropriate confidentiality is to be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally (including under legislated information sharing schemes being Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)) or pastorally.
- All members of the school community (including students and their families) are kept informed of child safety and wellbeing matters (where appropriate) and are involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- The College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal students, the safety of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for students with a disability.

### DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS POLICY

**Child means** child or a young person who is under the age of 18 years.

---



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

**Child abuse** includes:

- (a) any act committed against a child involving:
  - (i) a sexual offence
  - (ii) an offence under section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- (b) the infliction on a child, of:
  - (i) physical violence
  - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm
- (c) serious neglect of a child

**Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order 1359).

**Child neglect** includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health and physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

**Child physical abuse** generally consists of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning.

**Child protection:** Statutory services that are designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

**Child sexual abuse:**

- is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity
- can include a wide range of sexual activity including fondling the child's genitals, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography.

Child sexual abuse may not always include physical sexual contact and can also include non-contact offences, for example:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- sending sexual messages or emails to a child
- exposing a sexual body part to a child
- forcing a child to watch a sexual act (including showing pornography to a child)
- having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner (including child sexual exploitation).

Child sexual abuse does not always involve force. In some circumstances a child may be manipulated into believing that they have brought the abuse on themselves, or that the abuse is an expression of love, through a process of grooming.

Consensual sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse.

**Emotional child abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or

---



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

by witnessing family violence.

**Grooming** is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. It can include communication and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.

**Mandatory Reporting:** The legal requirement under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The Principal, registered teachers and early childhood teachers, school counsellors, religious clergy, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners are mandatory reporters under this Act.

**Reasonable Belief - mandatory reporting:** When school staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

**Reasonable belief – reportable conduct scheme:** When a person has a reasonable belief that a worker/volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct. A reasonable belief is more than suspicion and there must be some objective basis for the belief. It does not necessitate proof or require certainty.

NOTE: the difference between the reasonable belief definitions under mandatory reporting and the reportable conduct scheme is the category of persons who are required to, or can, form the reasonable belief which forms the basis for a report.

**Reportable conduct:** Five types of reportable conduct are listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*. These include:

1. sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of a child)
2. sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of a child)
3. physical violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm
5. significant neglect.

**College environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the College
- online College environments or virtual school environments for use by a student (including email, intranet systems, software, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the College or through a third-party provider for a student to use (including, without limitation, locations used for College camps, homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events)

**College staff** means an individual working in a College environment who is:

---



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

- directly engaged or employed by a College governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged to provide child-related work for the College
- a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the College.

**Volunteer** means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the College in the school environment.

### **POLICY COMMITMENTS**

All students enrolled at Star of the Sea College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The safety and wellbeing of children in our care will always be the College's first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. The College aims to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full, without any concern for their safety. Particular attention is paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students.

### **Our Commitment to our Students**

We commit to:

- the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in the College
  - providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences
  - encouraging and actively supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
  - paying particular attention to the needs of students with a disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students and LGBTIQ+ students
  - listening to children and young people and empowering them by ensuring that they understand their rights (including to safety, information and participation), and by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us
  - taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
  - ensuring that the needs of all children and young people enrolled in our school are met, including those who are most vulnerable
  - recognising the importance of friendships and to encouraging support from peers, to help children and students feel safe and less isolated
  - developing a culture that facilitates and provides opportunities for student participation, and that strengthens the confidence and engagement of children and young people by being responsive to their input
-



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

- teaching students the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing
- empowering children and educating them about their rights (including to safety, information and participation), how to raise concerns, how to maintain their personal safety and wellbeing, and how to support the safety and wellbeing of other children
- seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

### **Our Commitment to Parents, Guardians and Carers**

We recognise that families are the first and ongoing educators of their children.

We commit to:

- communicating honestly and openly with parents, guardians and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children
- engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents, guardians and carers about our child-safety and wellbeing practice, policies and procedures and include them in decision-making practices where applicable
- transparency in our decision-making with parents, guardians and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people
- open engagement and communication with parents, guardians and carers about our child safe approach and our operations and governance related to child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that relevant information relating to child safety and wellbeing is accessible to parents, guardians and carers
- acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues
- regularly reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

### **Our Commitment to our College Staff (Employees, Volunteers, Contractors and Clergy)**

We commit to:

- providing all our school staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles, and to ensure that staff are attuned to signs of harm and are able to facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
  - providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing, and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns
  - listening to all concerns voiced by Star of the Sea College staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm
  - providing opportunities for Star of the Sea College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person
-



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

- providing regular supervision for the Student Counsellors to debrief in general, and specifically when serious child abuse and self-harm situations occur
- seeking legal advice for College staff in the event of difficult or conflicting situations relating to child safety or abuse.

### **PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING**

Our school is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the *Australian Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Health Privacy Principles set out in the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic).

Our Privacy Policy sets out the types of information that we collect about:

- students and prospective students, and their parents, guardians and carers
- job applicants, staff members, volunteers and contractors
- other people who come into contact with the College.

It also sets out how and why our school collects, holds, uses, discloses, secures and stores the information.

The College is a prescribed Information Sharing Entities (ISE). This means that we are able to collect and share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

### **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The College has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team consists of the Principal, Deputy Principal - Students, Head of Student Wellbeing, Student Counsellors and the Risk & Compliance Manager. The Deputy Principal - Students is the Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer.

### **Guide to Responsibilities of the Star of the Sea College Board and College Leadership**

The Directors of the Star of the Sea College Board, Principal and members of the Leadership Team at Star of the Sea College recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety and wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
  - upholding high principles and standards for all staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors
  - promoting models of behaviour between adults and children based on mutual respect and consideration
  - ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff and volunteers
  - ensuring that College personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to prevent, identify and address child safety matters
-





# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

- ensuring that the College has in place appropriate risk management strategies and practices that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the College environment
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to children and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the College meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359
- ensuring the College takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and in line with PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools
- ensuring the College understands and reports all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in accordance with the College's Reportable Conduct policy
- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the College's prescribed role as an ISE
- ensuring that the College monitors and reviews the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, on an annual basis.

### Guide to responsibilities of College Staff

Responsibilities of College staff (College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy) include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal College processes in the course of their work if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety, and the wellbeing of children and young people, including ways to prevent, identify and mitigate risks relating to child safety and wellbeing
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- where risks of child abuse are identified, ensuring that action is taken to mitigate against those risks and that risks and actions are appropriately recorded.

### Responsibilities of Child Safe School Committee

Star of the Sea College has established a Child Safe School Committee consisting of the College counsellors, Head of Student Wellbeing, Deputy Principal Students and the Principal, who, together with the Leadership Team and the Star of the Sea College Board are responsible for embedding a culture of child safety and wellbeing at all levels within the school.

The Principal has the overall leadership role in monitoring and responding to the policy, procedures and practices for child safety and wellbeing at the College in accordance with this Policy.

---





# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

The Child Safe School Committee assists the Principal and works in preventing, identifying and mitigating risks in child safety and wellbeing. This team also supports the Principal to monitor implementation of school policies, procedures and practices, to monitor and review the risks associated with child safety and wellbeing.

The College website and newsletter will provide information to keep parents and carers informed of child safety and wellbeing commitments, procedures and arrangements.

### **EXPECTATION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS – *Child Safety Code of Conduct***

At Star of the Sea College, we expect College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times, to identify concerns about child safety and wellbeing and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any child at the College. All College 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.

The College's Child Safety Code of Conduct recognises the critical role that College staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and/or neglect. This Code also protects College staff and volunteers through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

### **STUDENT SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION**

At Star of the Sea College, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students what to do if they feel unsafe, enabling them to understand, identify, discuss and report their concerns. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Students new to the College are informed of who they can approach to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their safety or the safety of others. The College has a very proactive pastoral system whereby Homeroom teachers have responsibility for monitoring the wellbeing of each student in their care. Working alongside the homeroom teachers are the House Pastoral Leaders who, with the Deputy Principal: Students ensure the welfare and wellbeing of each student is met. The College counsellors also ensure student welfare and safety is paramount.

The curriculum design integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe, as well as their understanding of their rights to safety, information and participation. Teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge and support student agency and voice are implemented. We ensure that students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

We have developed appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending our school
-



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

We have also developed curriculum planning documents that detail the strategies and actions the school takes to implement its obligations to ensure that:

- children and students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation
- the importance of friendship is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated
- staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- we have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students
- material is incorporated into mentor time to develop proactive approaches to developing resilience (eg. Resilience Project)
- we provide opportunities for children and students to participate and is responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- students participate in sexual abuse prevention programs and are provided with relevant information in an age-appropriate way.

### REPORTING AND RESPONDING

The College creates records relevant to any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the *Child Safety Code of Conduct*, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements and Public Records Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards (including minimum retention periods). The College complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*, the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*, the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)* and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#).

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

The College's Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy, sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a student at the College needs protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

The policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- identify the indicators of a student who may be in need of protection
  - understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed under the reportable conduct scheme as well as mandatory reporting
  - make a report of a child or young person who may need protection
-



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to child abuse and grooming under criminal law

The College has also established internal processes to help ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent, identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student. These are clearly articulated in the Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Reportable Conduct Policy.

At Star of the Sea College, if any member of our school community has concerns for a child's safety they need to discuss, they can notify the Principal, the Deputy Principal Students or School Counsellors.

If the Principal or Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer is not available, then it should be discussed with a member of the school leadership team. Alternatively, any member of the school community may report directly to the responsible authority.

The staff member, supported by the Principal or designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer will follow the step-by-step guide to making a report as outlined in the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

### **SCREENING AND RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF**

Star of the Sea College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child connected work. A commitment to child safety and screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Each job description for staff involved in child-connected work has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing for those in that role and the occupant's essential qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, the College gathers, verifies and records the following information about any person we propose to engage:

- confirms the applicant's *Working with Children Check* and *National Police Check* status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtains proof of personal identity and any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications
- verifies the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtains references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We will also ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and wellbeing and child-connected work.

---



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

The College has processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of College staff and volunteers to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of *Working with Children Checks* and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

The College implements the following CECV guidelines:

- *Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools*
- *NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools.*

Include further relevant details of school processes and practices regarding screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers.

### **CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING – EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR COLLEGE STAFF**

Star of the Sea College provides employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety and wellbeing matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

All staff are required to complete annually the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning module.

At least annually, our professional learning and training addresses:

- staff's individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
  - preventing, identifying and mitigating child abuse risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
  - the reportable conduct scheme
  - our school's current child safety standards (including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and any other policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing, including in relation to managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse)
  - guidance on recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
  - guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
  - guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
  - guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations, including under the [Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards](#).
-



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

New staff are provided with an induction session which includes an overview of policies and practices, including child safety obligations.

### **CULTURAL SAFETY**

At the College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for these students, their families and their communities (including local Aboriginal communities relevant to the College) to have a voice and presence in our College's planning, policies and activities.

### **DIVERSITY AND EQUITY – STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

At the College, we are committed to ensuring that equity is upheld, and that diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. The school has commenced a support group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In addition, we aim to ensure that:

- all school staff and volunteers understand the diverse circumstances of children and students
- our school provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students
- children, students, staff, volunteers and the school community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- the school pays particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students
- the school pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.
- the school provides cultural awareness training and a range of optional experiences to increase awareness such as accompanying indigenous students who are boarding back to their home, immersion experiences etc.
- the school is in the process of developing a Reconciliation Action plan, and developing the Fire Carrier program

### **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT - STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

The College ensures that families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school. We aim to ensure that:

- families participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
  - we engage and openly communicate with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach
  - all members of the school community have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing
  - families, carers and other members of the school community have the opportunity to provide input
-



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

- into the development and review of the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices
- families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- into the development and review of the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices
- families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

### RISK MANAGEMENT

Star of the Sea College is committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across the whole College environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. The College documents, implements, monitors and annually reviews risk management strategies for child safety and wellbeing, evaluates the effectiveness of implementation of the risk controls and ensures that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

The College has established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team consisting of Principal, Deputy Principal Students and College counsellor. This team will meet once a term to review existing policy and processes and implement changes to either in light of child safety issues which surfaced during the previous term. The team can meet more frequently should a situation arise that requires immediate action.

Child safety is also a standing item on Governance and Risk Committee meeting agendas. Reporting on child safety also occurs to the College Board and Kildare Ministries, considering personal privacy.

### BREACH OF POLICY

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Child Safety Policy, Star of the Sea College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2022* for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **Principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Child Safety Policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the Chair of the College Board and/or Kildare Ministries. Relevant notification should also be made to MACS Employee Relations department.

Where any **other member of the College community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Child Safety Policy, the College is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with Child Safety Code of Conduct. Relevant notifications may also be made to Kildare Ministries and/or MACS.

---



# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Principal
<b>Approved By</b>	Board
<b>Approved &amp; Commenced</b>	October 2017
<b>Last reviewed</b>	June 2024
<b>Review By</b>	June 2026
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	<p>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</p> <p>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</p> <p>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</p> <p><a href="#">Failure to disclose offence</a>, <a href="#">Failure to protect offence</a>, <a href="#">Grooming offence</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Failure to disclose offence</a>: Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.</li><li>2. <a href="#">Failure to protect offence</a>: This offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.</li><li>3. <a href="#">Grooming offence</a>: This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.</li></ol> <p>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</p> <p>Ministerial Order 1359: <i>Implementing the Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises</i></p> <p>Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)</p> <p>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</p>





# STAR OF THE SEA COLLEGE

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

<p><b>Related Policies &amp; Procedures</b></p>	<p>PROTECT Reporting and Responding to all forms of abuse in Schools            CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools            CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools            CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools            CECV NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools            CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines            Four Critical Actions for Schools - Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse</p> <p><b>College policies/procedures:</b>            Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (student version)            Child Safety – Reporting Obligations            Child Safety Code of Conduct            Critical Incident Procedures            Grievance Procedures            ICT Staff Policy            ICT Student Policy            Kildare Ministries Child Safeguarding Policy            Pastoral Care Policy            Reportable Conduct Policy            Respectful Relationships Policy            Volunteer Procedures            Kildare Ministries Child Safeguarding Policy</p>
<p><b>Version</b></p>	<p>6</p>
<p><b>Amendments to version</b></p>	<p>General revision</p>