



St John's Catholic Primary School	Last Update: 22.07.2022	 St John's Catholic Primary School
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St John's Primary School is a school that operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS), where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and where the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

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## Introduction

At St John's Primary School, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. 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: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school ([The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), n. 9).

Protection for children and young people is based upon the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and that the inherent dignity of all should be recognised and fostered.


St John's Primary School is committed to complying with [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#) and following the Victorian Child Safe Standards. An embedded culturally driven approach to child protection and safety in all schools means that protecting children from abuse is evident in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers.

St John's Primary School is entrusted, in partnership with parents/guardians/caregivers who are the primary educators of their children, with the total education of the child. School staff, therefore, have a duty of care to students during school operating hours and at other times when a staff/student relationship exists. Staff fulfil this duty by taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student.

Under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*, protecting children is everyone's responsibility – parents, communities, governments and businesses all have a role to play. In Victoria, a joint protocol, involving the Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) Child Protection, the Department of Education and Training (DET), licensed children's services and Victorian schools, including Catholic schools, exists to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

For the purposes of this joint protocol, acting in the best interests of the child includes:

- reporting to Child Protection all allegations or disclosures of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect
- reporting to Child Protection when a belief is formed that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed
- making the child's ongoing safety and wellbeing the primary focus of decision-making

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- sharing appropriate information, expertise and resources with other service providers supporting the child
- protecting and promoting the cultural and spiritual identity of a child and maintaining their connection to their family or community of origin
- enabling the child and the child's family to access appropriate services in order to reduce the long-term effects of abuse or neglect.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of St John's Primary School to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. 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 school, to 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.

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](#).

This Policy applies to school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with the following related school policies and procedures:

PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations

Child Safety Code of Conduct


Reportable Conduct Policy.

## Principles

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard, and they are safe and feel safe ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing at St John's Primary School:

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Our school 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 protection.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/carers.
- All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors, 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.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.

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- Appropriate confidentiality will 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.

## Definitions

**Aboriginal** The term 'Aboriginal' includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important to be respectful of how individual children, students, their families and community refer to themselves and use appropriate language when referring to individuals or communities.

**Child** means a child enrolled as a student at the school.

**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 incidents or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 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 ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

**Child sexual abuse** is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity and does not always involve physical contact or force ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).


**Cultural Safety** includes being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where Aboriginal children:

- feel comfortable being themselves
- feel secure to express their culture and spirituality
- are supported by a school community that respects their Aboriginality and encourages their sense of self and identity.

**Emotional child abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

**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 ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

**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

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teachers, school counsellors, religious clergy, medical practitioners and nurses at a school are mandatory reporters under this Act ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

**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 ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

**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 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 scheme:** Five types of reportable conduct are listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) (as amended by the *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017*). 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.


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

- a campus of the school
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorized by St John's Primary School for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for school camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events Ministerial Order No. 1359.

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

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider engaged by MACS (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work for St John's Primary School
- a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with MACS (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

**Volunteer** means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for St John's Primary School in the school environment.

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## Policy commitments

All students enrolled at St John's Primary School have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim 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. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students.

### Our commitment to our students


- We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
- We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We commit to 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.
- We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- We commit to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people enrolled in our school are met, including those who are most vulnerable.
- We commit to recognising the importance of friendships and to encouraging support from peers, to help children and students feel safe and less isolated.
- We commit to developing a culture that facilitates and provides opportunities for children and student participation, and that strengthens the confidence and engagement of children and students by being responsive to their input.
- 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.

### Our commitment to parents, guardians and carers

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

### Our commitment to our school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy)

- We commit to providing all St John's Primary 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.

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- We commit to 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.
- We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by St John's Primary School staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We commit to providing opportunities for St John's Primary School school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

## Our commitment to Aboriginal students and families in our care and the wider community

### Building a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion

- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgment of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision-making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share learnings through school newsletters, school assemblies and parent information nights.
- Lead on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, beginning with local content and then knowledge from Aboriginal cultures across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build school-wide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.

### Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children


- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
- Ask for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about what the school does well, and what can be improved.
- Implement the [CECV Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan](#) to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities.
- Engage with MACS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education officers for advice about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.

### Actively address racism

- Express zero tolerance for racism in your statement of commitment to child safety included in your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and other documents.
- Address racism from students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with and the culture of the school works to prevent incidents from occurring.
- Ensure leaders actively address racism in the school community and work towards the understanding of the impact of unconscious bias.
- Encourage all school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families and communities.

### Guide and train staff and volunteers



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- Educate staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture, and to promote cultural inclusion.
- Arrange cultural awareness training for staff.

### Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum

- Understand who the Traditional Owners are of the lands on which the school is located. Refer to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) [Welcome to Country and Acknowledgements Map](#).
- Learn about the importance of [acknowledging Traditional Owners](#).
- Include Aboriginal histories and cultures in professional learning opportunities for staff and volunteers.
- Embed Aboriginal histories and cultures when planning curriculum for students as demonstrated in the Victorian Curriculum F–10.
- Develop a resource bank of digital, hard copy and other artefacts that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum, ensuring that the resources have been developed in consultation/collaboration with Aboriginal peoples for its accuracy.
- Refer to information and resources available under *Student Support / Cultural Diversity*.

### Partner with Aboriginal communities


- Support local Aboriginal businesses through school procurement.
- Engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups, corporations or Registered Aboriginal Parties to review cultural safety in the school environment, systems and processes.
- Connect through Bunurong Land Council and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (Fire Carriers)
- Engage with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECCG) and/or the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).
- Visit an Aboriginal cultural learning centre, such as:
  - [Koorie Heritage Trust](#) (Melbourne)
  - [Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre](#) (Melbourne)
  - [Brambuk Cultural Centre](#) (Grampians)
  - [Bangerang Cultural Centre](#) (Shepparton)
  - [Krowathunkooloong Keeping Place](#) (Bairnsdale)
  - [Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre](#) (Geelong).

### Review and assess how the school supports cultural inclusion

- Use the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) [Building Respectful Partnerships](#) guide to make a tailored learning and development plan focused on staff cultural competence learning needs.
- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

### Recognise key events and anniversaries

- Anniversary of the 2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations (13 February)
- National Close the Gap Day (third Thursday of March)
- Harmony Day (21 March)
- National Sorry Day and Anniversary of the 2017 Uluru Statement From the Heart (26 May)
- Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum (27 May)
- National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June)
- Mabo Day (3 June)
- Coming of the Light (1 July)

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- NAIDOC Week (first week of July)
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (4 August)
- International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August)
- Anniversary of the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (13 September)
- Anniversary of the 1992 Redfern Address (10 December)

## Responsibilities and organisational arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at St John's Primary 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 Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

*Wellbeing Leader = Child Safety Leader*


*Wellbeing Leader - Leads the Student Child Safety Team*

*Student Child Safety Team - Drawn from student body*

### Guide to responsibilities of school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St John's Primary School 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. 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 and young people 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 school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to prevent, identify and address child safety and wellbeing matters
- ensuring that the school 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 school 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 school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359
- ensuring the school 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 school understands and reports all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in accordance with the School's reportable conduct policy

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- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the school's prescribed role as an ISE
- ensuring that the school 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 school staff

Responsibilities of school staff (school 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 school policies, procedures and 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 school'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.

## Organisational arrangements

The Principal has the overall leadership role in monitoring and responding to the policy, procedures and practices for child safety in St John's Primary School in accordance with this Policy.


We have appointed a Child Safety Leader, this falls under the responsibilities of the Wellbeing Leader, and the role description is available in the staff handbook:

- The Wellbeing and Child Safety Team assists the Principal.
- The Wellbeing and Child Safety Team works in preventing, identifying and mitigating risks in child safety and wellbeing.
- The Wellbeing and Child Safety Team also supports the Principal to monitor the implementation of school policies, procedures and practices, to monitor and review the risks associated with child safety and wellbeing (including by and to identify professional learning).

St John's Primary School's website and newsletter will provide information to keep parents and carers informed of child safety and wellbeing commitments, procedures and arrangements.

## Expectation of our school staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At St John's Primary School, we expect school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to proactively ensure the safety and wellbeing 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 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 comply with all requirements. We have developed a [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#), which recognises the critical role that school staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of

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school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and/or neglect.

Our Code also protects school staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

## Inform students of their rights


- Provide age-appropriate and accessible information to students, such as information about:
  - the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - the work of the Commission for Children and Young People
  - how adults in the school should behave.
- Inform students of their rights and special protections, including the right to:
  - live and grow up healthy
  - have a say about decisions affecting them
  - get information that is important to them
  - be safe and not harmed by anyone.
- Share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, and:
  - work to build trust by being open and transparent about information sharing, and keep the child and family informed each time their information is shared if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so
  - seek and consider the views of the child (or the relevant family members) about sharing their confidential information if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so.
- Provide information through the curriculum via relevant subject areas to promote:
  - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships, (or equivalent), within a Catholic context
  - Intro to Student Voice
  - eSmart.

## Empower students to contribute to school life

- Display visually engaging and easy-to-read posters promoting student voice and agency.
- Discuss commitment to student voice at enrolment and organise orientation activities focused on activating student voice.
- Conduct year-level meetings and form groups to discuss students' rights and safety issues.
- Invite students to provide feedback on school-wide decisions and take their views into account in school decision-making.
- Document student participation in activities that contribute to the life of the school.
- Involve students in consultation processes and inform them of their impact on decision-making.
- Demonstrate that the school takes students seriously by acting on their concerns, noting that what might seem unimportant to an adult may be important to a young person.
- Provide students who find it harder to speak up or be heard with multiple avenues for communicating, including writing, drawing or physical forms of communication.

## Empower students to raise their concerns

- Provide students with information about complaints processes.
- Give students a variety of ways to raise concerns. For example:
  - provide an anonymous, year-level student suggestion box
  - distribute regular online surveys

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- display information about the adults who students can talk to if they have a concern.
- Highlight student views in your school community or public-facing documents, including quoting students where appropriate.
- Create opportunities for all student voices by being aware of discriminatory barriers and any overreliance on the input of student leaders.

### Strengthen peer support for safety and wellbeing

- Acknowledge sexuality and gender diversity by identifying safe spaces where students can go if they need support.
- Discuss healthy boundaries for friendships. Point out that the risk of harm can occur in child-to-child interactions, as well as adult-to-child interactions.
- Develop or use an existing school transition program to provide support for students entering the school.
- Provide buddying or mentoring programs for new students transitioning to the school mid-year or outside the regular transition timeline.

### Establish protective factors


- Teach students practical protective strategies, including:
  - what to do when they feel unsafe
  - phrases they can use to raise an objection
  - pathways for raising safety concerns
  - online safety behaviours.
- Provide contact information for independent child and youth advocacy services or helplines.
- Provide a range of age-appropriate picture, fiction and non-fiction books that include:
  - children's rights and empowerment themes
  - cultural and linguistic diversity
  - neurodiverse characters and people with disability
  - diversity in sexual orientation and gender.
- Support all students to identify trusted adults and friends they can talk to about a concern at school, at home or in the community.
- Deliver age-appropriate curriculum content about respectful relationships, sexuality and consent through the Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials (or equivalent), within a Catholic context.
- Empower students with the knowledge that adults are accountable and that students have a right to safety.

### Communicate in a respectful and age-appropriate way

- Educate staff to uphold Aboriginal cultural safety, and be respectful of identity and culture.
- Train staff and volunteers to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Educate staff and volunteers about children's rights, including the four guiding principles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### Use sensitivity and build trust

- Provide training to staff and volunteers to be attuned to signs of harm and risk factors in students.
- Remind staff and volunteers to recognise that students might communicate in different ways, including through verbal and non-verbal cues, play, body language, facial expressions, drawings or behaviours.
- Follow through on your commitments – show students that the leadership team and staff are trustworthy, and take their worries or concerns seriously.

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## Student safety and participation

At St John's Primary School, 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 about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable 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.

The curriculum design integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe. 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
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention
- reconciliation and indigenous culture


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

- children and students are informed about their rights (including the right to safety), access to information, and participation in decisions impacting their safety and wellbeing
- 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
- we provide opportunities for children and students to participate and is responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant information in an age-appropriate way.
- Psychologist services
- Bullying, No Way days
- SEL opportunities (e.g. Circle Time)
- FSP - Family School Partnerships (Bunurong Family cluster)
- Growth Mindsets and Mindfulness awareness.

## Promote a culture of online and physical safety for all students

When working with students, staff or volunteers must know and adhere to the following protocols.

- When one-to-one interactions occur between an adult and a child, they should be conducted in either an open space or line of sight.
- Supervise students properly in all settings, including the playground, excursions and camps.

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- Give particular attention to the safety, diverse needs and vulnerabilities of students in each activity or setting. Consider whether there are any barriers that might prevent students from raising concerns.
- Inform students and their families about appropriate use of the school's technology, safety tools, and how to seek help and report concerns, including cyberbullying and online grooming.
- Keep up to date with current online safety issues and expert information from specialist government and non-government bodies, including the Office of the eSafety Commissioner and eSmart Schools.
- Promote activities in the school community that connect schools and communities, and raise awareness to prevent bullying and violence (e.g. National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence).
- Create a respectful, sensitive and safe environment for people who may be experiencing family violence, as required of schools under MARAM Responsibility 1, enabling a child or young person to feel comfortable to talk about their experiences and seek support.

## Managing risk in physical spaces


Staff and volunteers must also:

- Identify and document the school's child safety risks in the school's risk register or equivalent.
- Consider the range of school environments and the nature of physical spaces, including onsite buildings and grounds, classrooms, corridors, and pick-up and drop-off areas.
- Consider off-site physical environments for student use and, where reasonably possible, inspect these sites and venues for events, excursions, camps and international student accommodation ahead of time.
- Consider risks arising from child-to-child and adult-to-child interactions in physical and online spaces.
- Consider cultural safety, i.e. are there elements of the physical school environment that would be unwelcoming to Aboriginal people?
- Be informed of identified risks and risk management strategies.
- Keep records of risk management activities, including risk assessments for camps and excursions.
- Undergo training and refresher training on risk management policies and procedures.

## Appropriate Supervision

Staff should always remain mindful of the following:

- Be aware of risks posed by dark spaces, stairwells, private spaces and corners in school environments, and develop strategies to address these risks.
- Inform students about spaces that are off-limits, including out-of-bounds areas, storerooms and staffrooms.
- Nominate ratios of staff and volunteers to students for different types of activities.
- Keep records of any court orders in place regarding access or intervention orders, and communicate to staff who can collect students in these circumstances.
- Use observation aids when appropriate, such as observation windows, concave mirrors and CCTV, and consider the balance between appropriate visibility and respecting staff and students' privacy.
- Notifying leadership for works to improve lighting in poorly lit areas.
- Let students know how to raise concerns and where to go if they need help.
- Organise professional learning to discuss risk and harm prevention and hazard awareness with staff, volunteers and school council members.

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- Keep records of incidents that occur, including accidents and medical events.
- Review incidents against policies and procedures, including seeking student feedback on how incidents were handled and how safe they felt, and make improvements as needed.

## Promoting student safety online


Staff and volunteers must provide opportunities to:

- Give students opportunities to learn, play, create, entertain, make new friends and stay connected.
- Facilitate age-appropriate ways for students to use the internet and social media through Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (within a Catholic context), or equivalent, and eSafety Commissioner.
- Inform students about online safety risks, including:
  - cyberbullying/trolling
  - invasion of privacy or digital surveillance
  - inappropriate sharing of images
  - phishing, harvesting of personal information or data theft
  - identity theft
  - malevolent software (malware)
  - offensive images and messages
  - age-inappropriate online content
  - impersonation/catfishing
  - grooming.
- Outline acceptable use of personal devices for students.
- Prohibit the use of student email addresses to sign up to third-party services, and communicate this expectation to students and the school community.
- Use filtering software on school-based devices.
- Encourage parents to use parental controls on personal devices.
- Advise students on how they can seek help from a trusted adult if they are exposed to inappropriate imagery or content that upsets them.
- Monitor online activity and respond to breaches of the online policies and procedures with appropriate consequences.

## Promotion of acceptable behaviour by staff and volunteers

- The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct will address acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour in online environments; social media, email, instant messages, SMS and other apps.
- Acceptable use of personal devices by staff and volunteers is included in the Staff handbook.
- Guidelines for taking, storing and using images of children and students – including photos and video recordings in the Staff Handbook and Social Media Policy.
- Instances of with misuse of digital devices and unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with school policy.



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- Communication protocols will be reviewed regularly, considering emerging services and technologies, such as disappearing message services.
- Uphold policies and report breaches in accordance with the school's complaints handling processes and code of conduct.
- Provide avenues for students, families, carers, communities and staff to report online issues or concerns.
- Protect student privacy by collecting and storing online records appropriately.

## Consideration of procurement and third parties

- The school will undertake due diligence when engaging third parties.
- Require vendors to provide evidence of compliance with the Child Safe Standards when establishing contracts to deliver services to students.
- Make child safety a feature in legal contracts.
- Ask contractors to provide their Working with Children clearance upon entry to the school.
- Provide contractors with a copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Nominate a staff member who is responsible for collecting child safety compliance information about third-party providers.
- Keep records of due diligence processes.
- If a vendor is found to be non-compliant with the Child Safe Standards:
  - cease all activities with the vendor until the issue is resolved
  - if appropriate, inform the vendor of the non-compliance and provide an opportunity to rectify the problem
  - if the issue is serious, contact the relevant authorities.

## Reporting and responding

Our school creates records relevant to any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and maintains and disposes of those records in accordance with security and privacy requirements and [Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards](#) (including minimum retention periods). Our school 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](#) report.

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

Our school's [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations](#), updated on 11-03-2021, sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

### Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

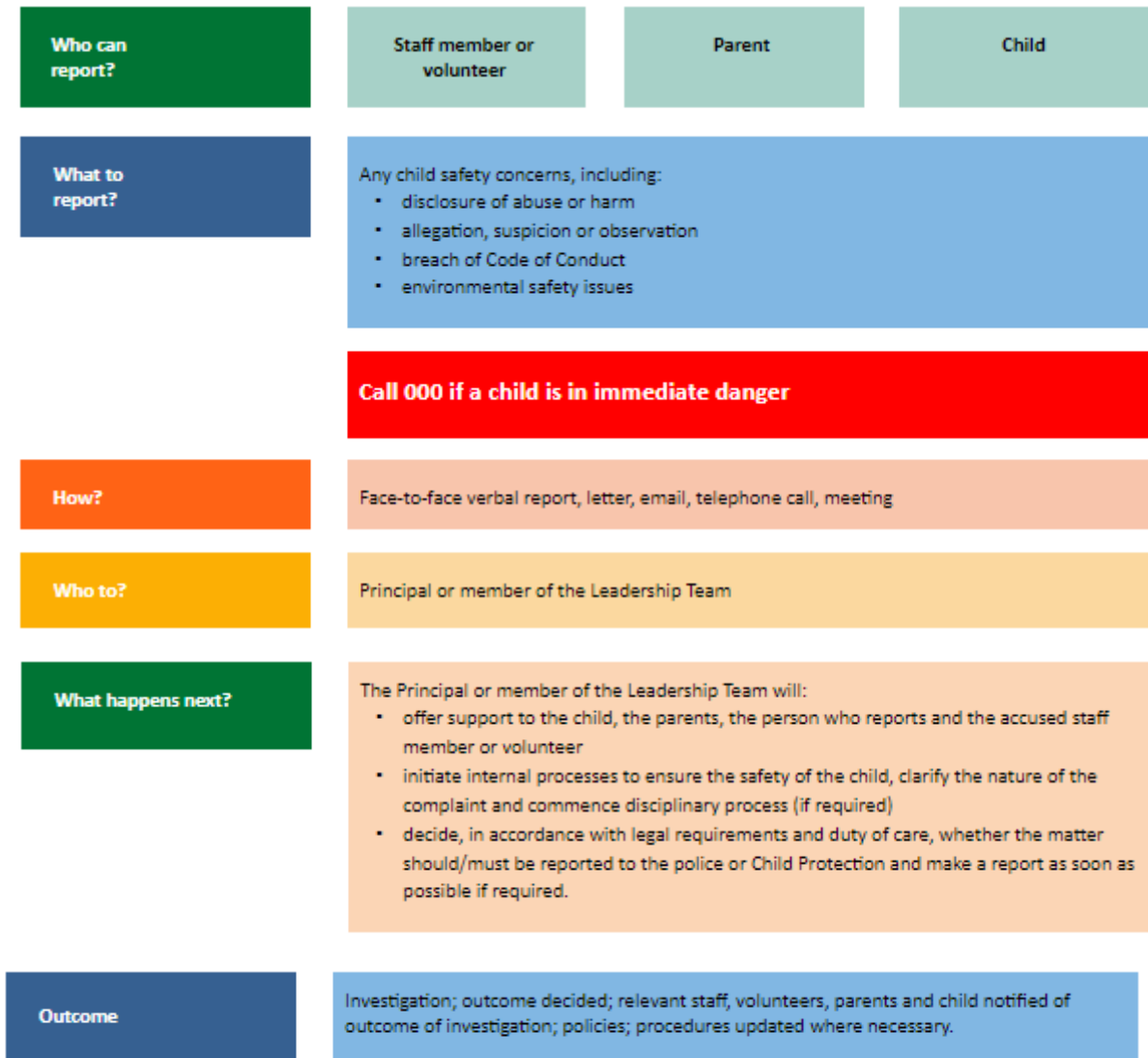
- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a reasonable belief is formed under the reportable conduct scheme as well as mandatory reporting
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection

- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law, and their legal obligations relating to child abuse and grooming under criminal law.
- understand and comply with information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- comply with reporting obligations under the reportable conduct scheme including obligations to report and investigate allegations of reportable conduct.


Our school has also established additional internal procedures and 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.

Our school is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, it is able to share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the CISS or FVISS.

Flowchart: Child safety reporting process



(Flowchart: Adapted from Commission for children and young people, Dec 2015)

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At St John's Primary School, if any member of our school community has concerns for a child's safety they need to discuss, they can notify the school Principal, the Deputy Principal or the designated Wellbeing and Child Safety Leader, Felicity Broughton.

If the Principal or Wellbeing and Child Safety Leader 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 Wellbeing and Child Safety Leader 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

St John's Primary School will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the school'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 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, we make all reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about any person we propose to engage:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain 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.


To support the establishment of minimum requirements and adhering to the Child Safe Standards, the following examples of practice around recruitment of staff are also considered:

### Robust recruitment

- Students may be involved in the recruitment process to provide an authentic opportunity for them to have a say about decisions that impact them where the person involved will have a direct impact on them.

### Advertising

- Ensure recruitment advertisements for staff in child-connected work contain:
  - the job's requirements, including expected knowledge of child development appropriate to the role
  - an outline of duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
  - essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing
  - a statement about the school's commitment to child safe practices and zero tolerance for abuse.
- Provide all job applicants with the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and links to child safety resources.

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## Screening

- Include selection criteria relevant to the role, such as:
  - experience working with children or particular groups of children, including children with a disability or Aboriginal children
  - engaging with families
  - child safety experience
  - cultural safety in their work.
- Screen all staff, volunteers, leaders and school governing board members for their suitability during recruitment.

## Interviews


- Interview panel members will have the right skills, experience and information to perform their role.
- MACS School Recruitment Policy is used to develop questions about child safety in job interviews.
- Referees for both staff and volunteers as appropriate, including their last employer, and overseas referees if they've worked overseas are sought.
- Referees are asked about the person's character and experience in working directly with children and young people.
- MACS School Recruitment Policy is referred to when asking referees about child safety.

## Supervision and people management focused on child safety and wellbeing

- Communicate regularly with staff and volunteers about the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct in supervision meetings, staff meetings, newsletters and staff updates.
- Provide refresher child safety training for staff and volunteers.
- Include child safety and wellbeing as a regular agenda item for staff meetings at all levels of the organisation.
- Include child safety and wellbeing goals in staff professional development plans.
- Train and assist staff to regularly use a risk-assessment approach to ensure staff and volunteers perform their role in a way that promotes child safety and wellbeing in online and physical environments.
- Set out standards for child safety performance in position descriptions and state how child safety performance relates to each position in the school and including the role of volunteers.
- Include child safety information during annual reviews between school leadership and individual staff.
- Ensure that all members of school leadership engage in regular training to develop knowledge and confidence to manage a staff member whose behaviour may raise child safety concerns and knowledge of when to escalate concerns about staff behaviour.

## Training and support to uphold child safety

- See [Child Safe Standard 8](#) for further guidance on building child safety knowledge, skills and awareness.
- Nominate a child safety officer, and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers.
- Provide induction that covers:
  - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - how to contribute to identifying, removing or reducing risks
  - recordkeeping and information sharing requirements
  - school values and philosophy
  - procedures for managing complaints
  - privacy and reporting protocols.
- Train all staff and volunteers as appropriate to their roles, on topics such as:
  - child safety (including family violence)
  - mandatory reporting

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- responding to student sexual offending
- human rights and the rights of children
- diversity and inclusion
- harassment and bullying
- cultural safety
- privacy and information sharing.
- Cover important topics in the child safety training, including:
  - risk factors and signs of harm, including intentional and unintentional harm, physical or emotional harm, bullying or cyberbullying, abuse and neglect
  - how to identify and respond to child safety risks, especially for vulnerable students
  - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise concerns
  - how to engage with families to support students' safety and wellbeing.
- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example through staff meetings, newsletters and year-level briefings.
- Inform staff and volunteers, as appropriate, of their responsibilities under the information sharing and family violence reforms.

### Make child safety a key part of recruitment processes

- Provide role descriptions for staff and volunteers to clearly outline their duties and responsibilities regarding supervision, child safety and wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion.
- Make sure all staff, particularly those with mandatory reporting responsibilities, are aware of the up-to-date processes for making a report.
- Provide child safety officers with information to support their function relating to child safety, family violence and information sharing.
- Put a process in place to check staff and volunteers' Working with Children clearance status or equivalent background check on at least an annual basis.
- Include child safety in ongoing staff support, supervision and performance management processes.
- Align complaints processes with best practice, including the PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools and reportable conduct requirements.
- Declare and manage any potential conflicts of interest, such as family or business relationships, or close friendships.
- Provide clear avenues for staff to report concerns.
- Involve staff in after-action reviews when a child safety incident has occurred.


We have procedures and processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school 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.

St John's Primary School 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.*

### Child Safety - Education and Training for School Staff

St John's Primary School provides employees and volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety and wellbeing matters. This includes induction,

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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.

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](#).

[St John's Staff Induction Handbook](#) - outlines key aspects of school procedures for staff

## Diversity and equity - strategies and actions

At St John's Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that equity is upheld and that diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. 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 lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- the school pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them
- a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- staff, students, volunteers and the school community are prepared to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture, and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students
- measures are adopted to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated
- any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences
- the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and students, and their families, are actively supported

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## Recognise the diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances of students


- Recognise the range of diverse student and family attributes. Pay attention to:
  - cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
  - the needs of students with disability and responses to disability
  - the needs of students from diverse religious and cultural communities
  - the needs of very young students and children
  - the impact of prior trauma
  - gender differences
  - the experiences of LGBTIQ+ students
  - challenges for students who are in foster care or out-of-home care, living away from home or international students
  - students experiencing pregnancy or who are young parents
  - socioeconomic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, remote or regional isolation).
- Pay attention to diverse student cohorts and individuals in your community, recognising that they may have a higher risk of harm.
- Ask for and use people's preferred pronouns and names with parent permission.
- Use contemporary, culturally sensitive and inclusive examples when discussing families, relationships or professions and vocations.

## Identify and address challenges that students experience due to their diverse attributes

- Communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, address the incident in line with the Anti-bullying Policy (including cyberbullying).
- Let students know they can safely raise concerns or report incidents that occurred at school and outside school.
- Check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. This can occur at, parent-teacher interviews or through informal discussions, try to avoid it occurring during pick-up or drop-off unless no other means has worked.
- Engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe all the time.
- Validate students' feelings. Students may feel that they have not been listened to or believed in the past.
- Offer buddying and mentoring for students who are at risk of social isolation.
- Discuss how students feel about discussing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Note that, where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the wishes of the student that their information remain confidential.
- Take a holistic approach when responding to family violence.
- Respond to family violence in a way that is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

## Put in place policies and strategies to help meet the diverse needs of students

- Ensure school environments are welcoming and inclusive. For example:
  - display flags representing different cultures within the school community

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- provide materials in different languages
- decorate the school with artistic expressions from students and young people.
- Provide child safety information in accessible, child-friendly language and formats.
- Accompany child safety information with the support materials needed to help students and families interpret it.
- Anticipate the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances. Don't expect all students to be equally empowered to ask for what they need.
- Provide staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination.
- Create opportunities to remind staff and volunteers about student diversity, and accommodating students' and young people's needs.
- Seek out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist or speech pathologist, and provision planning.


### Support diversity through school planning and resources

- We recognise dates that connect with the school community, for example:
  - World Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking (8 February)
  - Cultural Diversity Week (incorporating 21 March)
  - National Reconciliation Week (27 May – 3 June)
  - Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (19 days after Pentecost)
  - World Day of Migrants and Refugees (last Sunday of September)
  - World Mental Health Day (10 October)
  - World Day of the Poor (33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time)
  - International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December).
- Compile a range of age-appropriate materials for exploring differences and similarities in class, paying attention to Catholic perspectives through:
  - Respectful Relationships resources or equivalent
  - books and resources that reflect diverse views and perspectives
  - speech and drama scripts that explore themes relating to diversity.
- Use images of students with diverse characteristics in school publications to reflect the school community.

St John's engages in a variety of resources that enable us to meet our obligations in implementing diversity and equity processes. The following list of resources include but are not limited to:

- Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne – [Welcoming Each Other: Guidelines for Interfaith Education in the Schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne](#)
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) – [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan](#)
- CECV – [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives](#)
- CECV – [Assessing and Intervening with Impact](#)
- CECV – [Guidelines for Supporting New Arrivals and Refugees](#)
- CECV – [Intervention Framework](#)
- CECV – [Parent Guide to Program Support Groups](#)
- CECV – [Personal Care Support in Schools](#)
- CECV – [Positive Behaviour Guidelines](#)



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- Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) – Horizons of Hope – Vision, Context, Strategy, Practice
- CEM – Identity and Growth: A perspective for Catholic schools
- Catholic Education South Australia – Children: Close to the Mystery of God
- Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) – Live Life to the Full: EREA Safe & Inclusive Learning Communities Statement
- MACS – Allways: A guide to supporting all learners in all ways always
- MACS – Religious Education Curriculum
- National Catholic Education Commission – Framework for Student Faith Formation in Catholic Schools Victorian Curriculum F–10
- Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment
- Victorian DET – Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships, incorporating a Catholic context

## Implementation of these policies and strategies

To ensure the school meets its obligations to child safety we will do the following:

- Make all Child Safe policies and procedures easily accessible
- Publish the child safety policies in an easily accessible, public-facing location, such as the school website.
- Integrate child safety into induction processes, ongoing education, training and supervision for all staff and volunteers.
- Provide copies of the child safety policies in welcome packs and transition resources.

### Ensure policies are easy to understand

- Use plain language in written materials.
- Use visual representations to accompany discussions with students and their families, as needed to aid understanding.
- Display easy-to-read posters in various locations around the school.

### Nominate a child safety officer


- Nominate one or more child safety officers to promote, monitor and report on implementation of the school's child safety strategies.
- Support the child safety officers by empowering them to investigate child safety issues and allocate time for child safety.

### Build a culture of ongoing monitoring and reviewing

- Highlight child safety in recruitment processes.
- Have child-focused complaints policies and procedures.
- Review recordkeeping of child safety complaints to make sure it captures all relevant information.
- Manage child safety risks relating to child abuse using the Risk Register template.

### Champion and model compliance with policies and procedures

- Allocate regular time for a child safety agenda item for all-staff or Board meetings.
- Schedule child safety briefings at information evenings and orientation days.

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- Include a regular child safety item in newsletters to families.

### Use best practice models and stakeholder consultation

- Seek feedback on policies and procedures from the school community, staff, families and students.
- Be aware of emerging legislation, research and resources in child safety and wellbeing, and ensure that policies and procedures are informed by any new developments.

### Integrate child safety into policies, procedures and practices

- Nominate child safety officers to support school leaders to effectively implement and monitor the child safety policies and practices.
- Document the school's policies, procedures and statements required across all 11 Child Safe Standards.
- Seek feedback from students, families, staff and volunteers on whether the policies and procedures are easy to understand. Make any relevant improvements.
- Produce child safety material in different formats. Use child-friendly and plain language, and translated versions.
- Maintain high visibility of child safety and wellbeing. Discuss child safety at staff and parent meetings, and school assemblies. Display posters, and write articles, newsletters and staff bulletins on child safety topics.
- Train staff and volunteers on school policies and their responsibilities. Create regular opportunities to discuss and reinforce understanding.
- Identify formal and informal ways to monitor policy implementation. Analyse whether current processes achieve the outcomes for each Child Safe Standard.
- Monitor how staff and volunteers contribute to child safety through supervision, discussions, staff meetings and surveys.

### Family engagement - strategies and actions


St John's Primary School 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. Parents are encouraged to join the School Council, and share ideas through the parent engagement and ideas tool on the website, use newsletters and Seesaw posts and regular Operoo communication.

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 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

At St John's Primary School, we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential

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sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety, and ensure that the strategies change as new risks arise.

Risks can be reported using the Staff Portal Reporting Form, via the student child safe team or conveyed to a Leadership Team member via verbal, written or other forms and will be taken seriously and acted upon within 24 hours.

## Breach of Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, St John's may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013* (VCMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the parish priest or the employer. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Where any **other member of the school community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations, Complaints Resolution Policy, Risk Assessment and/or contact Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).


## Relevant legislation

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

**Failure to disclose offence:** 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 the police. Failure to disclose the information to the police is a criminal offence.

**Failure to protect offence:** 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.

**Grooming offence:** 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.

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## Related policies

### Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) guidelines

[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](#)

### School policies

[Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)

[PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations](#)

[Reportable Conduct Policy](#)

**Note:** Policy is to be reviewed once every 2 years, as directed by MACS, or in the event of a significant child safety incident.