


St John's Catholic Primary School	Last Update: 9.01.2023	
Version v.3.0 - 2023	Date of Next Review: April.2024	



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.

Central to the mission of St John's Primary School is an explicit commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment where the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual and physical wellbeing of our students is a priority.

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 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.

Purpose


This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at St John's Primary School against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and occupational codes.

All MACS Board members, MACS Board committee members, School Advisory Council members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St John's Primary School are expected to actively contribute to a school culture by respecting the dignity of its members, affirming the gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. All School Advisory Council members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Acceptable behaviours

All MACS Board members, MACS Board committee members, School Advisory Council members, the Principal and all our other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St John's Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school's child-safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety, at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from all forms of abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- taking into account the needs of all children and students
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children – particularly if they are telling you that they

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or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance for discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the reportable conduct scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the schools reportable conduct policy
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
- ensuring as quickly as possible that the child is safe if an allegation of child abuse is made
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or specific allegations or concerns about a registered teacher
- ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

Unacceptable behaviours

All MACS Board members, MACS Board committee members, School Advisory Council members, the Principal and all our other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St John's Primary School must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves (for example, toileting or changing clothes)
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- have contact with a child or their family outside school without the school leadership's or child safety officer's (if the school has appointed someone to this role) knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching); accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate

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- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family unless necessary (for example, providing families with eNewsletters or assisting students with their schoolwork)
- use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents or carers
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

Teachers

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

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

Psychologists and school counsellors


In their dealings with students, psychologists and school counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practise to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- the Australian Counselling Association
- Speech Pathology Australia.

Sports and recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be 'good sports'
- explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity
- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

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Breaches of this code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, St John's Primary School may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018* (VCEMEA 2018) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact MACS Regional General Manager.


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

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

Acknowledgement

I confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct. I have read and understood this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

Name:
Signature:
Date:

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How will St John's ensure these things occur?

Induct new staff and volunteers to child safety requirements

- Nominate a child safety officer, and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers.
- Provide an induction for new staff, volunteers and new school council members on child safety, appropriate to the person's role, that covers:
 - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
 - the PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations (including mandatory reporting) policy and procedures
 - providing information on [signs of harm](#) and risk factors caused by peers or adults (including grooming and family violence), and the different ways young people express concerns or disclose harm
 - how to build culturally safe environments
 - adherence to information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
 - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise concerns.

Provide ongoing education and training

- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example, through staff meetings, newsletters or year-level briefings.
- Require all staff with mandatory reporting obligations to refresh their [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) training at least once a year.
- Inform staff and volunteers (as appropriate) of their responsibilities under the [child information sharing and family violence reforms](#).
- Maintain records of annual child safety programs, including presentation materials, agenda, minutes and list of attendees
- Identify staff to attend [child information sharing and family violence reforms](#), available as online webinars or eLearning modules.
- Offer further training appropriate to staff and volunteers' level of involvement in the school community, on topics such as:
 - child safety (including family violence)
 - mandatory reporting
 - responding to student sexual offending
 - human rights and the rights of children
 - diversity and inclusion
 - harassment and bullying
 - cultural safety
 - privacy and information sharing.
- Offer a range of optional and compulsory education and training activities, including:
 - staffroom briefings and 'toolbox talks'
 - professional learning communities
 - peer discussions, scenarios and worked examples
 - presentations, seminars or webinars
 - training days
 - e-learning modules, for example the [Child Safe Organisations e-learning modules](#).
- Remind staff regularly that they need to be alert for [signs of harm](#) and risk factors, and aware of

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physical and online risks to child safety.

- Provide staff and volunteers with up-to-date contact details for local support services for students and families.
- Consider staff needs when designing training, such as:
 - cultural safety for the needs of staff and volunteers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
 - cultural sensitivity for staff and volunteers who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - inclusivity of gender diversity and sexuality
 - accessibility for those with a disability, including mobility, visual or hearing impaired individuals
 - accessibility for those who are rurally or remotely located, or unable or unwilling to attend physically.

Plan to resource and prioritise child safety training

- Develop and communicate your Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and reporting obligations policy.
- Include child safety improvement and training in school planning.
- Provide time release for teachers, non-teaching and auxiliary staff to undertake child safety and related training.
- Direct staff to [PROTECT](#) for guidance on:
 - how to recognise indicators and risk factors of child harm, including harm caused by other children and young people
 - the processes to follow if a concern is raised.
- Keep a record of all staff and volunteers who complete child safety training to ensure all are appropriately trained, and training is refreshed as required.