

"The whole of life
belongs to God."



St Columba's School

Engaging • Inspiring • Empowering

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Child Safety Policy

At St Columba's 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 in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of St Columba's School to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at this school. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse, in our school. This policy applies to school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy.

Commitment to Child Safety

All students have a right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse.

We aim to provide an environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life, without any concern for their safety.

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

At St Columba's, 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 listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

St Columba's School encourages students to explore learning opportunities in a safe, secure and empowering environment, where individual differences are respected and students' strengths, talents and interests are celebrated.

Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

At St Columba's School we value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices.

To achieve this, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and their families
- promote the personal safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life

Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

St Columba's School will apply thorough and rigorous processes in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers involved in child-connected work. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers, and require police checks and Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff and volunteers. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for staff and volunteer positions.

St Columba's School follows the CECV *Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools* in the recruitment of all staff. This resource is available at:

<http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/Industrial-Relations/Policies-and-Guidelines/Child-Safety>

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

St Columba's School provides support and guidance to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated.

Our school provides employees, clergy and volunteers (where appropriate) with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters.

This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning opportunities to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

Our school has developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct, which establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for the 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. All staff receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

Our school records 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.

St Columba's School follows the joint protocols outlined in the *"Identifying & Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools"* resource and associated processes, published jointly by the Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria. This resource is located on the DET PROTECT Portal <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect>

Our school has established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our school's Child Safety Officer plays an essential role in ensuring that St Columba's School is a child safe school, with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to child safety. The Principal, Kim Butler, has been appointed as Child Safety Officer.

Risk Management

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

We will enact this commitment through:

- Child safety as a standing item on staff meeting agenda
- Periodic review of the Child Safety Risk Register
- Completing a risk assessment of all new activities

Policy Review

At St Columba's School we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

We will maintain a history of updates to this policy.

Date	Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)

References

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools](#).

Safe Schools Hub 2014, [National Safe Schools Framework Glossary](#), Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

State of Victoria 2016, [Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order No. 870](#), Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2.

VRQA Child Safe Standards	
Drafted:	May 2016
Ratified:	July 2016
To be reviewed:	2018