



# Child Safe Policy

## 1.0 Rationale:

At Catherine McAuley College, as a Mercy School living in the Spirit of Catherine McAuley and following the model of Jesus are dedicated to our Touchstone Statement.

'Inspiring members of our community to be learners impelled to thrive and serve'

This policy demonstrates the strong commitment of the whole school community of Catherine McAuley College, its leaders, staff, volunteers, students, their families, to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and procedures developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including all forms of abuse.

## 2.0 Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, 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 and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

## 3.0 Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The staff and volunteers of Catherine McAuley College aim to empower children, who are vital and active participants in our community, to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. 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. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

## 4.0 Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

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

## 5.0 Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Catherine McAuley College will apply the most thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety, our social and legislative responsibilities for all staff and volunteer positions.

We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require current police checks and Working with Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff and volunteers.

- Victorian Teaching Code of Conduct  
<http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/media/documents/imported-files/spl/Code-of-Conduct-2015.pdf>
- Victorian Catholic Education Code of Conduct  
[http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/vcsa/Agreement\\_2013/VCEMEA\\_2013.pdf](http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au/vcsa/Agreement_2013/VCEMEA_2013.pdf)
- Mercy Education Code of Conduct  
[http://www.mercy.edu.au/\\_uploads/\\_ckpg/files/MEL%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20FINAL%2023-03-23.pdf](http://www.mercy.edu.au/_uploads/_ckpg/files/MEL%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20FINAL%2023-03-23.pdf)
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## 6.0 Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Catherine McAuley College provides support and supervision to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated. We have a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code and must agree to abide by.

## 7.0 Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Catherine McAuley College understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Catherine McAuley College commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).

## 8.0 Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

Catherine McAuley College takes all allegations seriously and we work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. We adhere to the four critical actions for schools responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct using the PROTECT template. All records are securely stored in accordance with security and privacy requirements.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as a school take as per PROTECT.

Deputy Principals are Child Safety Officers with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to Child Safety. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the Complaints & Disclosure Policy and Complaints Procedure.

### **9.0 Legislative responsibilities**

Catherine McAuley College takes our legal responsibilities seriously and will use the PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools.

### **10.0 Risk Management Plan**

Risk management is an approach that minimises the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. Our Risk Management Plan. Our risk management plan outlines and details all aspects of risk across our whole school environment (on site and off site school activities) with specific activity risk assessments. In addition to our general Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse and harm to our students.

### **11.0 Duty of Care**

Catherine McAuley College is a Child Safe School. We owe all students a duty of care to take reasonable measures to protect them from risks of injury that should have been reasonably foreseen. All on and off-site activities require appropriate supervision and greater measures may need to be taken for younger students or students with disabilities to meet this duty of care. The College's risk assessment procedures and emergency management plan provide the processes for ensuring the above is achieved.

### **12.0 Minimum Standards**

The College monitors its compliance with the minimum standards in line with Ministerial Order 870 in an ongoing manner.

### **13. Related Policies**

- *PROTECT – Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools*
- *Complaints & Disclosure Policy*
- *Complaints Procedure*
- *Disclosure of Abuse or Harm Procedure*
- *Privacy Policy*