



Child Safe Policy

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 College community, 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.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of Catherine McAuley College:

1.1 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 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.

1.2 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 concerned students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

1.3 Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

We value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and have a zero tolerance to 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 College life

1.4 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. Our induction process follows the [CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools](#).

We ensure that we advise staff of the Victorian Institute of Teaching and Mercy Education Limited Code of Conduct, and that they uphold these standards.

- [Victorian Institute Teaching Code of Conduct](#)
- [Mercy Education Code of Conduct](#)

1.5 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.

1.6 Training and Supervision

Training and education are 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 the risk 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's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behavior towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the code of conduct to understand appropriate behavior further).

1.7 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 behavior.

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 reporting process and follow our Catherine McAuley College Emergency Procedure guide when processing allegations. 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.

Our Directors of Campus and year level leaders are our Child Safety Officers with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers or Parents/Carers in relation to Child Safety. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy for students, parents and carers.

1.8 Legislative Responsibilities

Catherine McAuley College takes our legal responsibilities seriously and will use the PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All forms Abuse in Victorian Schools. Further, the College will follow the Reportable Conduct Scheme Processes as outlined by the Commission for Children and Young People.

1.9 Risk Management Plan

Risk Management is an approach that minimizes the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. Our Risk Management Plan outlines and details all aspects of risk across our whole College community (onsite and offsite 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.

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.

Definition

Discriminatory Practices:

Federal discrimination laws protect people from discrimination on the basis of their:

- race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status
- sex, pregnancy or marital status and breastfeeding
- age
- disability, or

- sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

Minimum Standards

The College monitors its compliance with the minimum standards in line with Ministerial Order 1359 in an ongoing manner.

Legislation:

This Policy is mandated by:

- [PROTECT – Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety Statement](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Scheme information sheets](#)

Related Policies, Procedures and Forms:

- [Complaints & Grievances Resolution Policy for Students, Parents and Carers](#)
- [Intervention and Response](#)
- [Intervention and Response - Indigenous Student](#)
- [Intervention Process Matrix](#)
- [Catherine McAuley College Emergency Procedure](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)

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| Policies folder | Care, Safety and Welfare of Students/Child Safe Policy |
| Staff Handbook Section | Pastoral Care/Child Safe and Mandatory Reporting |