



# Child Safe Policy

## 1.0 Rationale

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.

## 2.0 Scope

All staff, students, parents/carers and visitors at Catherine McAuley College Bendigo

## 3.0 Policy Statement

### 3.1 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 fullest without any concern for their safety.

### 3.2 Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The staff and volunteers of Catherine McAuley College Bendigo 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.

### 3.3 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 College life

### 3.4 Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Catherine McAuley College Bendigo 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.

### **3.5 Supporting Staff and Volunteers**

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

Staff are expected to read and accept the code of conduct every 12 months.

### **3.6 Training and Supervision**

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at Catherine McAuley College Bendigo 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 Bendigo's 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 the code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).

### **3.7 Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint**

Catherine McAuley College Bendigo 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 reporting processes. 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 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 Grievance Resolution Policy for Students, Parents and Carers and Complaints Procedure.

### 3.8 Legislative Responsibilities

Catherine McAuley College Bendigo leadership team are responsible for ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in governance and culture.

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

We involve parents through our Parents Advisory Council, ensuring that all policies and procedures are reviewed and endorsed by this council before a final approval by the executive of the college.

### 3.9 Risk Management Plan - Review and Improve

Risk Management is an approach that minimises the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. Our Risk Management focus 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.

Child Safety Standards are the responsibility of all staff members, however leadership will review the Child Safe Risk Register annually in conjunction with the policy being reviewed every 2 years or when a change in legislation occurs.

## 4.0 Definition

**Child** - a young person up to the age of 18 years

**Child Abuse** - Including but not limited to: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect

**Parents/Carers** - Natural biological parents, carers or legal guardians of a currently enrolled student

**Staff** - Including teachers and support staff, employed, seconded, or appointed by Catherine McAuley College Bendigo

**Student** – Enrolled student of Catherine McAuley College Bendigo

**Volunteer** - A person who is engaged by the College to support a co-curricular activity and does not receive a financial remuneration

## 5.0 Legislation

*This Policy is mandated by:*

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Ministerial Order 1359 - Child Safe standards

## 6.0 Duty of Care

Catherine McAuley College Bendigo is a Child Safe School. We owe all students and staff 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.

## 7.0 Minimum Standards

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

## 8.0 Related Policies, Procedures and Forms:

- Complaints & Disclosure Policy and Procedure
- Catherine McAuley College Bendigo Emergency Procedure guide
- Catherine McAuley College Risk Management Plans
- Privacy Policy
- [Victorian Institute Teaching Code of Conduct](#)
- [Mercy Education Code of Conduct](#)
- [PROTECT – Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety Statement](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Scheme information sheets](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Scheme, Victoria](#)

Date Last Reviewed:	Nov 2023
Policies folder	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students/Child Safe Policy
Date Approved:	Dec 2023
Policy Sponsor	Principal
Frequency of Review:	2 years
Version Number	1.0