



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but he who sent me.” Mark 9:37

1. Introduction

Our Lady of Sion College is governed by Our Lady of Sion College Ltd and is conducted in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church as interpreted by the Archbishop of Melbourne. The College maintains a strong commitment to the charism and educational mission of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion. This charism enlivens and guides all our practices, structures and relationships and is critical to the realisation of the mission of the College.

Central to the mission of Our Lady of Sion College 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.

Our commitment is drawn from and inherent to the biblical belief that each individual is made in the image and likeness of God and the mission of Jesus Christ.

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n. 9).

All students enrolled at Our Lady of Sion College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of the young people 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 students are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

Staff are expected to actively contribute to a culture that respects the dignity of its members and is affirming of 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.

2. Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on promoting child safety and wellbeing in the College environment and safeguarding the young people at Our Lady of Sion College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and occupational codes.

3. Scope

All Our Lady of Sion College Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and religious at Our Lady of Sion College (collectively, Staff).

4. Our Lady of Sion Child Safety Commitment Statement

Our Lady of Sion College is committed to creating a child safe community grounded in our Catholic and Sionian tradition. We uphold the dignity of every student and work to foster a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where each young person can flourish.

We recognise and respect the diverse needs and identities of our students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and support them to feel safe, valued and empowered within our community.



We have zero tolerance for child abuse and expect everyone to contribute to safeguarding children and young people. We work proactively to prevent all forms of abuse and harm and respond with action, compassion and care.

5. Acceptable behaviours

Our Lady of Sion College Board Directors, the Principal, and all other staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and religious at Our Lady of Sion College are responsible for supporting the safety of our students by:

- adhering to Our Lady of Sion College's child safety and wellbeing policies and upholding our statement of commitment to child safety, at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from 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 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)
- paying particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- 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 a member of the child safe team
- 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 school's reportable conduct policy
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership or a member of the child safe team
- 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

6. Unacceptable behaviours

Our Lady of Sion College Board, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and religious 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 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.
- have any online contact with a child (including through social media, email, instant messaging) 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 to contact students
- exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses with students
- where a Staff member has existing relationships outside of school with students and / or families this should be made known to the Principal
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents or carers
- consume illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children
- consume alcohol when responsible for the supervision and care of students
- consume alcohol at school or at school events in the presence of students. Limited exceptions, such as the Year 12 Valedictory where parents and carers are present and responsible for their children must be approved by the Principal.

6.1 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 which 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.

6.2 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 practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

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



6.3 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 students to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language.
- coaching students to show good sportsmanship.
- 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.
- will not be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.
- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as first aid room

6.4 Clergy or other persons involved in religious ministry

In addition to this Code of Conduct, clergy and other persons involved in religious ministry abide by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's safeguarding commitments, including the Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People, developed by the Safeguarding Unit within the Vicar General's Office. These commitments reinforce the responsibility of all Church personnel to protect and promote the safety, wellbeing and dignity of children and young people.

7. Breaches of this Code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, Our Lady of Sion College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2022 (CEMEA): Diocese of Ballarat, Diocese of Sandhurst, Archdiocese of Melbourne and Lavalla Catholic College Traralgon* 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 the Chair of the Our Lady of Sion College Board at: boardchair@sion.catholic.edu.au

Where any other member of the College community, including volunteers and contractors, is suspected of breaching this code, the College 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.

8. Related policies and documents

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations

9. Legislation and standards

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

Ministerial Order 1359: *Implementing the Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*

Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2022 (CEMEA): Diocese of Ballarat, Diocese of Sandhurst, Archdiocese of Melbourne and Lavalla Catholic College Traralgon



10. Child Safety Code of Conduct Status and Review

STATUS OF POLICY	
College Leader Responsible	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
Approving Authority	College Board
Approval Date	July 2026
Date of next review	2028
Publication	Website; Staff Portal, Staff Handbook, Onboarding Documentation, Visitor Sign in

Record of Review

Details of Amendments	By Whom	Date
	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing	July 2026