

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Mater Christi College, Belgrave is a Catholic College established by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan of the order of St Benedict in 1963. The College operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, is governed by an incorporated board and owned by Good Samaritan Education. Mater Christi is a proud leader in contemporary education and strives to educate young women to be Informed, Compassionate and Creative.

### Purpose

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

All MCC Board members, Board committee members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors at Mater Christi College are expected to actively contribute to a school culture by respecting the dignity of its members, affirming the values of Good Samaritan Education. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. All Board Members, Board Committee members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

This Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#).

### Acceptable Behaviours

All College Board members, Board committee members, the Principal and all our other staff, volunteers, and contractors are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

1. adhering to the school's child-safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety, at all times
2. taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
3. treating everyone in the school community with respect
4. taking into account the needs of all children and students
5. 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
6. 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)
7. promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance for discrimination)
8. promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
9. ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
10. reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
11. understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

12. understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the reportable conduct scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the schools reportable conduct policy
13. reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
14. ensuring as quickly as possible that the child is safe if an allegation of child abuse is made
15. 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
16. ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

## Unacceptable Behaviours

All Board members, Board committee members, School Advisory Council members, the Principal and all our other staff, volunteers and contractors must not:

1. Impose any form of corporal punishment.
2. ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
3. develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
4. exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
5. put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
6. 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)
7. engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
8. use inappropriate language in the presence of children
9. express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
10. discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
11. work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
12. have contact with a child or their family outside school without the school leadership's or child safety officer's (if the school has appointed someone to this role) 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
13. have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging) or their family unless necessary (for example, providing families with eNewsletters or assisting students with their schoolwork)
14. use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account
15. exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses
16. photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents, guardians or carers
17. consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children unless permission is sought due to a workplace and training context. .

## 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:

1. knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities

2. working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
3. modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
4. protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
5. respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
6. interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
7. not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students
8. not engaging in any form of corporal punishment which is strictly prohibited.

## Psychologists, school nurses and other allied health staff

In their dealings with students, psychologists and nurses 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.

## 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 children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be 'good sports'
- 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
- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

## Breaches of this code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, Mater Christi College may start the process under clause 13 of the Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018 (VCEMEA 2018) and subsequent agreements for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

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

## Governance

| Document Details |                                                   |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
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| Policy Owner     | Principal, Deputy Principal - Staff and Students. |
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