



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Child Safe Standard 3: Child safety code of conduct – acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

St Mary's College Melbourne is a Catholic school for girls and boys in the Edmund Rice tradition, established as Christian Brothers' College St Kilda in 1878. St Mary's College is committed to providing a caring, supportive and safe environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

St Mary's College is committed to providing a safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. At St Mary's College we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Responsibility

The protection of children and young people is the responsibility of everyone at St Mary's College including staff, Advisory Council members, clergy, contractors, parents and volunteers. We are all responsible for promoting the wellbeing and safety of all students and must behave appropriately when they are in our physical or online presence.

Purpose

When individuals are clear about behavioral expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately towards others. The purpose of this Child Safety Code of Conduct (the Code) is to:

- protect students from harm;
- reduce opportunities for abuse (including sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect) or harm to occur;
- promote child safety in the St Mary's College environment;
- complement the Child Safe Code of Conduct of the College's governing body, Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and procedures, and the College Child Protection Program (as revised from time to time);
- set standards about the ways in which individuals working in our College environment are expected to behave and conduct themselves when interacting with students.

Scope

The Code is intended to complement the EREA Child Safe Code of Conduct, EREA and College policies and procedures, child protection legislation and Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and Victorian Government policies and professional standards. All individuals who are working in the College environment are required to comply with the Code at all times. Such individuals include Advisory Council members, all College staff including teachers, administration and education support staff, temporary or casual staff, pre-service teachers, volunteers, contractors, external education providers, clergy, parents/guardians and carers. Where a staff member breaches the Code, the College and/or EREA may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

The College environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by St Mary's College for use by a student during or outside school hours, and includes St Mary's College registered campuses, online College environments, including email and intranet systems, and other locations provided by the College for student use including locations used for camps, tours, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

The Code is made available to all staff, volunteers, visitors, families and students via the College public website.

Overarching Principles

- An adult's response to a student's behaviour or circumstances should be commensurate with the student's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the student.
- An adult should not be alone with a student unless there is line of sight to other adults.
- An adult should not initiate or seek contact with students outside the College environment.

Acceptable Behaviours

All persons working in the St Mary's College environment will:

- uphold the College's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times and adhere to the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy;
- take all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse, violence, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect;
- respect the language, customs and religion of a student's family;
- treat everyone in the school community with respect both within and outside the College environment;
- maintain a duty of care towards students;
- avoid covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with students;
- maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in their interactions with students;
- behave as positive role models;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are communicating that they or another student has been abused or they are worried about their safety or the safety of another student;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, regardless of age, gender, religion, vulnerability, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, culture or language background (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students);
- ensure that they are not alone with a student unless there is line of sight to other adults;
- report immediately to the Principal or the College Senior Child Safety Officer if they have a reasonable belief or suspicion that a student has been or is being abused or neglected, or of any other child safety concern;
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is (are) safe;
- understand and comply with all reporting or disclosure obligations and procedures related to protecting students from harm or abuse (including mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*);
- alert the Principal or another member of the College Leadership Team if a breach of the Code is observed.

The Principal or Principal's delegate will:

- report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

Unacceptable Behaviours

All persons working in the St Mary's College environment will not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- behave in a sexual or other inappropriate, or discriminatory way towards students or expose students to such behaviour;
- engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a student that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including because of the student's or another person's race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or disability;
- exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical, including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves;
- engage in prejudicial, oppressive or threatening behaviour towards a student;
- engage in open discussions of an adult nature, or express personal views on culture, race or sexuality or use offensive, profane, sexual, discriminatory or abusive language, towards or in the presence of a student;
- communicate privately with students outside the context of their professional or volunteer relationship;
- work with students whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- consume alcohol or illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of students;
- develop any 'special' relationships with a student that could be seen as offering favoritism;
- exchange personal contact details or have any online contact with a student (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc.) or their family unless necessary for a legitimate school purpose, eg. providing families with school information or assisting students with their school work via College approved avenues;
- take, publish or share photos, video or other images of students, that are not for authorised school purposes, or without the authorisation of the student's parent/guardian.

I _____ confirm that I have received and taken due note of the St Mary's College Child Safety Code of Conduct and commit myself to fully comply with its principles and requirements.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Related Documents: Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, EREA Code of Conduct, EREA Child Safe Code of Conduct, SMC Child Protection and Safety Policy, SMC Information & Communication Technology Policy, Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy

Approval: Approved by EREA Board 7 August 2020 | **Date of last review:** March 2020 | **Date of next review:** 2021