

Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy

Introduction

Catholic education is an active partnership between family and school, where families are recognised as the first and ongoing educators of their children. Schools and families partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for children and young people's faith formation, learning, safety and wellbeing.

At Santa Maria College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

As educators governed by Good Samaritan Education in the Order of St Benedict, we at Santa Maria College are a learning community committed to professional dialogue and capacity building for all. We are charged with the responsibility of leading in matters of Faith, Learning and Wellbeing through the framework of the One Community: Three Villages model. As a College committed to holistic learning, we aim to foster respectful relationships for all by nurturing an optimal learning environment. This occurs within partnerships where every student can flourish within the context of our Catholic community and imagine her life, and the lives of those around her, in new ways.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at Santa Maria College to ensure that families, carers and other members of the College community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school.

This Policy takes into account the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Scope

This Policy applies to school employees, volunteers, and contractors. It should be read in conjunction with related school policies and procedures, including:

1. Child Safety Framework
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Principles

At Santa Maria College, the following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Families and carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families, carers and other members of the College community about our child safe approach.
- All members of the College community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers and other members of the College community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the College's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers and other members of the College community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the College in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Policy

Santa Maria College is committed to ensuring that all members of our College community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at Santa Maria College.

We implement the following strategies and actions to ensure that we are able to meet this commitment.

Strategies / actions used by College leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and College leaders at Santa Maria College recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers and other members of the College community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- utilising the Santa Maria College Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies and practices
- supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their communication and engagement skills and to understand the value and importance of effective communication and engagement
- identifying opportunities for parents and carers to participate in decisions that affect their child's safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available so that they are easily accessible to families, carers and other members of the College community
- engaging with families, carers and other members of the College community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- creating opportunities to ensure that members of the College community are adequately informed about the College's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing

Strategies / actions used by College staff, volunteers and contractors

College staff, volunteers and contractors at Santa Maria College also have a responsibility to support the College governing authority and College leaders in communicating and engaging with families, carers and other members of the College community regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- creating and maintaining open lines of communication with families, carers and other members of the College community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- liaising with parents and carers in relation to any concerns and/or decisions that affect their child and giving them the opportunity to contribute to any discussions, where appropriate
- ensuring that parents, carers and others in the College community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring they act in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing

Related Resources

[eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the College's two-year review cycle of its child safety practices.
- Update of the policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand.

Responsible director	Principal
Policy owner	Deputy Principal, Learning and Life
Approving body/individual	Santa Maria College Board
Approval date	June 2023
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	June 2024