

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Central to our mission at Catholic Regional College St Albans is Jesus' call to love one another as he loved us. We believe that each person is sacred and must be treated with dignity and respect, and we work hard to ensure that the school is a secure, safe and welcoming place where students, their families and staff experience belonging, support and trust.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Catholic Regional College St Albans against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and College Council members at Catholic Regional College St Albans are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms 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, as noted below.

Principles

The following principles should always guide an adult's behaviour when working with children and young people:

- the adult / young person relationship should be professional at all times;
- an adult's response to a young person's behaviour or circumstances should be commensurate with the young person's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for their care, safety and welfare;
- an adult should not be alone with a young person unless there is a line of sight to other adults, and
- an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact with students or contact students outside school.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors and College Council members are responsible for supporting the safety of young people by:

- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect young people from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe educational and pastoral environment
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or another young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another young person
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of young people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by never tolerating discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young people with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a young person
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe

Unacceptable behaviours

Staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with young people that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with young people which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps, hugging, touching)
- put young people at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- make contact with a young person in anger or frustration, or use corporal punishment to correct a young person's behaviour
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of young people (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of young people
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of young people

- discriminate against any young person, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a young person or their family outside of school without the school leadership's knowledge and/or consent of 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 young person (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

Raising concerns about unacceptable conduct

Concerns regarding unacceptable behaviour by a staff member or volunteer should be raised with a member of the College Leadership Team. The processes for this are outlined in the College Grievances and Complaints procedures.

Compliance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment obligations, misconduct (*under the VIT Code of Conduct*) or a criminal offence. Those who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, be reported to the police and / or have their employment terminated.

The College 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.

Safeguarding Children and Young People:
Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct.

Signed: _____ Date: _____