Safeguarding Children and Young People
Code of Conduct

July 2016

Purpose
This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at St Clare’s Catholic Primary School 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 board/school council members at St Clare’s Catholic Primary School 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.

Guiding Principles
Some simple principles should guide an adult’s behaviour when undertaking child-connected work. These include:

- the adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- an adult’s response to a child’s behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child’s age and vulnerability and the adult’s responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child
- the adult should not be alone with a child unless a line of sight is available to school staff members
- the adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact of an inappropriate nature with children outside of the school context.
Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board/school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- treating children with respect and dignity
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm
- respecting a student’s privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only revealing confidential matters when appropriate
- refraining from discussing students’ personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially
- making decisions in students’ best interests
- adhering to the school’s Child Safety Policy, Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures, Duty of Care and Wellbeing Policies
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal/Deputy Principal, principal delegate for the day
- 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 (e.g. by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child’s self-identification)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (e.g. zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (e.g. during personal care activities)
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- 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 child safety officer if the school has appointed someone in this role)
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- ensuring as quickly as possible, if an allegation of child abuse is made, that the child(ren) are safe
- reporting to the Principal and Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual office by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher
- reporting to the school’s leadership/governing body if any volunteer, contractor, clergy, board/school council member/parent has any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence, or certain allegations or concerns about an adult actively involved in the school community
- maintaining appropriate communication between parents, guardians and staff regarding students e.g. the academic, social, emotional needs of their child.
Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board/school council members must not:

- have a sexual relationship with a student
- use sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or materials with a student
- touch a student without a valid reason
- hold or have inappropriate conversations/contact with a student
- spend time alone or remain in a confined or secluded space with a child or young person
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (e.g. offering gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (e.g inappropiate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (e.g. by locking doors or blocking line of sight)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children 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 children (e.g. 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 because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school’s leadership or knowledge/consent or the school governing authority’s approval (e.g. unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street is acceptable.)
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging, online gaming etc) or their family (unless necessary, e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their 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, unless for academic and/or assessment purposes
- 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.

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

Signed: ___________________________ Date: __________
Definitions

Child abuse includes—
- any act committed against a child involving—
  - a sexual offence or
  - an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of—
  - physical violence or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:
- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff means:
- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
  - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
  - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
  - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
  - a minister of religion¹.

School governing authority means:
- the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
- the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
- the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

Explanatory note: There is a wide variety of school governance arrangements. Depending on the way a school is constituted and operated, the governing body for a school may be the school board, the school council, or some other person or entity. The school governing authorities may share or assign responsibility for discharging the requirements imposed by this Order, in accordance with the school’s internal governance arrangements.

¹ minister of religion has the same meaning as in the Working with Children Act 2005.