

Responsibility: Principal
Date approved by Board: November 2019
Date of next review: November 2021



Sharing Faith, Hope & Love

Emmanuel College

Child Safety Policy

RATIONALE

The care, safety and wellbeing of students is central to the Emmanuel College Vision in providing a dynamic learning community that brings to life the Gospel values of Faith, Hope, and Love, and in continuing the Catholic traditions of our founders. This policy sets out the College's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are kept safe from harm, and the framework for responding to the [Child Safe Standards](#) as set out in [Ministerial Order 870](#).

SCOPE

This policy relates to all personnel at Emmanuel College, including the Board of Management, staff, volunteers, and contractors, and applies to all aspects of the school program, including sporting events, camps and excursions, and other activities organised or attended by the school. All personnel are required to adhere to this policy and related procedures and must acknowledge this as part of the induction process.

DEFINITIONS

A full list of definitions can be found in the [Ministerial Order](#), and include:

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.

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); and the infliction on a child of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; and serious neglect of a child.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Emmanuel College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

The College has a zero tolerance for child abuse.

The College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved with the College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

School personnel, including the Board of Management, volunteers, and contractors, will be supported to fulfil their role, including receiving regular and appropriate learning opportunities, and training on the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy, Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct, and Child Protection Reporting Obligations Policy.

This commitment is supported by the CECV's [statement](#) underpinning the focus on child safety across Catholic education in Victoria.

CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin Emmanuel College's commitment to child safety.

1. Take a proactive, preventative and participatory approach to child safety.
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
4. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
5. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
6. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.
7. Work in partnership and communicate regularly with families and the community to ensure they are engaged in decision-making processes that impact on child safety and protection.
8. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and young people and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
9. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
10. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
11. Implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards, primarily the [Child Safe Standards](#) as set out in [Ministerial Order 870](#).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Child protection is a shared responsibility. Everyone has a role to play in protecting children and young people, and preventing child abuse and neglect from occurring in the first place.

The **Board of Management** must ensure the Principal, supported by the Leadership Team, implements practices for a child safe environment at the College, and periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice, and if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

The **Principal** has an overall leadership role in ensuring the College meets the specific requirements of the [Child Safe Standards](#) as set out in [Ministerial Order 870](#), and for creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and feel safe. The Deputy Principal will support the Principal in this role as the College's Child Safety Officer. Responsibilities include:

- ensuring the College's child safety policies, practices, procedures and record keeping are at all times compliant with the [CECV Child Safety](#) guidelines and assessment tool
- promoting a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety
- providing an annual budget allocation for regular training and education in order to understand individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- allocating resources and support to assist in meeting the learning and wellbeing needs of all students
- ensuring there are processes to monitor and update the register for Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration and Working with Children Checks
- implementing procedures consistent with [CECV guidelines](#) for the employment of staff and engagement of volunteers and contractors in Catholic schools
- ensuring the College website and newsletter has information to keep parents and carers informed of policy and procedures
- upholding high principles and standards for all school staff, including volunteers and contractors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- promoting student empowerment and participation in policies and curriculum design
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to the protection and wellbeing of children and young people

- implementing effective risk management strategies, including monitoring and reviewing the risk register, and ensuring that school personnel are informed of strategies to mitigate risks to support child safety
- including child safety as a standing agenda item for Board of Management and staff meetings, and providing regular updates on the implementation of child safety practices
- ensuring the school takes specific action to protect children from abuse and following the steps for making a report as outlined in [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
- responding to any allegations of child abuse or misconduct made against school staff following the requirements of the [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)
- recording any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct, and storing the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements

All **staff** are required to sign the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct, which recognises the critical role staff play in protecting children and young people and establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect. The Code of Conduct also protects staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Other responsibilities include:

- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing and care of children and young people is nurtured and respected
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand the individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- undertaking professional learning related to child safety, such as resilience, behaviour management, healthy and respectful relations, critical incidents, pastoral care, and child abuse awareness and preventions
- ensuring curriculum design integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance student understanding of being safe and engagement in curriculum design
- implementing teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge and support student empowerment and participation
- following the College and legislative procedures if forming a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected, including the steps for making a report as outlined in [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
- remaining familiar with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements

Volunteers and contractors must follow the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct, and be familiar with the relevant laws, policies, and procedures in relation to child protection and comply with these requirements. Other responsibilities include:

- participating in the College's requirements for induction and ongoing training on child safety
- ensuring students are treated with dignity and respect
- following College policies and procedures, including signing-in and out when on school grounds
- reporting immediately any concerns or issues regarding child safety to the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team

SCREENING AND RECRUITMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

The College will apply thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of school personnel, including volunteers and contractors.

The College's commitment to child safety and screening requirements are included in advertisements for all positions, and applicants are provided with a copy of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy. When recruiting and selecting school staff, all reasonable efforts are made to:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration as relevant
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children and young people
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children

The College has processes in place for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school personnel to work with children and young people, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements, such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

BREACH OF POLICY

Where an Emmanuel College employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the College may start the process under Clause 13 of the [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2018 \(VCEMEA\)](#) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the Chair of the Board of Management. The Board Chair would notify the Governors where the Principal was suspected of any breach of policy. Relevant notification should also be made to the Director of Catholic Education for the Diocese of Ballarat.

Where any other member of the College community is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the College is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with Child Protection Reporting Obligations Policy, Complaints and Grievances Policy, and/or contact the Secondary Educational Consultant at the Catholic Education Office Ballarat.

REPORTING CONCERNS

The College's Child Protection Reporting Obligations Policy sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection, or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report. The policy assists to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a "reasonable belief" is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection laws and the legal obligations relating to child abuse and grooming under criminal law

Concerns must be reported to the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team or Student Services.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The College is committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across the whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating where possible all potential sources of harm. Risk management strategies for child safety are documented, implemented, monitored, and periodically reviewed and changed as needed, or as new risk arise.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

The College collects, uses, and discloses information about particular children and young people and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws.

The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the College's Privacy Policy.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is reviewed every two years or as required, and feedback will be sought from the College community as part of the process.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

Child Protection Reporting Obligations Policy

Complaints and Grievances Policy

Privacy Policy

[Ministerial Order 807 – Child Safe Standards, Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools](#)

[Child Safe Standards – VRQA guidelines and resources for registered schools](#)

[CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)

[CECV Child Safety guidelines](#)

[Department of Education and Training – Child Protection and Child Safe Standards \(PROTECT\)](#)

[Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2018 \(VCEMEA\)](#)

[Crimes Act 1958](#)

[Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)