


St Catherine's Primary School	System Update: 29. 01. 2020	
Version 0.2	Date of Next Review: 29.01. 2021	

## *Code of Conduct- Safeguarding Children and Young People*

We believe that as people of God, inspired by St Catherine, we are called to provide an education that enables our students to be safe, confident and active learners who respond positively to challenge and have the courage to be of service to others.

### Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at St Catherine's 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 Catherine's 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.

### Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board/school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by observing the school Child Safety Policy and all related policies. Acceptable behaviours include but are not limited to:

- 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 children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- 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 (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- 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 to this role)
- 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 (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- reporting 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.

## TEACHERS MAINTAIN OBJECTIVITY IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

In their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend or a parent. They:

- interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- make decisions in students' best interests
- do not draw students into their personal agendas
- do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals.

## TEACHERS ARE ALWAYS IN A PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDENTS IN THEIR SCHOOL, WHETHER AT SCHOOL OR NOT

Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits.

A professional relationship will be violated if a teacher:

- has a sexual relationship with a student
- uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students
- touches a student without a valid reason
- holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context
- accepts gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents.

A professional relationship may be compromised if a teacher:

- attends parties or socialises with students
- invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present.

## Unacceptable behaviours

Staff and volunteers must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact which 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 (for example, 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, including 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 child safety officer's (if the school has appointed someone to this role) knowledge and/or consent or 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 child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family (unless necessary eg 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.

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

