



## Child Safety at St Bede's College [Existing Staff, Future Staff & Job Applicants]

It is a prerequisite that as from 1 August 2016, all existing and future staff at St Bede's College, as well as job applicants, are aware of two key documents:

1. St Bede's College – **Child Safety Policy**
2. St Bede's College – **Child Safety Code of Conduct**

All Middle Managers will receive a copy of the document Protect. Each year, managers of wellbeing will have appropriate professional development on this document.

In working or accepting a position at St Bede's College, staff need to be aware that:

- (a) At all times, child safety is a key priority of the College and clear policies, expectations and procedures are in place.
- (b) When submitting an application to work at the College, staff applying must meet all the requirements in relation to:

The safety of students connected within the College environment and with this extending to locations other than the College – example: camps, sporting events and excursions.

- (c) Existing staff, future staff and job applicants must produce evidence of:
  - A Working with Children Check
  - A VIT Registration or equivalent registration
- (d) When submitting an application for an employment position, a minimum of two references/referees is required that will indicate a suitability to work with students.





# Child Safe Policy

## Preamble:

St Bede's College holds the care, safety and wellbeing of its students to be at the core of all we do. The College is resolutely committed to ensuring that all College staff, including employees, Board members, committee members, contractors, volunteers and clergy (**College Staff**), act in a manner that promotes the inherent dignity of each of our young men and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

## Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to prevent child abuse and to demonstrate the strong commitment of St Bede's College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our College. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in College Environments.

This Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#).

## Scope:

This Policy applies to all College Staff.

At St Bede's College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of our students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in 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](#)).

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9).

## Statement of Policy:

### 1. Principles

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where students are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe.

**The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at St Bede's College:**

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

- Our College works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that various stakeholders are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.
- All adults in our College, including College Staff, have a responsibility to care for students, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and students.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- College Staff, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by the Leadership Team.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

## 2. Definitions used in this Policy

**Child:** A child or a young person enrolled as a student at the College (unless otherwise stated under the applicable legislation – discussed below).

**Child abuse** includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
  - (i) a sexual offence
  - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
- b) the infliction, on a child, of:
  - i) physical violence
  - ii) serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) serious neglect of a child.

**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 neglect** includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health and physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

**Child physical abuse:** Generally, consists of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

**Child protection:** Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.

**Child sexual abuse** is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can

include a wide range of sexual activity and does not always involve physical contact or force. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

**Commission:** Commission for Children and Young People.

**DHHS:** Department of Health and Human Services.

**Emotional child abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

**Grooming** is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. It can include communication and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

**Mandatory Reporting:** The legal requirement under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)* to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The Principal, teachers, medical practitioners and nurses at a school are mandatory reporters under this Act. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

**Reasonable Belief:** When College Staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

**College environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a) a campus of the College
- b) online College environments (including email and intranet systems)
- c) other locations provided by the College for a student's use (including, without limitation, locations used for College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

**College Staff** means an individual working in a College environment who is:

- a) directly engaged or employed by a College governing authority
- b) a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- c) a minister of religion.

### 3. Policy Commitments

All students enrolled at St Bede's College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of students in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where students are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students with a disability.

#### Our commitment to our students

- a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of students enrolled in our College.
- b) We commit to providing students with positive and nurturing experiences.
- c) We commit to listening to students and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing

any concerns that they raise with us.

- d) We commit to taking action to ensure that students are protected from abuse or harm.
- e) We commit to teaching students the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing, and as far as is possible to those of their peers.
- f) We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

#### **Our commitment to parents and carers**

- a) We commit to communicating, within the context of confidentiality, honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their students.
- b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures.
- c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of students.
- d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- e) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect students from abuse.

#### **Our commitment to our College Staff**

- a) We commit to providing all College Staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and College Staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by College Staff about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- d) We commit to providing opportunities for College Staff to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a student.

### **4. Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements**

All College Staff have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#))

The College has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows.

#### **4.1. Guide to Responsibilities of College Leadership**

The Principal and the Leadership Team at St Bede's College recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for students to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all College Staff
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and students based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of College Staff
- ensuring that College personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to students' protection and wellbeing

- ensuring the College meets the specific requirements of any legislative requirements (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- ensuring the College takes specific action to protect children from all abuse ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#))

## 4.2. Guide to Responsibilities of College Staff

Responsibilities of College Staff include:

- treating students with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting students in their care
- following the legislative and internal College processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a student has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of students is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of students
- 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
- following the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and Child Safety Procedure.

## 4.3. Organisational Arrangements

St Bede's College has established a Child Safe School Committee consisting of the College Counsellors and Deputies who, with the Principal, Leadership Team and the St Bede's College Board are responsible for embedding a culture of child safety including a zero tolerance for child abuse.

## 5. Expectation of our College Staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At St Bede's College community, we expect all College Staff to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any student at the College. All College Staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements. We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy, which recognises the critical role that College Staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of College Staff for appropriate behaviour with students in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect. Our Code also protects College Staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

## 6. Student Safety and Participation

At St Bede's College, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Students new to the College are informed of who they can approach to discuss any concerns they may have regarding their safety or the safety of others. The College also has a very proactive pastoral system whereby Homeroom Teachers (Years 7 – 9) and Tutors (Years 10 – 12) have responsibility for monitoring the wellbeing of each student in their care. Working alongside the Homeroom Teachers and Tutors are the Year Level and House Co-Ordinators who, with the Deputy Principals: Student Management and Wellbeing, ensure the welfare and wellbeing of each student is met. The College Counsellors also ensure that student welfare and safety is paramount.

## 7. Reporting and Responding

### Mandatory reporting obligations

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) requires certain professionals to make a report to the DHHS when, in the course of their position or employment:

- a) they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child (i.e. an individual under the age of 17) is in need of protection because the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse; and
- b) the child's parents or caregiver have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm.

At the College, mandatory reporters include the Principal, teachers, medical practitioners and nurses.

Mandatory reporters are required by law to notify the DHHS, as soon as practicable after forming such a belief, and after each occasion on which they become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

It is not mandatory to report emotional and psychological abuse or neglect, but mandatory reporters are at liberty to do so.

### Belief on reasonable grounds

You have reasonable grounds to notify when:

- a) a child tells you that he/she has been physically or sexually abused;
- b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child is talking about themselves);
- c) someone else, such as a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the child, tells you that a child has been abused;
- d) your observations of the child's behaviour or knowledge of children lead you to believe that the child has been abused; or
- e) you observe physical signs or indicators of abuse (e.g. bruises, cuts etc.).

NB: We encourage reporting where you hold a concern about the safety of a child.

### Voluntary reporting

In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse, may disclose that information to the Police or the DHHS. If a person would like internal guidance or support with addressing their concerns, they are encouraged to speak with the Principal or a member of the College's Leadership Team.

### When is a child in need of protection?

A child is in need of protection if any of the following grounds exist—

- a) the child has been abandoned by his or her parents;
- b) the child's parents are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person willing and able to care for the child;
- c) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- d) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;



- e) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, significantly damaged and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type;
- f) the child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be, significantly harmed and the child's parents have not provided, arranged or allowed the provision of, or are unlikely to provide, arrange or allow the provision of, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care.

### Reporting child sexual abuse

In addition to the obligations above, any person who receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (an individual under the age of 16 years) by another person (an individual of or over the age of 18 years), has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) is 3 years imprisonment.

The College supports and encourages College Staff to make a report to the Police if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.

### Reportable conduct scheme

Under the *Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), if the Principal becomes aware of a reportable allegation against a College Staff member, the Principal must notify the Commission in writing:

- within 3 business days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation—
  - that a reportable allegation has been made against a College Staff member;
  - the name (including any former name and alias, if known) and date of birth, if known, of the College Staff member;
  - whether Victoria Police has been contacted about the reportable allegation;
  - the name, address and telephone number of the College; and
  - the name of the Principal; and
- as soon as practicable and within 30 days after becoming aware of the reportable allegation:
  - detailed information about the reportable allegation;
  - whether or not the College proposes to take any disciplinary or other action in relation to the College Staff member and the reasons why it intends to take, or not to take, that action; and
  - any written submissions made to the Principal concerning the reportable allegation that the College Staff member wished to have considered in determining what, if any, disciplinary or other action should be taken.

In addition to the obligations above, any person may disclose a reportable allegation to the Commission.

If a person would like internal guidance or support with addressing their concerns, they are encouraged to speak with the Principal or a member of the College's Leadership Team.

For the purposes of the scheme:

- "Reportable conduct" means:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child (an individual under the age of 18), whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded; or
- sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child; or
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
- significant neglect of a child;
- “Reportable allegation” means any reportable allegation means any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that a College Staff member has committed:
  - reportable conduct; or
  - misconduct that may involve reportable conduct,

whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's engagement.

Furthermore, the Principal is required to ensure that the College has in place a system for:

- preventing child abuse by College Staff within the course of the person's engagement;
- enabling any person, including College Staff, to notify the Principal of a reportable allegation of which the person becomes aware;
- enabling any person, including College Staff, to notify the Commission of a reportable allegation involving Principal of which the person becomes aware; and
- investigating and responding to a reportable allegation.

### Protection of reporters

Any College Staff member that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the College, and will not be penalised by the College for making the report.

If a College Staff member is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they should speak to the Principal or a member of the College's Leadership Team for guidance and information.

Ultimately, it is a personal decision of the College Staff member whether they choose to make a report to an external authority or not.

## **8. Screening and Recruitment of School Staff**

St Bede's College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of College Staff involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such College Staff positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

When recruiting and selecting College Staff involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts 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

- obtain references that address the applicant’s suitability for the job and working with children.

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of College Staff to work with students, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

## **9. Child Safety – Education and Training for College Staff**

St Bede’s College provides College Staff with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

All College Staff are required to complete annually the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning module.

## **10. Child Safety – Work Place Learning**

The College will ensure that the amended Ministerial Orders 382 and 55 will be applied by the College Work Experience Coordinator (Work Experience) and Applied Learning Coordinator (Structured Workplace Learning and SBATs). The College will ensure the following guidelines for dealing with risk management of students whilst undertaking work experience, structured workplace learning, and School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs) will be adhered to:

- a) All Students to complete Occupational Health and Safety training prior to commencing any work placement.
- b) All employers to provide training and instruction to students on Occupational Health and Safety at the start of each placement.
- c) The Work Experience Coordinator (WE) and Applied Learning Coordinator (SWL and SBATs) or nominated Staff will arrange an appropriate time to contact the students (by any appropriate means):
  - a. At least once during the course of the placement under the Arrangement; and
  - b. If the placement under the Arrangement includes placement days in more than one term, at least once during each of those terms.
- d) The health, education and moral and material welfare of the student will not suffer under the proposed Arrangement.
- e) The student will not be subjected to any form of exploitation, harassment or unlawful discrimination during the course of the proposed Arrangement.
- f) The student will have the contact details of the Work Experience Coordinator (WE), Applied Learning Coordinator (SWL or SBATs) or nominated Staff to report any incidences of harassment, bullying or violence during the course of the placement under the Arrangement.
- g) The Work Experience Coordinator (WE), Applied Learning Coordinator (SWL or SBATs) or nominated Staff will supply to each employer a copy of the Victorian Government, Education and Training, “Fact Sheet for Employers: Child Safe Standards and Workplace Learning”.
- h) The College will provide to the employer an internet link to access the St Bede’s College “Child Safety Policy”.

## **11. Risk Management**

At St Bede’s College we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across all College Environments, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor, evaluate and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

The College has established a Child Safe School Committee consisting of a number of Deputies and College Counsellors, to take responsibility for the above.

## 12. Responding & Reporting

In the case of an allegation being made against an employee, director, volunteer and/or contractor at the College, the Principal will follow the College's Child Safety Procedure. The College will take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount.

The first step is to withdraw the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down (with pay, where applicable), re-assignment to other duties that do not have direct contact with children, or to work under increased supervision while the matter is being investigated.

### Case management

In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse to someone they trust it is essential that it is dealt with sensitively and professionally.

### Investigations

The College will appropriately investigate all allegations relating to an incident of abuse in accordance with its obligations and to the extent reasonably practicable. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the College to conduct an investigation in addition to any investigation conducted by authorities (e.g. the police).

The Principal will conduct an independent investigation into the allegation to the extent that it will not interfere with investigations by DHHS or the police, and will co-operate with the authorities as required.

All College Staff must co-operate fully with any investigation by DHHS, the police or the College.

The Principal will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other College Staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation (e.g. to provide witness statements).

An investigation conducted by the College will be conducted in accordance with procedural fairness to protect the integrity of the investigation and the interests of all the participants involved in the investigation. The College will also handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for the College to engage a person (or persons) from outside the College to conduct an independent investigation in relation to allegations.

The outcome will depend on the findings of the investigation, but may include withdrawal from active duty, re-assignment to duties with no contact with children, increased supervision, disciplinary action, dismissal or criminal prosecutions.

The Principal will ensure that his/her obligations under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) (i.e. the reportable conduct scheme) are satisfied, and that the Commission is notified in the manner (and time periods) required.

## 13. Record keeping

All reports of alleged abuse or harm, or risk thereof, must be collected and documented using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#). Places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm are what is recordable. Reports must be securely stored by the Principal or a member of the College's Leadership Team.

## 14. Privacy and confidentiality

The College will collect, use, disclose and hold personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the College's Privacy Policy.

### Principles

There are two guiding principles in respect to a child's privacy.

- First, the College will operate on the best interests principle. All College Staff will do what they believe to be in the best interest of the child. This principle supersedes all others.
- Second, the College will respect a child's confidentiality except in situations where it conflicts with the best interests principle.

As much as is reasonably possible, an individual's confidentiality is to be protected. Both those who are making reports and those about whom accusations are being made are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, College Staff must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with this Policy, the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy, the College's Child Safety Procedure, and relevant statutory requirements.

## 15. Relevant Legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001* (Vic)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:
  - a) [Failure to disclose offence](#): Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
  - b) [Failure to protect offence](#): The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
  - c) [Grooming offence](#): This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

## 16. Related Policies

### 16.1. Catholic Education Melbourne Policies

- [Policy 2.2: Guidelines Relating to the Employment of Staff](#) (currently under review)
- [Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Policy 2.19a: School Guidelines –Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#)
- [Policy 2.20: Complaints Policy](#)
- [Policy 2.26: Pastoral Care of students in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CEM Guidelines for Behaviour Support](#)
- [CECV Whole School Approaches to Supporting Positive Behaviour](#)

### 16.2. College Policies

- Child Safety Procedure
- Pastoral Care Policy
- ICT Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints Resolution Policy
- St Bede's College Grievance Procedure
- Code of Professional Conduct for Staff at St Bede's College

## 17. Breach of Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, St Bede's College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013* (VCEMEA) for managing employment concerns.

Where the **Principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the parish priest or the employer. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Where any **other College Staff member** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, the College is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and/or contact Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Any breach may result in disciplinary action (including up to cessation of employment or engagement).

### Associated Documents and Sources:

- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools.](#)
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2013, [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013](#), CECV.
- Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), Vatican.
- Department of Education, 2016, [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
- Safe Schools Hub 2014, [National Safe Schools Framework Glossary](#), Australian Government Department of Education and Training.
- State of Victoria 2016, [Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order No. 870](#), Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2.
- Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 2013, [Betrayal of trust](#)

### Document Authorisation:



Mr John Finn  
ST BEDE'S COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

### Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Reviewed: August 2018

Principal: Mr John Finn

\*Next Review Date: August 2021



## POLICIES

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# Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy

## Preamble:

St Bede's College holds the care, safety and wellbeing of its students to be at the core of all we do. The College is resolutely committed to ensuring that all College staff, including employees, Board members, committee members, contractors, volunteers and clergy (**College Staff**) act in a manner that promotes the inherent dignity of each of our young men and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment.

## Purpose:

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to demonstrate the strong commitment of the College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. It provides an outline of agreed and non-agreed behaviour standards that are to be adhered to at all times by College Staff. It has been developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the school.

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at St Bede's College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes and is in accordance with Ministerial Order 870. Failure to adhere to professional boundaries can have a detrimental impact on the child or young person and the community, and may result in disciplinary action (including up to cessation of employment or engagement).

## Scope:

All College Staff are required to abide by this Code of Conduct.

All College Staff 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. College Staff are also required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

## Acceptable behaviours:

All College Staff must support the safety of children by:

- adhering to the College's Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Procedure, and upholding the College's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- ensuring that in dealing with children and young people that all actions are professional, open and transparent
- 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 safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children with culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability by having a zero tolerance to discrimination
- supporting, understanding and respecting a child's sexual orientation and gender identification
- respecting the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child and adhering to related policies regarding supervision
- promptly reporting any child safety concerns to the College's leadership in line with the College's Child Safety Procedure and ensuring (as quickly as possible) that the child/children are safe
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (set out in more detail in the Child Safe Policy and Child Safety Procedure)
- 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.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but instead sets out the minimum practical behavioural standards College Staff must comply with in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people at St Bede's College.

Unacceptable behaviours:

All College Staff 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 massage, tickling, wrestling and 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 any form of over familiarity or inappropriate verbal or written language such as ridiculing, demeaning, discriminating or making intimidating or threatening statements to or in the presence of children or young people this includes but is not limited to communication in person or via social media
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child
- 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 unnecessary contact with a child outside of school without the College leadership's consent (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring). Formal contact through official sporting clubs, parish or tuition agencies is appropriate
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary e.g. 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. Where personal mobile numbers are authorised to be shared in the interests of child safety the numbers must be deleted at the first opportunity, and any other personal information is not to be shared.
- take or publish (including online) photograph, videos or recordings of a child without the consent of the parent or guardians (as per the Digital Media Permission as outlined on Caremonkey)
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs



- consume alcohol at school or at College events in the presence of children and young people

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but instead sets out the minimum practical behavioural standards College Staff must comply with in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people at St Bede's College.

Code Breach:

If a College Staff member breaches this Child Safety Code of Conduct, the College may take disciplinary action, including up to cessation of employment or engagement.

Document Authorisation:



**Mr John Finn**  
**ST BEDE'S COLLEGE PRINCIPAL**

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Reviewed: August 2018

Principal: Mr John Finn

\*Next Review Date: August 2021

\*Policy placed in Handbook and College Staff alerted each year to the Policy