



Child Safety Code of Conduct

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1. Statement of Context and Purpose

The Child Safety Code of Conduct (the Code) is set in the context of the mission and vision of St Kevin's College (the **College**), where we seek to live, learn and teach with the values of the Catholic Church and those of the College – *compassion, integrity, and excellence*. The College is committed to standards of excellence in the formation of young people. We lead through the values of the Gospel and in the spirituality of Blessed Edmund Rice. We strive with compassion and integrity to build a better world.

This Code promotes child safety and wellbeing in the College environment. It sets the standards of behaviour expected of staff, volunteers, contractors and other adults interacting with students. It supports the College's commitment to prevent, identify, respond to and report child abuse and other child safety concerns.

It is intended to complement child protection legislation, College policies in relation to child safeguarding, mandatory reporting and other reporting requirements and the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Codes of Conduct and other professional or occupational Codes as these apply to staff and personnel.

2. Child Safety

The College is an inclusive school committed to providing a safe and educationally supportive environment for students where there is zero tolerance for child abuse and harm. To support this safeguarding, the College complies with the Child Safe Standards and the requirement of the *Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises*. (**MO 1359**)

This policy sets out the strategies and actions that the College expects and will implement to meet the requirements of MO1359.

3. Related Documents

Policies and Procedures

- Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures

- *Staff Code of Conduct;*
- *Student Code of Conduct;*
- *Parent Code of Conduct;*
- *Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting) Policy and Procedures;*

Guidelines and Standards

- *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2022; and*
- *VIT Code of Conduct.*

Legislation, Regulations and Standards

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic);*
- Ministerial Order 1359
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

4. Application

This Code applies to all individuals who work for the College, or visit the College environment and interact with students, whether that be inside or outside of usual school hours and/or face-to-face or online. Individuals must comply with the code at all times. This includes:

- All employees (teachers, administration, education support, temporary, clergy, casual, sports coaches and assistants).
- Board Members and Committee members
- Parents and carers (when visiting or representing the College)
- External education providers
- Contractors
- Teaching students on placement and visiting gap students
- Volunteers including parent volunteers
- Visitors

This Code applies regardless of a student's age, consent obtained from a parent or carer, or whether the student initiates the interaction.

This Code does not apply to students. Required standards of behaviour for students are set out in the Student Code of Conduct located on the Student Portal and in the Student Diary

5. Definitions

Child Safe Standards	Means the standards made under Section 17 of the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic). The aim of the Child Safe Standards is to promote child safety, ensure that child abuse is prevented, and ensure that allegations of child abuse are properly addressed.
MO 1359	Means <i>Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises</i> .
Staff	Means all person identified in Section 4 of this policy.
LGBTQIA+	Means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and more

6. Overview

All individuals are responsible for understanding their obligations under this Code and complying with the provisions of this Code as updated from time-to-time.

The Principal, as Head of Entity is responsible for ensuring this Code is implemented effectively and that compliance is monitored routinely.

7. Acceptable Behaviours

All individuals must treat all students with respect. They hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to students. As such, it is their duty to always establish and maintain professional boundaries with students.

All individuals are responsible for supporting the safety of students by:

- a) adhering to the College's Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy, this Code, the Staff or Parent Code of Conduct (as applicable) and other applicable policies and procedures (as amended from time to time) at all times;
- b) being vigilant and taking all reasonable steps to protect the students in the College's care from abuse or harm;
- c) abiding by professional boundaries, acknowledging that interactions with students by their very nature are open to scrutiny;
- d) treating everyone in the College community with respect, modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment;
- e) listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child, student or young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child, student or young person;
- f) promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ students, students with a disability, vulnerable students such as International students and students with complex needs;
- g) respecting the language, customs, religions and cultures of a student;

- h) ensuring as far as practicable that individuals are not alone with a student unnecessarily or in a manner unrelated to the College or their role – See Line of Sight Guidance in Appendix 1;
- i) reporting any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns in accordance with the College's Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting) Policy and Procedures;
- j) reporting any suspected breach of this Code by any other individual to the Dean of Child Safeguarding, a member of the College Leadership Team or the Principal;
- k) understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and any other legal reporting obligations;
- l) understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the reportable conduct scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the College's Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- m) if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the students are safe, in accordance with the College's policies and procedures;
- n) respecting the confidentiality and privacy of students and acting in accordance with the College's Privacy Policy;
- o) exercising prudent judgement and intervention consistent with the College's Student Behaviour Policy when students engage in bullying behaviour towards others or act in a humiliating, degrading, intimidating or vilifying way;
- p) only interacting with students online using the College's approved technology and communications systems, and only for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular events and in compliance with the College's Digital technologies Acceptable Use Agreement;
- q) immediately notifying the Principal or Principal's delegate if they become the subject of any child safety investigation or become charged with any offence involving or related to child safety. This may include temporary suspension, restriction or made subject of conditions to VIT registration, Working with Children Check or other Professional memberships;
- r) complying with their professional and employment obligations, including any other relevant professional or occupational code of conduct such as the VIT Code of Conduct;
- s) developing and exercising prudent judgment and sensitivity regarding appropriate physical interactions and only engage in physical interactions with students where it may be necessary, a required part of the educative process, beneficial and/or supportive;
- t) complying with any lawful and reasonable direction by the College; and
- u) cooperating with any child safety investigation by the College or any regulatory authority.
- v) follow the guidance issued concerning maintaining line of sight when working with children (Appendix 1) and guidance concerning staff supervision, and maintenance of student privacy associated with student toilets and changerooms

8. Unacceptable behaviours

Individuals must not:

- a) engage in any form of child abuse, including behaviour that could constitute grooming;

- b) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- c) develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism, including but not limited to:
 - i. the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students;
 - ii. attending parties or socialising with students outside of organised College events without College Leadership's knowledge, and/or prior consent of the Principal;
 - iii. share inappropriate, or over-share, personal details about their private life with students; and
 - iv. meeting with students outside of College hours without permission from the College without College Leadership's knowledge, and/or prior consent of the Principal;
- d) exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, sitting on laps, massages);
- e) engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a student that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including because of the student's or another person's race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or disability;
- f) subject any student to any form of corporal punishment;
- g) put students at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- h) initiate unnecessary physical contact with a student or do things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- i) engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (for example, personal social activities);
- j) use inappropriate language in the presence of students;
- k) express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of students;
- l) discriminate against any student, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability;
- m) have contact with a student or their family outside of College without College Leadership's knowledge, and/or consent of the Principal (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching); this does not include accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street;
- n) have any online contact with a student (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc.) or their family, unless that contact is limited to providing information about the College, or is connected directly to the College work of the enrolled student;
- o) use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account, social media or instant messenger accounts to make contact with students;
- p) exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or personal email addresses;
- q) drive a student in their car unless they have the express consent of the Principal and the parent or guardian;

- r) put themselves in a position where there is a conflict of interest;
- s) become 'friends' with, follow or add a student on any social media platform
- t) photograph or video a student without the consent of the parent or guardians – see Appendix 3, Digital Media Guidance;
- u) share or request any photographs, videos, recordings or personal information about students without the College's consent, including on any of their own social media platforms;
- v) work with a young person while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- w) consume alcohol or drugs at College or at College events in the presence of students or supply any student; and
- x) supply any student with drugs or alcohol.

9. Teachers

In addition to this Code of Conduct, teachers must comply with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Code of Conduct and uphold respectful, professional and impartial relationships with students, while protecting their wellbeing, privacy and dignity.

10. Psychologists and Counsellors

In addition to this Code of Conduct, Psychologists and counsellors must comply with the ethical and professional standards, codes and practice requirements of their profession.

11. Professional Boundaries

Whilst working at or for the College or visiting the College environment, all individuals must always maintain professional boundaries.

Individuals should be aware that where a relationship develops with an ex-student, the College is entitled to consider whether the individual's actions suggest/suggested an abuse of their position at the College including if professional boundaries between the individual and the student were infringed. A judgment that abuse of their position has occurred would constitute serious misconduct and may result in the individual's employment or engagement being terminated, together with mandated reporting to appropriate child protection agencies.

12. Reporting

The College Child Safeguarding Program contains information on how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to respond and report child abuse concerns to one of the College's nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains procedures for the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

External education providers, contractors, volunteers, students, partners or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College's Child Safety Officers, or a member of the College Leadership Team.

All communications will be treated confidentially subject to legislative reporting and information sharing obligations.

13. Exemptions

Nil

14. Consequences of Breach

Breaches of this Code will be taken seriously.

The College will respond in accordance with its requirements under law, relevant industrial agreements, and its policies and procedures.

A substantial breach may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or engagement, removal from College premises, withdrawal of volunteer approval, termination of contract, or other action appropriate to an individual's relationship with the College.

15. Concerns and Complaints

Any concerns arising in respect of this Code should be raised with the College in first instance. The College will respond to such concerns in accordance with its Complaints Policy and Procedure or *Staff Internal Grievance Policy* as relevant.

16. Acknowledgement and Review

Individuals must acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Code.

17. Where to get help?

For enquiries on this policy, contact the **Dean of Child Safeguarding**

For general policy enquiries, contact the **Risk and Compliance Manager**

You can provide feedback on this policy by emailing policy@stkevins.vic.edu.au

For enquiries on the Colleges' handling of a breach of this policy, please contact the **Director of Governance**.

Appendix 1: Line of Sight Guidance

Where practical the opportunity for line of sight has to be able to happen when adults are working with students of the College

- Be able to be seen by other adults and have an unobstructed path or view of the student and adult
- Staff can be observed even in just the other staff members peripheral vision
- If a door is closed line of sight must be enable through unobstructed windows (no blinds/posters)
- Indoor: Rooms with unobstructed glass windows or with the door remaining completely open
- Outdoor: Activities are conducted within the general vision of another staff member

Prevention

- Talk with your Team as Teamwork is very important when considering Child Safety
- Support each other ensuring line of sight is made possible and able to happen
- Be proactive and think ahead as preparation is the key to ensuring Child Safety remains paramount
- **Before or After School**: apply the same expectations; working with your line manager for additional staff support and / coverage where risks exist in current supervision / staffing ratios

Contact the Dean of Child Safeguarding or a Child Safety Officer if you have questions, or if you need to proactively self-report any issues or instances when line of sight may have been compromised.

Appendix 2: Guidance for Staff supervision and maintenance of student privacy associated with student toilets and changerooms

Entering

Staff members must have a valid reason to enter student toilet blocks or change rooms (e.g. repair or maintenance requirement, cleaning etc.).

Prior to entering the student toilet block or changerooms, the following should be undertaken:

1. Staff members must knock 3 times and announce they will be entering the room giving reasonable warning before entering
 - a) Staff on supervisory duties should consider knocking and asking all students to assemble outside the room as an alternative to entering the room, for example if point 2 below cannot be satisfied
2. Staff members should enter the toilet block or change room in pairs
3. Upon entry, a verbal and visual sweep of the toilet block or change rooms should be done to ensure that all students have vacated

Signage and Barriers

The following signage and barriers is to be in place while work is being undertaken in Student Changerooms or Toilets:

- Expandable scissor barriers to restrict entry to students
- “Do Not Enter” signage to be placed on or around the barriers

Timing

- Where possible, work in student toilet blocks or change rooms should be undertaken outside of normal College operating hours.
- If a repair is required during normal College operating hours, recess and lunchtimes should be avoided, where possible.

Emergency Procedures

Staff with responsibilities for clearing building during emergency evacuations are permitted to expedite the clearing and evacuation of toilets and changerooms in accordance with relevant Emergency Management Plans.

Appendix 3: Digital Media Guidance

Where a college-owned device is available, this should be the preferred method for capturing digital media. The use of personal devices is limited to

1. Situations where a College device is not reasonably available, **and**
2. Where operational needs require immediate capture of an event.

The use of personal devices can only be used to capture photographs, video, or audio recordings of school activities and events **where there is a legitimate educational, promotional, or operational purpose.**

If using a personal device, individuals must:

- Ensure any images, video, or audio recordings are captured solely for College purposes.
- Handle the media in accordance with the school's privacy, child safety, records management, and ICT policies.
- Transfer media to an approved College storage location or platform as soon as practicable.
- Delete all College-related media from their personal device once the transfer has been completed and verified.
- Not share, upload, store, or distribute College-related media through personal social media accounts, messaging applications, cloud storage services, or other unauthorised platforms.
- Take reasonable steps to secure their device, including the use of passwords, biometric security, and current software updates.
- Immediately report any loss, theft, unauthorised access, or accidental disclosure of College-related media to their manager or the relevant school authority.