Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy 2022

St Paul's College takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in the new Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order No. 1359 (MO 1359), Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises. MO 1359 provided the framework for how St Paul's College has actioned the 11 new Victorian Child Safe Standards, legislated on 1st July 2022

Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies, and practices are inclusive of the needs of all students, particularly our students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and other students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable, students in out of home care and LGBTIQA+ students.

Introduction

At St Paul's College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice, and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (Catholic 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: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n. 9).

The school's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our school philosophy and values. At St Paul's College our vision is 'to be the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's leading provider of high-quality disability, specialist education' and our mission is 'to continue the caring ministry of Jesus by creating choices, offering hospitality, and building our inclusive, compassionate, and sustainable community. We are especially committed to students who are disadvantaged and marginalised.'

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of St Paul's College to the care, safety, and wellbeing of all students at our school. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures, actions, and strategies that will be implemented to ensure that a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the school, 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 Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

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This Policy applies to school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with the following related school policies and procedures:

1. PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Reportable Conduct Policy.

Principles

St Paul's College has a moral, legal, and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard, and they are safe and feel safe (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety and wellbeing at St Paul'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 they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and wellbeing 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/carers.
- All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing, to identify and mitigate risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment 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 children and young people.
- 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.
- All members of the school community (including students and their families) are kept informed of child safety and wellbeing matters (where appropriate) and are involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents, and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety and wellbeing, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally (including under legislated information sharing schemes being Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)) or pastorally.

Definitions

Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

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)

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(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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

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 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).

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, registered teachers and early childhood teachers, school counsellors, religious clergy, 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 – mandatory reporting: When school 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).

Reasonable belief – reportable conduct scheme: When a person has a reasonable belief that a worker/volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct. A reasonable belief is more than suspicion and there must be some objective basis for the belief. It does not necessitate proof or require certainty.

> NOTE: the difference between the reasonable belief definitions under mandatory reporting and the reportable conduct scheme is the category of persons who are required to, or can, form the reasonable belief which forms the basis for a report.

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Reportable conduct: Five types of reportable conduct are listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) (as amended by the *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017*). These include:

1. sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of a child)
2. sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of a child)
3. physical violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm
5. significant neglect.

School environment means any of the following physical, online, or virtual places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the school
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorized by St Paul's College for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-part provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for school camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a contracted service provider engaged by St Paul's College (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work for St Paul's College
- a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with ST Paul's College (VMCH) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for St Paul's College in the school environment.

Policy commitments

All students enrolled at St Paul's College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The safety and wellbeing of children 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 children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students.

Our commitment to our students

- We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
- We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by ensuring that they understand their rights (including to safety, information and participation), and by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- We commit to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people enrolled in our school are met, including those who are most vulnerable.

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- We commit to recognising the importance of friendships and to encouraging support from peers, to help children and students feel safe and less isolated.
- We commit to developing a culture that facilitates and provides opportunities for children and student participation, and that strengthens the confidence and engagement of children and students by being responsive to their input.
- We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

Our commitment to parents, guardians, and carers

- We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents, guardians and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents, guardians and carers about our child safety and wellbeing practice, policies, and procedures.
- We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents, guardians, and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- We commit to open engagement and communication with parents, guardians and carers about our child safe approach and our operations and governance related to child safety and wellbeing.
- We commit to ensuring that relevant information relating to child safety and wellbeing is accessible to parents, guardians, and carers.
- We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

Our commitment to our school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy)

- We commit to providing all St Paul's College staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles, and to ensure that staff are attuned to signs of harm and are able to facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing, and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by St Paul's College staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We commit to providing opportunities for St Paul's College school employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

Responsibilities and organisational arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at St Paul's College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure a child safe culture in which 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 school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety and wellbeing as follows:

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Timothy Hemphill (Principal and Child Safe Officer) / Natalie Walsh (Deputy Principal & Child Safe Officer)

Guide to responsibilities of school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Paul'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 and wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe

- upholding high principles and standards for all staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors

- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration

- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff and volunteers

- ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of openness to and ability to prevent, identify and address child safety and wellbeing matters

- ensuring that the school has in place appropriate risk management strategies and practices that focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment

- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy, and procedures in relation to children and young people's protection and wellbeing

- ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359

- ensuring the school takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and in line with PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools

- ensuring the school understands and reports all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in accordance with the School's reportable conduct policy

- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the school's prescribed role as an ISE

- ensuring that the school monitors and reviews the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, on an annual basis.

Guide to responsibilities of school staff

Responsibilities of school staff (school employees, contractors, and clergy) and volunteers include:
- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care

- following the legislative and internal school policies, procedures, and processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected

- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured

- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety, and the wellbeing of children and young people, including ways to prevent, identify and mitigate risks relating to child safety and wellbeing

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- 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 school's Child Safety Code of Conduct

- where risks of child abuse are identified, ensuring that action is taken to mitigate against those risks and that risks and actions are appropriately recorded.

Organisational arrangements

The Principal has the overall leadership role in monitoring and responding to the policy, procedures and practices for child safety and wellbeing in St Paul's College in accordance with this Policy.

We have appointed a second Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead/Officer Natalie Walsh and the role description is available in the staff handbook:

- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead/Officer assists the Principal.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead/Officer works in preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks in child safety and wellbeing.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead/Officer also supports the Principal to monitor implementation of school policies, procedures, and practices, to monitor and review the risks associated with child safety and wellbeing (including by and to identify professional learning.

St Paul's College website and newsletter will provide information to keep parents and carers informed of child safety and wellbeing commitments, procedures, and arrangements.

Expectation of our school staff and volunteers – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At St Paul's College we expect school employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy to proactively ensure the safety and wellbeing of students at all times, to identify concerns about child safety and wellbeing and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any child at the school. All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements. We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct *St Paul's College Code of Conduct – 2022* which recognises the critical role that school staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and/or neglect.

Our Code also protects school staff and volunteers through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Student safety and participation

At St Paul'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 their concerns. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

The curriculum design will integrate appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe, as well as their understanding of their rights to safety, information, and participation. Teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge and support student agency and voice are also to be implemented. We ensure that students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

We are continuing to develop appropriate education and professional development about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending our school

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- are continuing to develop a disability specific and augmented healthy and respectful relationships curriculum (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

We are continuing to work on developing curriculum planning documents that detail the strategies and actions the school takes to implement its obligations to ensure that:

- children and students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information, and participation
- the importance of friendship is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated
- staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- we have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students
- we provide opportunities for children and students to participate and is responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant information in a disability and age-appropriate way.

The Actions St Paul's College has taken to meet this standard related to student rights, participation and empowerment includes.

The Deputy Principal is overseeing the existing resources and programs which include.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award Program

The Compass Award Program

The Community Access Programs

The Independent Living Skills Program

The Performing Arts, Bike Ed & STEAM Program

The Healthy Food Tuckshop Program
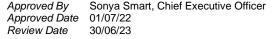
The Black Cat Café Program

The College's partnership with Holmesglen TAFE, delivering the CIALN (course in initial adult literacy and numeracy) certificates.

All of these existing programs and outcomes continue support the ongoing empowerment of the students here at St Paul's College

The Respectful Relationships Program

Respectful Relationships Surveys have been conducted with all staff, parents, and carers for stakeholders to share their views pertaining to child safeguarding. The surveys are coordinated by The School Principal, Deputy Principal and Psychologist. Surveys have been focused on the delivery of the 'Respectful Relationships Program' which commenced in 2021 and is to be fully implemented in 2022. (This includes training for staff, parents, and carers) with the goal of augmenting this program across the 11 Classrooms cohorts of students at St Paul's College, ensuring students have access to age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention programs and relevant related information at our College.

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Family Planning Sexual Health information sessions

The Family Planning information session for staff and families has commenced at the College. The Deputy Principal and College Psychologist are drafting a whole school approach to personal safety and respectful relationships curriculum which will be linked to the Victorian Curriculum and include resources shared with us from those the sessions. This educational program will deliver lesson plans developing an awareness of body parts, feelings, and private and public locations right up to the more advanced content as required.

College Deputy Principal to embed and augment the FISO empowering student and building pride implementation guide;

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/fiso-empowering-students-and-building-school-pride-implementation-guide.pdf

Reporting and responding

Our school creates records relevant to any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and maintains and disposes of those records in accordance with security and privacy requirements and Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards (including minimum retention periods). Our school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.), the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

Our College's PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations *[Add a hyperlink to your school's latest version of PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations],* updated on [insert date], sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers, and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a reasonable belief is formed under the reportable conduct scheme as well as mandatory reporting
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law, and their legal obligations relating to child abuse and grooming under criminal law
- understand and comply with information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- comply with reporting obligations under the reportable conduct scheme including obligations to report and investigate allegations of reportable conduct.

Our school has also established additional internal procedures and processes to help ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent, identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our school is Governed by the VMCH Board and is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, it is able to share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the CISS or FVISS.

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At St Paul's College, if any member of our school community has concerns for a child's safety they need to discuss, they can notify the school Principal, the Deputy Principal and or the designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead/Officer of the College Psychologist Pina Profeta.

If the Principal or Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer is not available, then it should be discussed with a member of the school leadership team. Alternatively, any member of the school community may report directly to the responsible authority.

The staff member, supported by the Principal or designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer will follow the step-by-step guide to making a report as outlined in the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Screening and recruitment of school staff

St Paul's College applies thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Each job description for staff involved in child-connected work has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing for those in that role and the occupant's essential qualifications, experience, and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we ensure that we gather, verify, and record the following information about any person we propose to engage:

- 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 essential or relevant 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 will also ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and wellbeing and child-connected work.

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

St Paul's College implements the following policies and procedures.

- *Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools*
- *NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools.*

Recruitment here at St Paul's College includes.

TeamGo - *Working with Children clearances continue to be sighted, verified, and recorded, where required, under the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.) Recruitment here at St Paul's College.*

TeamGo *has a live integration with the Department of Justice and Community Safety WWCC database so that a person's WWCC can be verified in real time before they can be admitted into the school's buildings and grounds.*

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Child Safe Surveys will continue to be conducted with all staff, parents, and carers for stakeholders to share their views pertaining to child safeguarding. The surveys are coordinated by The College Principal, Deputy Principal and College Psychologist.

St Paul's College Recruitment and Induction for staff and volunteers ensures all staff and volunteers are suitable for engaged in child-related work at the College.

Staff and Volunteer induction handbook includes all aspects of the Child Safety Code of Conduct for all staff and volunteers

Child safety and wellbeing – education and training for school staff

St Paul's College provides employees, volunteers and visting clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of openness to and ability to address child safety and wellbeing 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.

At least annually, our professional learning and training addresses:

- staff's individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
- preventing, identifying, and mitigating child abuse risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- the reportable conduct schemes
- our school's current child safety standards (including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and any other policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing, including in relation to managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse)
- guidance on recognizing indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations, including under the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

Information about our child safety and wellbeing induction programs and related professional learning and training arrangements for employees and volunteers.

Diversity and equity – strategies and actions

At St Paul's College, we are committed to ensuring that equity is upheld, and that diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. We aim to ensure that:

- all school staff and volunteers understand the diverse circumstances of children and students
- our school provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students
- children, students, staff, volunteers, and the school community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand
- the school pays particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students
- the school pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

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The College Principal will provide professional development for all staff and volunteers to ensure a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported by utilising effective and contextualized programs and initiatives
https://www.kickboardforschools.com/professional-services/virtual/equity-anti-racism/

The College's Deputy Principal will champion diversity and equity – strategies and actions across the College including the school community's involvement and participation across cultural initiatives across the College

The College Principal will ensure all school policies, procedures, systems, and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment, and meet the needs of Aboriginal children and students, and their families.

The College Leadership team will model and embed in the College these

(TOP 5 STRATEGIES) for all staff.

Self-awareness

Promoting equity and diversity in your classroom begins with self-awareness. Educators will be supported to recognize how the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, and being able-bodied impact us individually.

Class Norms

Setting norms in all classrooms that promote inclusion and openness so that staff can be explicit about the way students in their class will be respectful to each other; and share ideas, opinions, and values.

Culturally Relevant Teaching

The Deputy Principal will guide all staff to ensure.

Culturally relevant, or responsive, teaching emphasizes academic excellence, cultural competence, and social and political analysis and activism.

Purposeful Planning

The Deputy Principal will lead conversations with the classroom teachers about diversity and equity which can be uncomfortable for students and teachers. The Deputy Principal will lead the important part of promoting equity and diversity in all classrooms is purposeful planning here at our College. It will include sessions with staff around planning a lesson and the execution of the lesson; especially if the class will discuss sensitive topics or ideas.

Community Involvement

The Deputy Principal will oversee the engagement with students and their families, as they have a wealth of knowledge to share about themselves. Parents and family members will be invited into the College classrooms as community experts. They will be encouraged to read a book about a particular issue that relates to their culture or that they are passionate about. This will show students various representations of their culture and other cultures. The Deputy Principal will oversee these incursions by invite people from the College community to visit classes as guest speakers to talk about a cultural topic in classroom learning.

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Family engagement – strategies and actions

St Paul's College ensures that families, carers, and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school. We aim to ensure that:

- families participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- we engage and openly communicate with families, carers, and other members of the school community about our child safe approach
- all members of the school community have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing
- families, carers, and other members of the school community have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices
- families, carers, and other members of the school community are informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Informing the Parents and Carers in our College Community

In many contexts the participation of the St Paul's College community in the operation of our College has helped increase access, retention, and attendance rates of children to college. St Paul's College education and programs are a 'social activity' in which, in addition to the college, society plays the role of a facilitator and partner.' St Paul's College is a successful college which understands the importance of establishing good and harmonious relations with our community. These relationships exist at two levels, at a formal and legal level, as well as an informal and voluntary one.

The former is expressed by the representation of the community through the Parent Advisory Group, Parents and Friends Association, and via the Classroom Teachers, Learning Support Officers, Allied Health Professionals, and the Leadership Team (Principal and Deputy Principal) including the College Administration Team (Business Support PA to the Principal and the Student Support Officer). Despite the current Covid-19 Pandemic the college will be ensuring that community members will have the opportunity to get involved through special activities or events.

In order to enhance the community's participation in education, it is essential to promote a college environment where community members feel welcomed, respected, trusted, heard, and needed. Surveys are provided to encourage parent input and advice.

The College provides the policies on the St Paul's College websites and conducts regular meetings between parent and carers, with the Classroom Education Teams and the College's Allied Health Team including the College's Leadership Team (Principal and Deputy Principal) throughout the year.

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St Paul's College Carer's Support Group. The School Psychologist provides this community connection meeting to cover family engagement discussing parenting experiences in a safe and supportive environment ensuring there is open communication and also about the College's child safe approach which overlaps with the College's Parent and Friends Association.

The College's Parent Advisory Group also continues to have on their agenda for their meeting with School Leadership around families participating in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing.

The parents and carers provided resources to engage them and our school and home partnership around empowering their children at home and in our College setting.

Informing the School Community across family engagement also includes:

- *College Newsletters*

- *Principal Update Bulletins*

- *Allied Health Parent Support Group Meetings*

- *Education Team Parent Support Group Meetings*

- *Individual Student Diaries for Teacher-Parent Communications*

- *Access to Leadership Team via the College Admin Team for Parents and Carers*

- *Consult with appropriate community members on whether the Child Safety strategies, policies, procedures, and practices are inclusive of families of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disabilities, students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and vulnerable students*

https://www.php.com/directory/infuse-special-students-empowerment-program/

http://www.familyschool.org.au/resources/archives/archive/three/social-emotional-well-being/safe-schools/

Risk management

At St Paul's College, we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor, and annually review our risks and risk management strategies for child safety and wellbeing, evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of our risk controls and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

Child Safety Leadership Team addressing and meeting the characteristics and needs of all children and students expected to be present our College specialist environment includes.

St Paul's College augments their communication methodology based on an individual's disability:

- A student with a Cognitive Disability (mild to severe)

- A student who is Non-Verbal (mild to severe)

- A student who is Vision Impaired and/or Hearing Impaired (mild to severe)

- A student with a Physical Disability (mild to severe)

- A student with a Sensory (ASD) Disability (mild to severe)

- A student with a Medical Disability (mild to severe)

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- A Student with Dysregulation presenting with Behaviours of Concern (mild to severe)

Students with complex needs

Under both State and Commonwealth laws schools must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate students at risk. Adjustments or measures of action are in place in order to assist all students to participate in education and training on the same basis as their peers without a disability.

The objectives of the new Victorian Curriculum are the same for all students. The ongoing development of curriculum for students with complex needs, is aimed to offer flexibility for teachers to tailor their teaching in ways that provide rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning and opportunities for students with disabilities.

Most students with disabilities can engage with the curriculum provided the necessary adjustments made in order to address the potential complexity of the curriculum content and the means through which students demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

For some learners, adjusting instructional processes and to assessment strategies enables students to achieve educational standards commensurate with their peers.

For other students, teachers will need to make extensive and appropriate adjustments to the complexity of the curriculum content, focusing instruction on content different to that taught to others in their age group. It follows that adjustments will also need to be made, also ensuring how the student's progress is monitored, assessed, and reported.

For a large percentage of students with disabilities here at St Paul's College, their learning may be well below the age-appropriate Victorian Curriculum Foundation standards. Most of these students have a significant and potentially complex level of disability. 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' provides this cohort of students with access to curriculum content and standards that enable students to move toward the learning described at Foundation level.
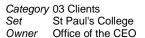
Adjustments at St Paul's College include:

Gestures and Nonverbal Communication – Including gestures such as pointing, nodding and focused eye contact help children with disabilities understand messages. Parents and teachers need at times to exaggerate gestures or prolong them, especially in the beginning, to promote comprehension. In general, children like responding to exaggerated nonverbals with their own movements and gestures, and for children with disabilities, gestures are necessary.

As part of the Child Safety Standards the staff read to them and talk to them often about the right to be safe. Practice makes perfect and pertains to children with disabilities as they are always on the pathway to learning better communication strategies. The first step to learning language is to observe, listen, and engage with a student who cannot communicate effectively in order for them to be taught to understand about the right to be safe. Exposure to communication is a key element for learning and their right to be safe.

Constantly provide explanation. In the classroom, talk to the child at every step about what they can do if they are feeling unsafe and anxious e.g. No! Go! Tell!, as well as their 'Safety Network' of people they can turn to in their 'Circle Of Trust.'

Expanded vocabulary

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While it is necessary to begin with simple language, as many of the students at St Paul's College have limited communication skills, whilst it is essential to expand students' vocabulary, if he or she has the capacity depending on their level of cognitive disability, autism spectrum disorder . Start small. Use "the other words" from time to time. Rather than saying to the child to go through the door, tell him or her to enter through it. Expansion of vocabulary challenges the thought process as well as helps a child feel confident in communication skills and therefore in feeling safe. St Paul's College have comprehensive communication systems in place (via our two speech pathologists on staff), which includes the ROCC program that provides individualized data for all students allowing the school to map out the individual levels and processes required to meet the communication needs of all of our students. .

Use pictures related to the right to be safe. Like flashcards, pictures can challenge the memory. Associating still pictures with words can help the child associate words with the real world. Use pictures with single items rather than those with busy backgrounds. As the child learns, you may introduce more challenging scenery or pictures in which children may identify ways in which they can keep themselves safe.

Realize and respect their differences and limitations. Challenging children can give them opportunities to succeed, but the child will let you know when he or she is ready to move on to new and more complex steps in language.

St Paul's College augments our communication methodology in terms of delivering curriculum learning based on an individual's disability:

- A student with a Cognitive Disability (mild to severe)

- A student who is Non-Verbal (mild to severe)

- A student who is Vision Impaired and/or Hearing Impaired (mild to severe)

- A student with a Physical Disability (mild to severe)

- A student with a Sensory (ASD) Disability (mild to severe)

- A student with a Medical Disability (mild to severe)

- A Student with Dysregulation presenting with Behaviours of Concern (mild to severe)

The actions St Paul's College is taking to meet this standard in the online environment includes;
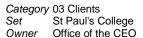
St Paul's College Digital Technologies Students will be updated to ensure that it is accessible, child-focused, culturally safe, and easily understood by the school community. The procedures include.
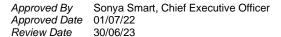
Our ongoing commitment to providing students with the opportunity to benefit from digital technologies to support and enhance learning and development at school.

Expected student behaviour when using digital technologies including the internet, social media, and digital devices (including computers, laptops, tablets)

The College's commitment to promoting safe, responsible, and discerning use of digital technologies, and educating students on appropriate responses to any dangers or threats to wellbeing that they may encounter when using the internet and digital technologies

Our College's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour on digital technologies and the internet are already in place.

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Relevant legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

1. [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.

2. [Failure to protect offence](): This 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.

3. [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.

School policies

- Child Safety Code of Conduct *[Hyperlink to your school's Child Safety Code of Conduct]*
- PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations *[Hyperlink to your school's latest version of PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations]*
- Reportable Conduct Policy *(hyperlink to your school's Reportable Conduct Policy)*

Resources

- *Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne – Welcoming Each Other: Guidelines for Interfaith Education in the Schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne*

- *Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan*

- *CECV – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives*

- *CECV – Assessing and Intervening with Impact*

- *CECV – Guidelines for Supporting New Arrivals and Refugees*

- *CECV – Intervention Framework*

- *CECV – Parent Guide to Program Support Groups*

- *CECV – Personal Care Support in Schools*

- *CECV – Positive Behaviour Guidelines*

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- *Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) – Horizons of Hope – Vision, Context, Strategy, Practice*

- *CEM – Identity and Growth: A perspective for Catholic schools*

- *National Catholic Education Commission – Framework for Student Faith Formation in Catholic Schools*

- *Victorian Curriculum F–10*

- *Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment*

- *Victorian DET – Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships, incorporating a Catholic context*

Related policies

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) guidelines

- [CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools](#)
- [CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines](#)

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