



# St Paul's College

## Engaging Families in Child Safety 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 LGBTIQ+ students.*

*St Paul's College provides a contemporary, safe, and nurturing school environment with state-of-the-art facilities where children and young people with a range of disabilities have a sense of belonging and every opportunity to achieve optimal learning outcomes*

### Scope Statement

The purpose of this Scope Statement is to ensure that those who might be affected by this policy are identified, considered, and consulted.

This St Paul's College Child Safe policy applies to:

- *All people who conduct work for the College in a paid or unpaid capacity. This includes board members, executive leadership, staff, volunteers, trainees, contractors, and consultants*
- *Taking into account of other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff*
- *Taking into account the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.*
- *All activities undertaken at the College which involve, result in, or relate to contact with children or young people including excursions, and online learning*

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- *Partner organisations will be made aware of this policy and the school's underlying philosophy towards the care of children.*

## Introduction

Catholic education is an active partnership between family and school, where families are recognised as the first and ongoing educators of their children. Schools and families partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for children and young people's faith formation, learning, safety, and wellbeing.

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 (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

*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.'*

*In order to create and maintain a safe, respectful, and evidence-based learning environment where the diversity of all student learners feel included, valued, happy, are actively engaged, challenged, and supported to achieve success. We know student can struggle to achieve their personal best if they are not safe from abuse.*

*At St Paul's College our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety.*

*St Paul's College is committed to providing a child safe environment where our students and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.*

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St Paul's College to ensure 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.

This Policy takes into account the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

## Scope

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

1. Child Safety Framework
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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# Principles

At St Paul's College, the following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Families and carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families, carers, and other members of the school community about our child safe approach.
- All members of the school community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers, and other members of the school community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers, and other members of the school community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

# Policy

St Paul's College is committed to ensuring that all members of our school community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at St Paul's College.

We implement the following strategies and actions to ensure that we are able to meet this commitment.

## Strategies / actions used by school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Paul's College recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers, and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- utilising the St Paul's College Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies, and practices
- supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their communication and engagement skills and to understand the value and importance of effective communication and engagement
- identifying opportunities for parents and carers to participate in decisions that affect their child's safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available so that they are easily accessible to families, carers, and other members of the school community
- engaging with families, carers, and other members of the school community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- creating opportunities to ensure that members of the school community are adequately informed about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing

## Strategies / actions used by school staff, volunteers, contractors, and clergy

- School staff, volunteers, contractors, and clergy at St Paul's College also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with families, carers, and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:
- creating and maintaining open lines of communication with families, carers, and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- liaising with parents and carers in relation to any concerns and/or decisions that affect their child and giving them the opportunity to contribute to any discussions, where appropriate
- ensuring that parents, carers, and others in the school community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring they act in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing

## External references

### Related Resources – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

[eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

## Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the school's two-year review cycle of its child safety practices.
- Update of the policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand.

Drafted/Updated by Timothy Hemphill May (MO 1395) 2022 - Review July 2023

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