



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Central to the mission of Aquinas College and St Mary's College for the Deaf is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children at Aquinas College and St Mary's College for the Deaf against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, College policies/procedures and professional standards in accord with Ministerial Order 870.

All staff, allied health providers, volunteers, contractors, clergy, visitors and College Board members are expected to actively contribute to a College culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, allied health providers, volunteers, contractors, clergy, visitors and College Board members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the College's Child Safety Policy and upholding the College's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times
- treating everyone in the College community with respect by modelling positive and respectful relationships
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, especially if they relate to their safety or the safety of another child
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, or those with a disability (for example, by having a policy of zero tolerance to discrimination)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults interact with children in child safe and visible settings
- ensuring that when working in a small group of students or 1:1 with a student, all adults will follow the St Mary's College for the Deaf's Supervision Policy (St Mary's only)
- adhering to the College's Bus and Transport policies
- promptly reporting any allegations of child abuse and/or safety concerns to the College's leadership and ensuring immediately that the child is safe
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, allied health providers, volunteers, contractors, clergy, visitors and College Board members 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)
- initiate or exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- engage in discussions of a personal adult nature in the presence of children without appropriate context
- use inappropriate language or profanity in the presence of children unless required by the learning context
- express inappropriate personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality and sexual identity, 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 online contact with a child (including by social media, instant messaging etc.) unless carrying out school sanctioned professional responsibilities
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account or 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
- photograph or video a child unless authorised in this role by the College who will seek consent from guardians before publication
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- consume alcohol at school or at College events in the presence of children outside the guidelines of the House Policy of the licensed venue.

(Adapted from Source: VRQA)

I, _____, confirm that I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct and that I have read, understood and accept this Code.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This Code has Aquinas College governing authority approval.