

DOMINIC COLLEGE

A Catholic School in the Salesian Tradition



CHILD SAFE POLICY

Date	December 2024
Responsible Position	College Leadership Team
Approved By	College Board
Next Review Date	2027
Related Documents	Behaviour Management Policy Child Safe Procedure Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Flow Chart Complaints Policy Parent Code of Conduct Privacy Policy Staff Code of Conduct Student Code of Conduct Student Welfare Policy Wellbeing Policy eSafety Commissioner Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Office of the Independent Regulator United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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1. RATIONALE

Dominic College, in operating as a Child Safe Organisation, is required to adhere to various state, national, and international laws, standards, and guidelines (see related documents). We adhere to the standards, obligations, and requirements of these various bodies while also aligning our responses to our obligations under the Archbishop's Charter and the Charter for Salesian Schools in Australia.

As a catholic school we aim to adhere to the four domains of the Archbishop's Charter of

- Catholic Identity
- Learning
- Leadership
- Mission

The Charter for Salesian Schools in Australia guides how Dominic College enacts these domains with a focus on

- A HOME that welcomes
- A PARISH that evangelises
- A SCHOOL that prepares for life
- A PLAYGROUND where friends meet and enjoy themselves

Our Child Safe Policy reflects the ethos of the College and our legal obligations.

2. THE SALESIAN CHARTER

Living out the Salesian Charter requires us to manage our child protection responsibilities in certain ways.

A HOME THAT WELCOMES

Being a HOME that welcomes means that:

- We uphold equity and respect diversity.
- We provide safe physical and online environments.
- We provide training to students and information to families on online safety.
- We provide support for students, staff, families, contractors, and community members, to raise complaints, concerns, and child safety issues.
- We welcome participation from families and the community in developing our policies and procedures.
- We ensure that the best interests of children are at the heart of all our actions, policies, and procedures.

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and facilitate their participation as valued members of our community.
- We have zero tolerance for child abuse and harm. Our staff prioritise the safety of the children they interact with in the performance of their role and report any conduct of concern.
- We are committed to being a Child Safe Organisation.

A PARISH THAT EVANGELISES

Being a PARISH that evangelises means that:

- We ensure that our actions, activities, and presentation, model and reflect the teachings of Christ.
- We aim for our culture, leadership, and governance to reflect our care, commitment, and concern for the safety of those committed to our care.
- We acknowledge that our behaviour reflects on the school requiring us to be always examples of the charism of Saint John Bosco and the Preventive System.
- We take seriously our obligations as a religious organisation under the Child and Youth Safe Organisation Framework.
- We comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

A SCHOOL THAT PREPARES FOR LIFE

Being a SCHOOL that prepares for life means that:

- We follow the law, as well as relevant legislation and guidelines.
- We recognise our legal and moral responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe and have policies and procedures in place to meet this commitment.
- We recognise the importance of child safety in the provision of education services.
- We verify WWVP (Working with Vulnerable People) registration for staff, contractors, and volunteers.
- We provide training to contractors and volunteers regarding child safety.
- We provide regular, ongoing education and training for staff, students, our Board and our community in identifying, addressing, and preventing child abuse in all its forms.
- We ensure robust recruitment and screening for those working with children.
- We have an effective complaints management system.
- We strive for ongoing improvement.
- We maintain a centralised Child Safety Register.
- We require all staff to record any child safety concerns or reports on the child safety register via the College's online Child Safety Reporting Form.

A PLAYGROUND WHERE FRIENDS MEET

Being a PLAYGROUND where friends meet means that:

- We foster friendship, honesty, fair play, active participation, and open and active communication between students, staff, and families.
- We strive to keep children and young people safe, informed, involved, and participating as part of the school community.
- We support and train staff and students on appropriate behaviour and language.
- We expect all visitors to sign in and follow our child safety guidelines provided on registration.
- We want children to thrive, and be safe, happy, and empowered, and we are dedicated to ensuring their views are listened to and respected, and they are given opportunities to contribute to how we plan and deliver services that affect them.

3. DEFINING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse or neglect means sexual abuse, or physical or emotional injury or other abuse, or neglect, to the extent that:

- the injured, abused, or neglected person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological harm detrimental to the person's wellbeing; or
- the injured, abused, harmed or neglected person's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

4. CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

Dominic College is committed to maintaining and encouraging an organisational culture where children and young people feel safe, are treated with respect and protected from harm. As a child safe organisation, Dominic College puts the safety of children and young people first. The College adheres to the requirements of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, is committed to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and complies with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework is a law to keep children safe in organisations and was established under the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023. The Framework creates the Child and Youth Safe Standards, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and establishes the Independent Regulator.

The Child and Youth Safe Standards comprise 10 principles that organisations must follow to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and includes the Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety.

The Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety states organisations must provide an environment that ensures the right to Cultural Safety of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires leaders of specific organisations to notify the Independent Regulator upon becoming aware of conduct related to child abuse involving an adult worker (the reportable conduct) and to conduct investigations. Workers include paid workers, volunteers and contractors.

The Office of the Independent Regulator oversees Tasmanian organisations to ensure they comply with the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework. It is independent of government and reports to parliament, not a department.

5. CHILD SAFETY OFFICER

At Dominic College, the role of Child Safety Officer is performed by the Chief Financial and Operations Officer. The Child Safety Officer is responsible for:

- Overseeing the College's mandatory reporting obligations and ensuring they are met.
- Reviewing all reports made by staff regarding the abuse, harm or neglect of a child.
- Providing training, advice, support, and direction to staff regarding child safety obligations.
- Ensuring the College meets the requirements of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Maintaining the College Child Safety Register.

6. MANDATORY REPORTING

Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement to report a reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to children, young people, and unborn babies to relevant authorities and is an important part of keeping children and young people safe.

All employees, volunteers and contractors who know, believe or suspect on reasonable grounds that a child, young person or unborn baby has been, is being, or is likely to be abused, harmed or neglected is required to report this to the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line on 1800 000 123.

Employees, volunteers and contractors may also be required to make a report to Tasmania Police by calling the Police Radio Room on 131 444. The law requires that all adults must report to police where they have a reasonable belief that a child is being or has been abused. It should be noted that abuse offences are not confined to sexual abuse and cover a range of criminal offences.

If a child is at immediate risk and police or medical assistance is required, call 000.

Failure to report suspected abuse, neglect or other reportable conduct is a criminal offence.

7. REPORTABLE CONDUCT

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires leaders of specific organisations to notify the Independent Regulator upon becoming aware of conduct related to child abuse involving an adult worker (the reportable conduct), and to conduct investigations (they may engage an investigator). Workers include employees, volunteers and contractors.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is about ensuring reportable conduct is investigated properly in a child-centred way. This is done through oversight by the Independent Regulator. Leaders must:

- report reportable conduct to the Independent Regulator in writing within three business days and commence an investigation as soon as possible;
- provide an update to the Independent Regulator within 30 days including any information they have about the allegation or conviction, whether any actions have been taken and any written submissions by the worker involved;
- at the end of the investigation, provide findings of the investigation, reasons for the findings and details of any actions that have been taken as a result.

All reportable concerns must be reported to the Independent Regulator by the leader of the organisation (or their delegate). If the person raising the reportable concern reasonably believes the conduct to have occurred, this is enough for it to be reported. It is not relevant whether the leader of the organisation also holds that reasonable belief.

Whilst the reporting obligation is on the head of entity, the Independent Regulator can receive voluntary reports from anyone including children, parents and workers. If the head of entity is made aware of a report against a worker, they must also report to the Independent Regulator as part of their responsibility under the legislation.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not replace other reporting obligations which may include the police (if the alleged conduct is criminal), Strong Families Safe Kids, Teachers Registration Board or the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Scheme.

Leaders must also report any reportable conduct concerns about current workers, even if the alleged conduct is historical in nature.

Reportable conduct includes both criminal and non-criminal behaviour.

TYPES OF REPORTABLE CONDUCT

Emotional or psychological harm means harm to a child's wellbeing and or development.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- direct and indirect exposure to domestic and family violence;
- verbal abuse, such as telling a child they are worthless;
- humiliating a child in front of their peers.

Neglect of a child means the deliberate or reckless failure to meet one or more of that child's basic needs. Neglectful behaviour includes:

- supervisory neglect: for example, leaving a child in a hot car in summertime
- physical neglect: a child being extremely dirty and suffering a skin condition as a result of poor hygiene
- educational neglect: preventing a child from attending school for no valid reason
- emotional neglect: rejecting a child from a family, home, school or other situation for no valid reason

Physical violence means:

- actual physical violence: the intentional or reckless application of physical force to a person without lawful justification or excuse (e.g. hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, spitting);
- apprehended physical violence: any act which intentionally or recklessly causes a person to apprehend immediate and unlawful violence to the person (e.g. words or actions which indicate that physical violence will occur to the child in the future).

Sexual offence means an offence of a sexual nature under the law. Examples include but are not limited to:

- a sexual or indecent act with a child or young person;
- indecent assault;
- involving a person under 18 in the production of child exploitation material;
- production, distribution, possession and accessing of child exploitation material;
- indecency.

Sexual misconduct is conduct that doesn't meet the acceptable standard of behaviour and is committed in a sexual manner or with a sexual intention whether in person or online and includes inappropriate behaviour, physical contact, voyeurism, speech or other communication including electronic communication. Examples include but are not limited to:

- inappropriate comments to a child about their body;
- inappropriate touching of a child;

- showing sexually explicit material to a child.

Grooming means befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (and/or the child's guardian, family or friend or a worker) for the purpose of establishing trust to normalise sexually harmful behaviour or engage in an unlawful act, sexual offence or sexual misconduct against a child. Examples include but are not limited to:

- isolating a child from their peers to spend time alone;
- befriending a child in person and continuing to communicate with the child online;
- giving gifts, money or alcohol to a child, parent or friend to gain access to a child;
- inappropriate touching of a child, including tickling and play fighting;
- asking a child not to tell anyone about their behaviour.

Other relevant offences means other types of conduct that need to be reported but don't easily fit into the other categories. A relevant offence includes but is not limited to:

- a sexual offence under the Criminal Code Act;
- failing to report the abuse of a child;
- inciting to commit a relevant offence(s);
- attempts to commit a relevant offence(s);
- accessory after the fact to a relevant offence(s).

Breach of the College Child Safe Policy includes behaviour that does not fall into any of the reportable conduct categories. Behaviour that breaches the College Child Safe Policy or other related policies or expectations should be reported to either the Principal, the Deputy Principals, or the Child Safety Officer, or by lodging a complaint using the online Complaints Form available on the College website.