

Child Safe Policy

The following policy has been written with respect to the guiding principles of the St Aloysius College Mission Statement and Mercy Education Values.

St Aloysius College is a Child Safe School that acknowledges the duty of care owed to students. We commit to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people in our care including exchange and overseas students. We understand that students may be particularly vulnerable to the risk of child abuse, and we commit to identifying, managing and mitigating these risks, remaining empathetic to the diversity, sexuality, disability, cultural backgrounds, of our students.

Introduction

St Aloysius College is a Catholic College in the Tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. The staff at St Aloysius College are expected to proactively support the School's Mission Statement.

The Child Safety Policy applies to all St Aloysius College staff, students, homestay families, volunteers and contractors.

1. Rationale

At St Aloysius 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 in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (VCEA Commitment Statement to Child Safety). We are also guided by our Mercy Education values of Compassion, Justice, Respect, Hospitality, Service and Courage.

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9).

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of St Aloysius College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed 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 Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

This policy applies to school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy.

3. Principles

Catholic schools have 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 ([VCEA Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at St Aloysius College:

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- All students have a right to a culturally safe environment where the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal students are respected and valued.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.
- In respecting and upholding equity and diverse needs in policy and practice, we pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable students.
- We have zero tolerance for bullying, discrimination and racism in all forms
- Our College is conscious of supporting our boys to feel welcome and safe as they are progressively enrolled in a previously girls only environment.
- All adults in our College, 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 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.
- Empowering students about their rights in ways that are age-appropriate and sensitive to cultural and linguistic backgrounds, disability, diverse circumstances or other vulnerabilities.
- Our College works with students, families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- Policies and procedures are documented, accessible and delivered with clarity.
- The College regularly reviews, evaluates, improves child safe practices.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect and with an understanding of the diverse needs of children and young people.
- Students have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe and easy to understand.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and students feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by the College Leadership.

- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally, pastorally or under the Child Information Sharing Scheme, the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and the Family violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

4. Definitions used in this Policy

- 4.1 **Child:** A child or a young person enrolled as a student at the College.
- 4.2 **Child abuse** includes:
- (a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - i. a sexual offence
 - ii. an offence under section 498(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
 - iii. online grooming
 - (b) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - i. physical violence
 - ii. serious emotional or psychological harm
 - (c) serious neglect of a child. (Ministerial Order No. 1359)
 - (d) exposure to, witness or hear family violence
- 4.3 **Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS):** assists professionals and organisations, such as schools, to better perform their roles and responsibilities by expanding the circumstances in which they can share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. It is intended to facilitate services working together to identify needs and risks, promote earlier and more effective intervention and integrated service provision, and improve outcomes for children and families. (Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance)
- 4.4 **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 incidents or allegations of child abuse. (Ministerial Order No. 1359)
- 4.5 **Child neglect:** The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing. (Safe Schools Hub)
- 4.6 **Child physical abuse:** Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour. (Safe Schools Hub)
- 4.7 **Child protection:** Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm. (Safe Schools Hub)
- 4.8 **Child sexual abuse:** Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse.
- Child sexual abuse can also be:

- a) any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g. a teacher); the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated
 - b) any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion
 - c) sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion
 - d) non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14-year-old and an 11-year-old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse. ([Safe Schools Hub](#))
- 4.9 Family Violence Information Sharing (FVISS):** supports effective assessment and management of family violence risk and enables authorised organisations and services, such as schools, to share information to facilitate assessment and management of family violence risk to children and adults. Under the scheme, Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) such as schools, can share information related to assessing or managing family violence risk. (Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance)
- 4.10 Mandatory Reporting:** The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists, and medical practitioners. (Safe Schools Hub)
- 4.11 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM):** a framework that sets out the responsibilities of different workforces in identifying, assessing and managing family violence risk across the family violence and broader service system and guides information sharing under both CISS and FVISS wherever family violence is present. (Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance)
- 4.12 Reasonable Belief:** When 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.
- 4.13 School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:
- a) any campus/facility of the school (North Melbourne and Torquay)
 - b) online school environments (including email, intranet systems, remote learning platforms)
 - c) other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, college chartered transportation, excursions, competitions, and other events). ([Ministerial Order No. 1359](#))

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

- a) directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- b) a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- c) a minister of religion. (Ministerial Order No. 1359)

5. Policy Commitments

All students enrolled at St Aloysius College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our 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 or other diverse circumstances.

5.1 Our Commitment to Our Students

- (a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
- (b) We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- (c) We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- (d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- (e) We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- (f) We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment, both physically and online.

5.2 Our Commitment to Parents and Carers

- a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies, and procedures.
- c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- e) We commit to being sensitive to the diverse range of circumstances that may contribute to a student's vulnerability and taking this into account when responding
- f) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse and informing families and communities of the implementation updates.

5.3 Our Commitment to Our College Staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy)

- a) We commit to providing all St Aloysius College staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include initial induction of Child Safe policies and protocols, regular and appropriate professional learning.
- b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to train, clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns; staff awareness of mitigating risk and creating Child safe environments.
- c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by St Aloysius College staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- d) We commit to providing opportunities for St Aloysius 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.

6 Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at St Aloysius College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. ([VCEA Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#))

The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows.

6.1 Guide to Responsibilities of College Leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Aloysius 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.

Responsibilities include:

- appointing a Child Safe Co-ordinator to ensure the Child Safe Standards are followed and embedded in College policies and practices
- 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
- ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child 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.

6.2 Guide to Responsibilities of College Staff

Responsibilities of College staff (College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy) include:

- Effectively implementing this Child Safe Policy
- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, being sensitive to the diversity of culture and circumstances, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal College 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, or is at risk of child abuse.
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- providing a physically and psychologically safe online environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is respected and protected
- undertaking regular training and education to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people including how to recognise indicators of child harm
- undertaking professional learning to ensure College staff understand the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the correct responsive protocols to protect children and young people which are sensitive and appropriate to the circumstances of the student involved
- 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 regardless of cultural background, sexuality or disability or vulnerability due to their diversity or circumstances.
- following the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

6.3 Organisational Arrangements

- The College has appointed a Child Safety Coordinator.
- The College has a child focused complaint handling policy.

7 Expectation of our College Staff - Child Safety Code of Conduct

At St Aloysius College, we expect College employees, volunteers, contractors, and clergy to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety 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 to comply with all requirements.

We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct which recognises the critical role that College staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect.

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

8 Student Safety and Participation

At St Aloysius College, we actively encourage all students to express their views openly and respectfully 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 on Child Safety. We listen to and act on any concerns that students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Through our Nourish Program, students will be provided with access to Child Safety information, policies and practices regardless of a student's disability, cultural background or sexuality. In matters related to child safety, information including relevant details of College practices and processes, is available to all students ensuring inclusivity, participation and empowerment. Child Safety information is made available through our LMS.

9 Reporting and Responding

St Aloysius College records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. 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.) and the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report.

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

Our school's ***Child Protection & Mandatory Reporting Policy*** 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 need protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may need protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Our College has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Please refer to the College Child Protection & Mandatory Reporting Policy

As of 19th April 2021, St Aloysius College is an authorised information sharing entity under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). These schemes fall under the Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework and aim to improve outcomes for young people and their families. These frameworks apply in addition to the Child Safe Standards and Mandatory Reporting obligations.

All requests for sharing information must first come through either the Assistant Principal - Student Engagement & Wellbeing and/or the College Psychologist. The following details will be required and recorded:

1. Purpose of the information sharing request.
2. Which scheme the information is being shared under?
3. How the request meets the requirements for sharing.
4. Date, contact details, and what information was requested/shared.

If any information sharing request is refused, our College is required to communicate this in writing to the information sharing entity requesting information.

9.1 Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

CISS enables information to be shared by prescribed information sharing entities, to promote the wellbeing or safety of children.

Consent is not required to share or request information relevant to the safety of a child but should consider the views and wishes of those involved when it is safe, reasonable, and appropriate to do so.

The three-part threshold test must be met for information to be shared:

1. Share for the purpose of promoting the wellbeing or safety of children and young people.
2. Share to inform an action.
3. Do not share excluded information.

9.2 Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

Enables information to be shared between information sharing entities and risk assessment entities to assess and manage family violence risk. There are three requirements for sharing:

1. to assess or protect from family violence risk
2. applicable consent requirements are met (see below)
3. the information is not excluded information

Consent is not required to:

1. assess or manage family violence risk to a child
2. lessen or prevent a serious threat to life, health, safety, or welfare
3. share information about a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator

but should consider the views and wishes of the child and non-perpetrating parent when it is safe, reasonable, and appropriate to do so.

Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- *Resolution of Grievances Policy*
- *Our Pastoral Care Policy*
- *Child Protection & Mandatory Reporting Policy*
- *Student Management Plan*

10 Screening and Recruitment of College Staff

St Aloysius College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety 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 Policy.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Clearance and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any 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.

The HR Manager is responsible for ensuring that all recruitment processes are followed when advertising positions, validating and verifying applicant information, and monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of College staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Clearances and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

11 Child Safety Education and Training for College Staff

St Aloysius College provides employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of openness and ability to address child safety matters.

For employees, participation in child safety education and training is required. 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 a reasonable belief about child abuse and neglect.

12 Risk Management

At St Aloysius 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 periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety for all College activities and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

Professional Learning in relation to Child Safety and Child Safe is delivered to staff, volunteers, clergy and contractors and also included in induction programs to reduce risk.

The College has appointed a subcommittee to identify and manage Child Safe risks. This committee consists of the:

Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal – Student Engagement & Wellbeing, Director of College Learning Administration, College Psychologist/Counsellor and the Child Safe Coordinator.

College learning programs, co-curricular activities; Child Safe education programs for students, families; review of policy and procedures are monitored, reviewed and implemented. This subcommittee is also responsible for ensuring Child Safe professional learning compliancy standards are actioned for staff, students are educated, and Child Safe Standards are adhered.

13 Relevant Legislation

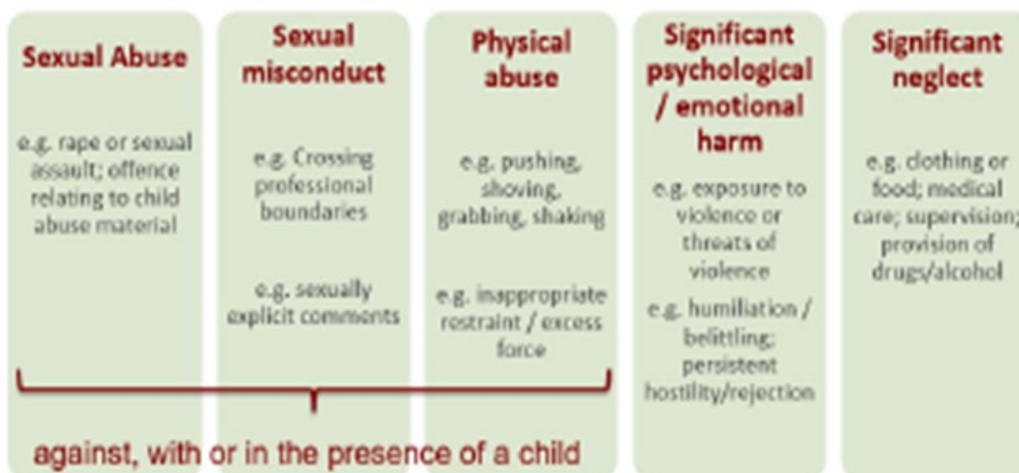
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic.)*
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*- Three new criminal offences were introduced under this Act:
 - **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.
 - **Failure to protect offence:** The 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.
 - **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.

Reportable Conduct Scheme:

As a result of 2017, updated 'child safety enforcement powers' to Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), Principals must act where they have any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that:

- an employee has committed reportable conduct; or
- an employee has committed misconduct which may include reportable conduct

Identifying Reportable Conduct



Child Safe Schools

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13.1 Reportable Allegation Involving the Head of Entity

The Head of Entity is the person who is primarily responsible for decision-making for the school. In most primary schools and in diocesan secondary schools, this will generally be a parish priest. In other secondary schools (e.g. congregational), there may be other governance arrangements regarding the identity of the Head of Entity. For St Aloysius College, the governance or Head of Entity is Mercy Education Limited.

13.2 Where the School Principal, or other person or body, is the Head of Entity

Where the governance arrangements of a school are such that a person, i.e. the school principal, or other person or body, is the head of entity, the following actions are required.

If any person, including any employee of the school, becomes aware of a reportable allegation involving the school principal, as the head of entity, the person should inform an appropriate member of the school's Leadership Team, who will advise the nominated contact, who will notify the CCYP. In all instances of a reportable allegation of a criminal offence, Victoria Police must be notified.

If any such person becomes aware of a reportable allegation involving a person or body, other than the school principal, as the head of entity, the person should inform the school principal or, if the principal is involved in the reportable allegation, an appropriate member of the Leadership Team, who will advise the nominated contact, who will notify the CCYP. In all instance of a reportable allegation of a criminal offence, Victoria Police must be notified.

Where a person becomes aware of a reportable allegation involving, relevantly, the school principal, or other person or body, as the relevant head of entity, but is not able to advise the principal or an appropriate member of the Leadership Team, the person shall directly notify the CCYP and, in the instance of an alleged criminal offence, Victoria Police.

For more information refer to the *Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) Guide to the Reportable Conduct Scheme*, which has been developed to assist employers, principals and school leaders in understanding and complying with their obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

14 Relevant Resources

- Aboriginal Children Inclusion and Safety: <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe/>
- Short Guide to the updated standards: [Short-guide-to-the-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf \(ccyp.vic.gov.au\)](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards.pdf)
- Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>

14.1 Related Policies

Mercy Education Policies

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Management Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- MEL Code of Conduct

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Policies

- Guidelines Relating to the Employment of Staff
- Child Protection - Reporting Obligations
- School Guidelines-Police and DHHS Interview Protocols
- Complaints Policy
- Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools

School Policies

- Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy
- Camp and Excursion Policy
- International Student Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- ICT Policy
- Student ICT Policy
- Resolution of Grievances Policy

15. Breach of Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, St Aloysius College may start the process under Clause 13 of the *Catholic Education Multi Enterprise*

Agreement 2022 (CEMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the employer. Relevant notification should also be made to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Where any **other member of the school community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action in accordance with Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Obligations and the MEL Code of Conduct and must contact Mercy Education and/or Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

16. Review of Child Safe Policy

At St Aloysius College we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

Mercy Education review our Child Safety and Wellbeing policies annually in conjunction with the annual compliance process for Mercy Education schools. St Aloysius College reviews our policies, procedures and practices:

- after any significant child safety incident
- at least every two years; and improve where applicable.

A history of updates to this policy is maintained.

17. Accessibility

This policy is published on our website, so it is accessible to our school community.

History of Updates to Policy:

Date	Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)
September 2017	Addition of Reportable Conduct information
April 2021	Addition of Information Sharing Schemes (CISS, FVISS, and MARAM framework)
April 2022	Implementation of new Victorian Child Safe Standards, July 1 st 2022

18. References

- Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) - [VCEA Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#).
- [Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement \(CEMEA\)](#).
- Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines 2018, [Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines: Guidelines for sharing entities](#), Victorian State Government.
- Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), Vatican.

- Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines 2018, Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines: Guidance for Information Sharing Entities, Victorian State Government.
- Safe Schools Hub 2014, National Safe Schools Framework Glossary. Australian Government Department of Education and Training.
- State of Victoria 2022, Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order No. 1359, Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette **No.S2**.
- Victorian Government Department of Justice 2016, **Betrayal of Trust Implementation**.
- Commission for Children and Young People, *Victorian Child Safe Standards, 2022*

Date Ratified: July 2016

Approved by: Executive Leadership Team

Implementation Responsibility: College Leadership Team

Reviewed: November 2019; April 2021; April 2022; July 2023; May 2024

Date of Last Review: April 2025

Date of Next Review: April 2026

Appendix 1: New Victorian Child Safe Standards: July 1, 2022

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- 1.5 All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.
- 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.
- 2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.

- 3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.
- 3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- 3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- 3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.
- 4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- 5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- 5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- 5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- 6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.

- 6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.
- 7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- 7.3 Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- 7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.
- 7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- 8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- 8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- 9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.
- 9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.

- 9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- 10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- 10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.