

MacKillop College

Child Safety Policy



MacKillop College is a college which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS), where formation and education are based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and where the teachers are outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.

Introduction

At MacKillop College, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. 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 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).

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of MacKillop College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our College. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our College environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the College.

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. 870](#).

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

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

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 ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at MacKillop 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 protection.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/carers.

- 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.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by 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 or pastorally.

Definitions

Child means a child enrolled as a student at the College.

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)
- (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. 870](#)).

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. 870](#)).

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: 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](#)).

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 physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the College
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the College for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#)).

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

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- a minister of religion ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#)).

Policy commitments

All students enrolled at MacKillop College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The 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, and children with a disability.

Our commitment to our students

- We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our College.
- 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 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 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 and carers

- We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child safety practice, policies and procedures.
- We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- 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 College staff (College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy)

- We commit to providing all MacKillop College staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. 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 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.
- We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by MacKillop College staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We commit to providing opportunities for MacKillop College 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 MacKillop 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 ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The College has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

Senior Child Safety Officer

- Anna Marazita

Child Safety Officers

- Andrew Exton
- Caroline Moon
- Jacqueline Plochino

- Mark Westgarth

Guide to responsibilities of College leadership

The Principal, the College governing authority and College leaders at MacKillop 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:

- 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 children and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the College meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)
- ensuring the College 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](#).

Guide to responsibilities of College staff

Responsibilities of College staff (College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy) 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 College 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
- 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 College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Organisational arrangements

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

A number of staff members have been nominated as the College's Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to Child Safety issues. They are the first point of contact for raising Child Safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing Child Safety within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to Child Safety incidents.

Name	Position
Anna Marazita	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
Andrew Exton	Director of Wellbeing
Caroline Moon	Staff Mentor
Jacqueline Plochino	Staff Mentor
Mark Westgarth	Director of Wellbeing

To contact any of the above during school hours, please call: (03) 8734 5200

In emergencies outside of school hours, please call: 000

To flag an issue in writing, please go to our [Complaints and Commendations](#) page

Our Senior Child Safety Officer is Anna Marazita.

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

Expectation of our College staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At MacKillop College, we expect school 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 College. All College 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](#), 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.

Student safety and participation

At MacKillop 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 integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe. Teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge and support student agency and voice are implemented.

We have developed appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending our College
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

Standards of Behaviour for Students Attending the College

The College has developed a Student Code of Conduct that sets out standards of behaviour for all students attending the College. The Code is promoted within the College and students are encouraged to provide feedback on the Code.

For more information, refer to Bullying Prevention & Intervention, Social Media – Student Usage and Harassment Policy (Student Against Student).

Students who do not uphold the standards of behaviour outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and in our anti-bullying, harassment and social media policies are subject to disciplinary procedures but are also supported by the College to address and mitigate behaviours that are not in line with the Code and any underlying factors.

Students are encouraged to tell a trusted adult, whether it's a parent/carer or other family member, a trusted teacher or a Child Safety Officer, when they feel unsafe or are impacted by the behaviour of other students.

Healthy and Respectful Relationships and Resilience

The teaching of healthy and respectful relationships, including sexuality, at the College seeks to assist students to grow and develop into healthy, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential.

Healthy and respectful relationships and sexuality education at the College is:

- imparted in the context of moral teachings leading to the formation of a Catholic conscience
- enshrined in core pedagogical practices that are age-appropriate, respectful, sensitive of culture and family background and differentiated to support the learning and developmental needs of the child or young person
- endorsed by the Advisory Council.

MacKillop College also teaches resilience, which is the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity. Building resilience has a positive impact on students' social and academic outcomes and is particularly critical for students who may be impacted by abuse.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention

The College provides age-appropriate education for students on child safety awareness and child abuse and harm prevention, to build their capacity to:

- identify when they feel safe and unsafe and when they are at risk, including when online
- identify safe and unsafe touching (using the anatomical names for their body parts)
- promote their personal safety (avoiding harm where possible)
- seek help, using their identified safety networks
- overcome barriers to disclosure, for example guilt or disbelief.

The College considers best practice when providing access to or selecting providers of child abuse and harm prevention education.

The College openly displays contact details for independent child advocacy and child helpline services throughout the College.

Reporting and responding

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

Our school's [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations](#) updated on 17 June 2020, sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our College 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
- 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.

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

At MacKillop 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 or the designated Child Safety Officers.

If the Principal or Child Safety 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 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 College staff

MacKillop 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 College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety 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 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 make all reasonable efforts to 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 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 College staff into the College's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work.

We have procedures and processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of College staff 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.

MacKillop College implements the following CECV guidelines:

- *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.*

[Child Safety Human Resources Management](#)

Child safety – education and training for school staff

MacKillop College provides employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety 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
- child abuse risks in the school environment
- our school's current child safety standards.

[Child Safety Training](#)

Risk management

At MacKillop 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, and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

The College has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the identification, assessment and management of Child Safety risks in all College environments.

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.)*

- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.)
 - *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
 - *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
 - *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.

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](#)

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) policies

- [Policy 2.19: Identifying and responding to abuse – Reporting obligations](#)
- [Policy 2.20: Complaints](#)
- [Policy 2.26: Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools](#)

School policies

- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations](#)