


St Fidelis' Primary School	Date of Next Review: 26. 07. 2016	
Version 0.1	Date of Next Review: 26. 07. 2018	

Standard Two – Child Safety Policy

Introduction

St Fidelis Vision Statement

“We love to learn”

St Fidelis' is about learning.

Learning about who we are, our God and our world.

Learning involves students, teachers, parents, parish and our local and global community.

We learn best when we feel safe, are active and independent, make connections, work with and understand how we learn.

Together we try new things, value others, share our learning and reflect on what we have learnt.

We are guided by the teachings of Jesus and St Fidelis.

We are always and everywhere faithful.

At St Fidelis' 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 (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: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9).

St Fidelis Primary School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and takes active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safety Strategies to ensure that any person involved in 'child connected work' is aware of their obligations & responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all children under their care.

In accordance with requirements of the [Victorian Government's Ministerial Order No 870](#), St Fidelis Primary School maintains a culture of 'no tolerance' to child abuse and to support this has established minimum Child Safety Standards.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate St Fidelis Primary School's commitment to ensuring Child Safety and to illustrate the measures implemented by the school to maintain a safe education environment, as well as processes for responding to suspected abuse.

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Scope

This policy & associated procedures apply to all staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

Commitment to Child Safety

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).

All students & young people attending St Fidelis Primary School have the right to feel safe. The school affirms its commitment to child safety by adopting a 'zero tolerance' to child abuse and by actively implementing and managing strategies to help protect children from harm.

Initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety of students and young people at St Fidelis Primary School include the following:

- » An annual assessment of the effectiveness of its Child Safety Management Strategies to identify areas for improvement.
- » A Code of Conduct defining workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.
- » Processes for the recruitment, support, training & supervision of staff members, clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors who participate in 'Child Connected Work'.
- » Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected Child Abuse.
- » Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people in the establishment of Child Safety strategies.
- » A commitment that promotes safety of Indigenous children, children with disabilities and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

St Fidelis Primary School maintains policies, procedures and strategies to create a child safe environment in the following areas.


Risk Management

St Fidelis Primary School recognises the importance of minimising the potential of Child Abuse or harm and uses this process to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general Occupational Health & Safety risks the school proactively manages risk via a formal assessment process.

Code of Conduct

St Fidelis Primary School enforces a Code of Conduct for all staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance and support to individuals so that they feel valued, respected and fairly treated. It is provided to any person engaged in 'Child Connected Work' and is available on the school website & in the Employee Handbook.

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Recruitment, Support, Training & Supervision

St Fidelis Primary School adopts Administrative & Human Resource practices to ensure its screening, recruitment & performance management processes identify and engage the most suitable candidates for positions available at the school. Recruitment and screening processes, as well as Police and Working With Children's Checks are minimum requirements for those engaged in 'Child Connected Work'.

Staff Members are provided with regular development opportunities, support, supervision & training to assist with addressing child safety matters.

Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Concerns or Abuse

St Fidelis Primary School has appointed a Child Safety Officer (Michael Jennings) with specific responsibilities for responding to reports or complaints made by any member of the school community relating to child safety concerns or abuse. The school's Child Safety Officer works closely with members of the leadership team, staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, contractors, students and the parent community to ensure Child Safety Standards are maintained and all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct are immediately addressed.

Where staff members have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a student or young person they are mandated by law to report their concerns immediately to the Principal, Child Safety Officer or a Members of the Leadership Team before contacting DHHS Child Protection. Staff members will be supported through all aspects of the reporting process.

Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people

St Fidelis Primary School works with students to ensure that they are empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and encourage them to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or afraid. Staff members actively encourages students & young people to express their views on matters that directly affect them. The school educates students and young people on strategies they can adopt if they feel unsafe.

Valuing Diversity


St Fidelis Primary School values diversity and does not tolerate discriminatory practices.

To achieve this the school:

- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous children and their families.
- » Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from cultural and/or linguistically different backgrounds.
- » Welcome children with disabilities and their families and actively promotes their participation.
- » Seek to employ staff members from a culturally diverse background.

Breach of Policy

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, St Fidelis' may start the process under clause 13 of the Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013 (VCEMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

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Where the principal is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the parish priest or the employer. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (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.

Review of this Policy

St Fidelis Primary School reviews its Child Safety Code of Conduct every three years more frequently in the event of a complaint or when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children.