ST. MARY’S SCHOOL

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“Let your light shine”

# **Child Safety Policy**

**Reviewed: Term 2 2020**

**Ratified by School Board: TBA**

**NEXT REVIEW 2022**

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# Introduction

At St Mary’s all students enrolled, and any child visiting, have the right to feel safe and be safe in all school environments and outside of school hours. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

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](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940582)).

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).

# Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of St Mary’s 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. 870](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf).

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

# 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](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940582)).

**The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at St Mary’s:**

* All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
* Our school 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/guardians/caregivers.
* All adults in our school, 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 school 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 used in this Policy

**Child:** A child or a young person enrolled as a student at the school.

**Child abuse** includes:

(a) any act committed against a child involving:

* 1. a sexual offence
	2. an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)

(b) the infliction, on a child, of:

1. physical violence
2. serious emotional or psychological harm

(c) serious neglect of a child. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf))

**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](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf))

**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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx#page=18))

**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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx#page=10))

**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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx#page=12))

**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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx#page=17))

**Grooming** is when aperson 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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx#page=15))

**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, teachers, 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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx#page=7))

**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](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx#page=25))

**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:

1. a campus of the school
2. online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
3. other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events). [(Ministerial Order No. 870)](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf)

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

1. directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
2. a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
3. a minister of religion. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf))

# Policy Commitments

All students enrolled at St Mary’s 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**

1. We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
2. We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
3. 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.
4. We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
5. We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
6. We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

**Our commitment to parents and carers**

1. We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
2. We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures.
3. We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
4. We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
5. We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

**Our commitment to our school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy)**

1. We commit to providing all St Mary’s staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
2. 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.
3. We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by **St Mary’s** staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
4. We commit to providing opportunities for **St Mary’s** school 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 St Mary’s has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays 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](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940582))

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

## 6.1 Guide to Responsibilities of School Leadership

The principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Mary’s 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 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. 870](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf).
* ensuring the school 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 the [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx).

### 6.2 Guide to Responsibilities of School Staff

Responsibilities of school staff (school 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 school 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 school’s Child Safety Code of Conduct.

### 6.3 Organisational Arrangements

The St Mary’s Child Safety Team comprises of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Pastoral Wellbeing Leader. They are responsible to ensure Child Safety is prominent in the day to day running of the school. Any issues raised are to be recorded in the Child Safety documentation section of CompliSpace. The team is responsible for ensuring that School staff and Board members have sighted and signed off on all Child Safe declarations listed in relevant policies and procedures.

# Expectation of our School Staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At **St Mary’s**, 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 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 school staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect.

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

# Student Safety and Participation

At St Mary’s, 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 on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

# Reporting and Responding

Our school 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](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fcdc/article/1788) report.

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

Our school’s **Child Protection – Reporting Policy,** updated in May 2018**,** 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 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 criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Our school 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.

Our Child Safety Team has the responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to child safety.

Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the **Complaints and Disclosure Procedure.**

# Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

St Mary’swill 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 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 have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school 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.

# Child Safety – Education and Training for School Staff

**St Mary’s**  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.

All new staff are required to attend a Staff Induction Day prior to the commencement of the school year.

All ongoing staff take part in a Child Safety Information Session at the start of the school year.

# Risk Management

At **St Mary’s**  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.

All Staff, Leadership, School Board and sub committee Meetings will have Child Safety as a permanent agenda item at all meetings. Any risks identified will be recorded on the Child Safety documentation section of Complispace. The follow up and action taken on any risks will also be an agenda item.

# Relevant Legislation

* Children, Youth and Families 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)
* Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:
	1. [**Failure to disclose offence**](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer%2Bcommunities/protecting%2Bchildren%2Band%2Bfamilies/failure%2Bto%2Bdisclose%2Boffence)**:** 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**](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/http%3A/www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer%2Bcommunities/protecting%2Bchildren%2Band%2Bfamilies/failure%2Bto%2Bprotect%2Boffence)**:** 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.
		1. [**Grooming offence**](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer%2Bcommunities/protecting%2Bchildren%2Band%2Bfamilies/grooming%2Boffence)**:** 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

## 14.1 Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Policies

* [Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](http://www.cem.edu.au/publications-policies/policy/policy-2.19-child-protection-repoting-obligations/)
* [Policy 2.19a: School Guidelines –Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](http://www.cem.edu.au/publications-policies/policy/policy-2.19a-police-and-dhhs-interview-protocols/)
* [Policy 2.20: Complaints](http://www.cem.edu.au/publications-policies/policy/Policy-2.20-Complaints/) Policy
* [Policy 2.26: Pastoral Care of Students](http://www.cem.edu.au/publications-policies/policy/policy-2.26-pastoral-care-of-students-in-catholic-schools/) in Catholic Schools

## 14.2 School Policies & Procedures

* Grooming
* Mandatory Reporting
* Working With Children Checks
* Reporting Obligations
* Child Safety Code of Conduct
* Complaints and Disclosure
* Employment of New Staff
* Failure to Disclose
* Failure to Protect
* Off Site Supervision
* On Site Supervision
* Staff Declaration
* Statement of Commitment
* Students Working with an external Provider
* Volunteers Protocol

# Breach of Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, St Mary’s may start the process under clause 13 of the Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013(VCEMEA) for managingemployment 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 parish priest or the employer. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Sandhurst.

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, including in accordance with the St Mary’s Policies and procedures listed in the Policy and/or contact Catholic Education Sandhurst.

# Review of this Child Safety Policy

At St Mary’s 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.

We will maintain a history of updates to the policy.

**History of Updates to Policy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)** |
| Term 1 2016 | Development of Initial Child Safe policy. |
| May 2018 | Major review. |
|  |  |

# References

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety](http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940208): A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools.

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2013, [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/vcsa/Agreement_2013/VCEMEA_2013.pdf), CECV.

Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html.), Vatican.

Department of Education, 2016, [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/getmedia/ebe135a4-d1b3-48a0-81fe-50d4fc451bcd/Identifying-and-Responding-to-All-Forms-of-Abuse.aspx)

State of Victoria 2016, [Child Safe Standards](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf) – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order No. 870, Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2.

Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 2013, [Betrayal of Trust](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/fcdc/inquiries/article/1788)

“Employment in Catholic Education, Diocese of Sandhurst” document.”

 SANDHURST SCHOOL EDUCATION BOARD

**Employment**

**in Catholic Education**

**DIOCESE OF SANDHURST**

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**Introduction**

Dear Colleagues

I invite you to read this document, Employment in Catholic Education carefully. It is a statement of our key understandings and commitment as professionals to each other and to the families whose children we teach and serve. It is a document imbued with the core understandings of the Catholic Church and of the ministry of education. It embraces all roles within our schools and is informed by contemporary professional expectations as well as visionary and sound theology.

This document is intentional in celebrating all roles within Catholic education – everyone present in our communities is an educator. Some of us have formal qualifications which require particular responsibilities whilst others are educators by their presence, compassion and relationship with students, families and co-workers.

*“When we go back to a list of the qualities that made our best educators so effective, we probably notice that so much of what made them significant in our lives was not what they did, but who they are as human beings”*

(Zehm & Kottler, 1993:2)

We need the ‘variety and unity of gifts’ (Corinthians 12:4) to fulfil the mission of Catholic education! Education author Christopher Day encourages us all when he states:

*‘Educators with a passion for teaching are driven by hope rather than optimism. They are hard-working, practical people who know their craft and like their pupils. They are sustained as active learners by their own sense of moral purpose…they understand that teaching is emotional as well as intellectual and practical work. They are not heroes or heroines but they are heroic!’*

(Passion for Teaching 2004:177)

Education is always a human encounter! We understand it best as a work of love which nourishes and nurtures students, families and colleagues to fullness of life. We are committed to your growth and development and exhort you to continue to grow and enrich the lives of the students whom you teach and the colleagues with whom you minister each day.

Blessings

**Mr Paul Desmond**

*Director of Catholic Education – Diocese of Sandhurst*

February 2015

**Note**: unless it is stated otherwise, the responsibilities and requirements outlined in this document apply to all staff in Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sandhurst (teaching and non-teaching staff alike), even though these responsibilities and requirements will be fulfilled in different ways.

**1.0 Commitment to the Church’s Mission within Catholic Education**

***Each Staff Member in a Catholic school shows through her/his professional and personal life a commitment to the Church’s mission in Catholic education.***

Therefore, each staff member undertakes to:

**1.1** accept, support and promote the value and principles of Catholic education within the mission of the Church in an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, loyalty, integrity and truthfulness;

**1.2** contribute to the ongoing formation of the school as a faith-enriched community with the Eucharist as its centre and Christ as its model;

**1.3** recognise and acknowledge the rich history and unfolding story of the Catholic Church and Catholic education within the Parish and the Diocese;

**1.4** participate in the development and realisation of the school’s own vision and mission;

**1.5** engage with the poor, alienated and marginalised with understanding and compassion and support policies and decisions to create conditions supporting this;

**1.6** strive, through daily interactions and example, to develop students’ understanding and acceptance of Catholic teachings, values and practices; and the following of the Person of Christ;

**1.7** assist students in the dialogue of faith and culture in their daily lives within a changing world in the light of the Gospel message of love, truth and freedom;

**1.8** develop and maintain an adequate understanding of, and commitment to, those aspects of Catholic teaching that touch upon her/his life-style and areas of responsibility;

**1.9** strive to live out her/his personal vocational commitment in a community of colleagues.

**2.0 Responsibility of the Employing Authority**

**to the Staff member**

***The school’s employing authority acknowledges the co-operative professional relationship between the school and the staff member.***

Therefore, the employing authority commits to:

**2.1** making available copies of school policy documents, Sandhurst School Education Board (SSEB) policies, diocesan policies and CECV policies, regulations and industrial agreements to the staff member as appropriate;

**2.2** providing a formal letter of appointment which includes a description of the staff members position and the requirements of the position;

**2.3** providing a supportive professional environment, including appropriate induction programmes and reasonable access to professional development;

**2.4** providing a staff handbook (or equivalent) which describes general organisational details and expectations of professional staff;

**2.5** providing opportunities for all staff to participate in the Faith life of the school;

**2.6** just and equitable processes, interactions, opportunities and outcomes for all staff;

**2.7** providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and supportive of staff wellbeing, including appropriate resources, facilities and training.

**2.8** encouraging staff to pursue a healthy balance between the personal and professional areas of her/his life.

**3.0 Responsibilities of Staff to School**

**and Employing Authority**

***Each staff member acknowledges a co-operative professional relationship with her/his school and employing authority.***

Therefore, the staff member undertakes to ensure that she/he:

**3.1** is honest, truthful and acts with integrity at all times in her/his relationship with the Employing Authority and the delegated school leaders;

**3.2** adheres to contractual commitments and respect appraisal commitments in accordance with relevant policies and industrial agreements;

**3.3** supports and complies with the development and implementation of school and Diocesan policies and CECV policies, regulations and industrial agreements;

**3.4** provides high quality professional service to fellow staff, students and parents/guardians;

**3.5** commits to appropriate and regular Professional Development in line with school and Diocesan policy;

**3.6** models a public lifestyle that provides a positive role commensurate with Catholic teaching and practice;

**3.7** seeks to fulfill all legal obligations such as those involving Duty of Care, Occupational Health and Safety, Copyright, Privacy and Confidentiality, and Child Protection;

**3.8** maintains appropriate relationships with current and past students at all times, including through digital media, according to school and VIT policy and standards;

**3.9** acts responsibly in the use of resources in a sustainable and equitable manner;

**3.10** maintains an appropriate professional registration, such as with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) to teach in the State of Victoria, or its equivalent where required; or will maintain a valid and current Working With Children Check, and advise the employing authority immediately if such a Check is withdrawn, or may be withdrawn;

**3.11** does not operate beyond the limits of her/his competence and qualifications;

**3.12** positively promotes the school in the wider community.

**Note**: *“Relevant Policies” may include: School/SSEB/Diocesan/CECV/Orders/Congregations.*

School Board Child Safe Agenda Schedule

Term 1 – VRQA Child Safe Standards Overview and the St Mary’s Child Safe policy

Term 2 – Implementation of practices for a Child Safe environment. (Review)

Term 3 – Effectiveness of School’s Child Safe Practices. (Review)

Term 4 – Effectiveness of Schools Risk Controls. (Review)

**4.0 Commitment to Competence and Professionalism**

***Each staff member, as a competent professional, is committed to Catholic education and to ongoing professional development.***

Therefore, the staff member undertakes to ensure that he/she:

**4.1** endeavours to nurture the particular gifts and talents of all students;

**4.2** is caring and responsive to students with special needs and respects individual diversity;

**4.3** supports and contributes to the leadership of the school and exercises personal leadership appropriately;

**4.4** builds and maintains collaborative partnerships in relationships with colleagues;

**4.5** participates, when appropriate, in Diocesan professional development teams and programs and supports the school in collaborating in Professional Learning programs across clusters and the Diocese and broader community;

**4.6** strives to maintain a healthy balance between personal and professional areas of her/his life.

**4.7** assists and supports newcomers to, and all those involved in, Catholic Education;

**4.8** recognises and interacts appropriately with other professionals outside the immediate school environment and school system.

**5.0 Commitment to the Learning and Professional Development of Students**

***Each staff member shares in promoting the formation of the whole Person. Teaching staff have a particular responsibility for this through positive rapport with students and through a well-planned school curriculum which should enhance student learning and personal development.***

Therefore, the teacher undertakes to ensure that he/she:

**5.1** integrates values consistent with Catholic teaching into all areas of the school curriculum;

**5.2** presents and models learning and growth in faith as a life-long and life-giving process through the development of critical thought, reflection and community action in the light of Gospel values and consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church;

**5.3** strives to provide effective learning and teaching through continual professional development;

**5.4** acts in a professional manner among staff, students and the community and in a manner consistent with the requisite Professional Standards and Code of Ethics of the Victorian Institute of Teaching, including the use of digital media.

**5.5** provides a diversity of creative and effective learning experiences to enable all students the opportunity to gain access to the knowledge, skills and values required for full, active and fruitful participation in society;

**5.6** uses appropriate student assessment procedures consistent with school policy, and provides meaningful feedback to students and parents;

**5.7** teaches in a way that addresses each student’s development with an understanding of the conditions and processes which facilitate learning for students;

**5.8** leads students through facilitation, co-ordination, word and example towards greater responsibility for their own learning;

**5.9** recognises and caters for different styles and rates of learning across curriculum areas;

**5.10** is accredited or agrees to gain accreditation within a specified timeframe to teach in the Catholic school in accordance with CECV policy;

**5.11** is accredited or agrees to gain accreditation, if applicable, to teach Religious Education in the Catholic School, in accordance with CECV policy;

**5.12** participates in school-level curriculum development and evaluation consistent with Catholic ethos and approved policies and guidelines.

**6.0 Commitment to Student Pastoral Wellbeing**

***Each staff member of a Catholic school performs an essential personal role in the teaching ministry of the Catholic Church. This goes beyond the need for professional skills and competence as staff bring to the students a realisation and knowledge of the richness and joy of a life lived in accordance with Gospel values.***

Therefore, within her/his particular responsibilities, the staff member

undertakes to:

**6.1** exercise a duty of care towards all students, consistent with school and Diocesan policy as well as community expectations;

**6.2** recognise values and protect the uniqueness, potential and dignity of each student;

**6.3** be sensitive to each student’s religious, social and cultural background and affirms the richness of this diversity;

**6.4** foster the development of each student’s self-concept and their ability to interact harmoniously and productively with others;

**6.5** support students in developing increased responsibility for personal decision-making and action in accordance with Gospel values;

**6.6** be committed to justice and equity for all students, in all interactions, educational opportunities and outcomes;

**6.7** use agreed instructional and behavioural practices and interventions;

**6.8** support and actively promote a safe and positive school environment;

**6.9** foster relationships with students which are based on trust, honesty and integrity.

**7.0 Partnership with Parents/Guardians**

***Each staff member understands that the family is the primary focus and nurturing “centre” of children and young people and therefore works in partnership with parents/guardians towards the development of each student.***

Consequently, the staff member undertakes to ensure that he/she will act in a way which:

**7.1** is sensitive and responsive to the complexity and diversity of modern family life and to the many social, psychological, financial and other pressures faced by families, and respects the uniqueness and value of each student’s family background;

**7.2** values and promotes the role of parents/guardians as their child’s/children’s first and foremost educators by:

7.2.1 recognising accountability and responsibility to the parent/s or guardians of the students;

7.2.2 working in partnership with parents/guardians through establishing appropriate communication channels to facilitate such partnership;

7.2.3 creating a warm and welcoming climate for parents at classroom and school levels, based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication;

7.2.4 participating in school initiatives to involve parents/guardians in genuine ways of engagement and in the decision-making processes of the school;

**7.3** recognises the vital role of the parish and community in partnership with parents/guardians and school in achieving each student’s growth in wholeness;

**7.4** respects family privacy and the confidential nature of family information (within the requirements of relevant legislation);

**7.5** respects parents’ and guardians’ rights of inquiry, consultation and information with regard to their children.

**8.0 Collaboration with the Parish Community**

***Each staff member recognises the school and parish share in a common mission***

Therefore, the staff member undertakes to:

**8.1** recognise, appreciate and promote the role of the Parish in the life and nature of the Catholic School and promote where appropriate, the continuing interaction between the school community and the wider Christian community;

**8.2** recognise and support, where appropriate, the involvement of the school in the sacramental life of the local faith community;

**8.3** understand and respect the role of the Parish Priest/Congregational Leaders as employer/canonical administrator of the school, and the priest’s role as pastor and/or chaplain;

**8.4** provide opportunities when appropriate for students to take their place in the communal and liturgical life of the Church;

**8.5** welcome and support priests and their representatives and chaplaincy services within the school as integral to the holistic development of students, school staff and community.

**9.0 Responsibility to the Broader Community**

***In view of the Catholic school as a place of light and service, each staff member, according to her/his responsibilities seeks to develop in students the values of a community which include: respect for self and others; equality; integrity; participation; and the pursuit of truth.***

Therefore, each staff member undertakes to:

**9.1** promote co-operation among all agencies and professionals working in the best interests of students and families;

**9.2** provide a professional service which considers the needs of the community;

**9.3** develop, by precept and example, a respect for our nation and its laws and policies which protect and promote the well-being of students, families and the community.

**9.4** recognises each school as being an integral part of the whole community and therefore seeks to support and build that community

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