

St. Mary's School is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic

## Introduction

Catholic education is an active partnership between family and school, where families are recognised as the first and ongoing educators of their children. Schools and families partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for children and young people's faith formation, learning, safety and wellbeing.

At St. Mary's School, 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 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).

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is committed to the protection of students. We seek to enable a nurturing, respectful and safe community where the uniqueness and sacred dignity of every young person is celebrated and they are able to flourish in their learning and development.

We pride ourselves on being a Caring, Catholic Community with values that complement our vision of being a welcoming and supportive community, one that proclaims the presence of Jesus Christ in all people. We value and celebrate our faith, diversity, individuality and life-long learning. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop is our guiding light as we strive to foster quality relationships that support the dignity of each person.

Families are the first educators of their children, and when the child moves beyond the earliest years, families are joined by a school on their child's learning journey. This is when a long-term partnership between home and school begins.

At St. Mary's, we understand that parents are in partnership with us as we share the responsibility for the child's faith formation, learning and wellbeing and aim to ensure that positive and respectful relationships are maintained to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

When schools and families work together for the formation of all children, the school community is strengthened, and the whole of society benefits as a sense of ownership and belonging to community grows for children and young people, and for their families (Bryk et al. 2010).

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St. Mary's School to ensure that families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school.

This Policy takes into account the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

## Scope

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

1. Child Safety Framework
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Principles

At St. Mary's School, the following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Families and carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach.
- All members of the school community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers and other members of the school community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers and other members of the school community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

## Policy

St. Mary's School is committed to ensuring that all members of our school community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at St. Mary's School.

We implement the following strategies and actions to ensure that we are able to meet this commitment.

### Strategies / actions used by school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St. Mary's School recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- utilising the St. Mary's School Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies and practices
- supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their communication and engagement skills and to understand the value and importance of effective communication and engagement
- identifying opportunities for parents and carers to participate in decisions that affect their child's safety and wellbeing

- ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available so that they are easily accessible to families, carers and other members of the school community
- engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- creating opportunities to ensure that members of the school community are adequately informed about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing

### **Strategies / actions used by school staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy**

School staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St. Mary's School also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- creating and maintaining open lines of communication with families, carers and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- liaising with parents and carers in relation to any concerns and/or decisions that affect their child and giving them the opportunity to contribute to any discussions, where appropriate
- ensuring that parents, carers and others in the school community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring they act in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing

## **External references**

### **Related Resources – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools**

[eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

## **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the school's two-year review cycle of its child safety practices.
- Update of the policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand.

<b>Responsible director</b>	Director, Learning and Regional Services
<b>Policy owner</b>	General Manager, Student Wellbeing
<b>Approving body/individual</b>	MACS Board
<b>Approval date</b>	13 April 2022
<b>Risk rating</b>	High
<b>Date of next review</b>	April 2023

<b>POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Related documents</b>	
<b>Superseded documents</b>	
<b>New policy</b>	New