



# St Mary of the Cross Catholic Primary School

## School Policy Document

### Child Safety Policy

#### St Mary of the Cross Catholic Primary School

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#### Ratified by the Board of Management:

Name of Chairperson:

Name of Principal:

Signature of Chairperson:

Signature of Principal:

Date:     /     /

Date:     /     /

#### Vision:

*We, at St Mary of the Cross, are an inclusive*



*and welcoming Catholic Community  
of actively engaged learners.*

*We model Mary MacKillop's servant leadership,  
to nurture compassionate and respectful individuals  
who translate their beliefs into action.*

### **Rationale:**

All Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy that details:

- the principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment; and
- the actions the school proposes to take to:
  - i demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy;
  - ii. support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
  - iii. support or assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

To promote child safety in the school environment we acknowledge the following:

All students have a right to:

- Take part in learning programs that meet their individual needs.
- Feel secure and to be safe in a caring and supportive environment.
- Work and play without interference in an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation.
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness.
- Have learning continue without disruption in a supportive environment.
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity.
- Expect the school rules are fair, consistently implemented and respect the rights of all involved.

All students have a responsibility to:

- Care and value themselves, others, teachers and the school community.
- Be safety conscious in relation to themselves and others.
- Treat others with respect and good manners.
- Keep the guidelines of good behaviour, modelling and supporting school rules.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.
- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others.
- Explore their full potential in their learning.

### **Expectations of Staff**



School staff are expected to adhere to the following standards regarding their behaviour when working with children.

School staff will:

- provide opportunities for all students to learn at their level
- treat their students with courtesy and dignity
- work within the limits of their professional expertise
- maintain objectivity in their relationships with students
- always maintain a professional relationship with the students whether at school or not

### **Child Safety Leader**

The Board of Management will establish a Child Safety Leader position.

The Board of Management will be responsible for developing the duties and responsibilities for this position.

The school will appoint the Child Safety Leader from amongst the staff.

This position will be responsible for leading the development of a culture of child safety.

The Child Safety Leader will be responsible to the Board of Management.

### **Staff Code of Conduct**

All staff will be required to sign the Staff Code of Conduct annually. The Staff Code of Conduct will form part of the Staff Induction program and will be presented to all staff at the commencement of each school year or on commencement of employment.

The school will provide annual training in Child Safety measures.

### **Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse**

The school maintains a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.

### **Definitions**

<b>Child</b>	A child is any person 17 years of age or under in accordance with the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic).
<b>Child FIRST</b>	This is The Family Information Referral Support Team, which is run by a registered community service in the local area. They can receive confidential referrals about a child of concern. This service does not have any statutory powers to protect a child but can refer matters to family services.
<b>Mandatory Reporting</b>	A report made to Child Protection Unit (DHS), by a person mandated under the Act, that is based on a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical injury that results from abuse or neglect or harm caused as a result of sexual abuse.
<b>Mandatory reporter:</b>	Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) registered school teachers or principals and registered nurses are required to make a report to the Child Protection Unit (DHS) if they believe a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.



### **Reasonable belief**

A reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection is more likely formed in circumstances where:

- A child states that he/she has been physically injured or sexually abused (self disclosure)
- A child states that he/she knows someone who has been physically injured or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- A relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the child states that the child has been physically injured or sexually abused
- Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development lead the mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been physically injured or sexually abused
- Signs of physical injury or sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been abused

### **School Advisory Group:**

This committee includes the Principal, Deputy Principal and Student Wellbeing Leader. The purpose of this group is to discuss any concerns and observations in relation to child physical or sexual abuse recorded by a teacher and to offer support to the teacher concerned.

### **Forming a belief on reasonable grounds**

If a teacher or staff member of St Mary of the Cross Catholic Primary School has concerns about a child's safety the teacher or staff member will respond as follows:

- Where the teacher has formed a reasonable belief and the situation requires immediate response, the teacher makes a report to the Child Protection. The teacher may choose to consult with the Principal, however it is not a requirement.

Please note: The teacher is mandated to report even if they tell the Principal and the Principal does not make a report to Child Protection

- Where the teacher has significant concerns and has not yet formed a reasonable belief, and the child is not in any immediate danger, the teacher continues to collate observations and information and documents them. These are maintained in a confidential file. Then:
  - The teacher may take the concerns to the School Advisory Group, where the concerns and observations are discussed, with the intention of the group being to provide support to the teacher concerned OR
  - The teacher may contact Child FIRST agency,
    - Wyndham 1300 783 341
- If the teacher forms a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection because of physical injury and/or sexual abuse, he/she must make a report to the Child Protection Unit (DHS) immediately.

The school will provide ongoing support to the reporting teacher, the student concerned and the student's family.

If two teachers form a belief that a child is in need of protection, they should:  
Report their beliefs to the Principal or Principal's delegate



Report their belief together to the Child Protection Unit (DHS) This will ensure that all grounds for forming the belief have been reported. The non reporter is responsible for ensuring that all information is conveyed accurately.

In the circumstance where a teacher forms a belief that a child is in need of protection, but is directed not to report by a colleague or person of higher authority, but continues to hold the belief, then the teacher is legally obliged to make the report to the Child Protection Unit (DHS).

All reported incidents must be written up and submitted to the Principal.

At all stages of this process, it is essential that those involved in any part of the consultation process maintain confidentiality, regarding the child, the family, the notifier and any alleged perpetrator.

Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures Policy 2016 (Rev 2, February 2016) for further information.

**These procedures do not:**

- prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school;
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
- require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse; or
- prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse.

## **Risk Management**

### **Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse**

If the school identifies risks of child abuse occurring in the school environment the Principal must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls)

**Note:** Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

At least annually, the school will provide appropriate guidance and training to the individual members of the school staff about:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
- child abuse risks in the school environment; and
- the school's current child safety standards.
- Risk management strategies have been developed within the following school policies:

Further Risk Management strategies may be found in the following School Policy documents:



- Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures Policy 2016 (Rev 2)
- Student Welfare Policy 2016 (Rev 2)
- Student Wellbeing Policy 2016 (Rev 1)
- Bullying & Harassment Prevention Policy 2016 (Rev 2)
- Cyber Bullying Policy 2016 (Rev 1)

## **Child Empowerment**

### **Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation**

The Principal, in consultation with appropriate bodies, will develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:

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

## **Accessibility**

The school will promote the Child Safety Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.

The school will publish the Child Safety Policy on the school's web site, and make it available to parents in hard copy.

Copies of the policy will be emailed to parents annually.

A copy of the Child safety Policy will be included in enrolment packs.

## **Policy Review**

The Child Safety Policy will be reviewed as required (change of legal requirement. Ministerial Order etc) or bi-annually.

The Board of Management will be responsible for reviewing the policy.