

Catholic Ladies' College



Reportable Conduct Policy

Stage	Date	Ratified
Initiated	2016	2016
Review 1	2020	2020
Review 2	2021	2021



Catholic Ladies' College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministry in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

At Catholic Ladies' College 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 College has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and keeping them safe from harm.

Introduction

Catholic Ladies' College is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people, and takes active steps to protect them from neglect and abuse. Our College and governing body maintain a comprehensive suite of child protection strategies, embedded in the Child Safe Standards, and acknowledge our responsibility to report any misconduct by an employee, volunteer or contractor to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

As of 1 July 2017, the Victorian Government legislated for the introduction of a Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) to improve how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by employees, volunteers and contractors.

Purpose

The CCYP is focused on employee, volunteer and contractor conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The RCS aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children, but do not have a criminal record. The RCS applies to our governing body, Catholic Ladies' College and other organisations which are required to meet the Child Safe Standards.

The Board Chair must ensure that Catholic Ladies' College maintains systems that:

- prevent reportable conduct by employees of the College within the course of their employment
- ensure reportable allegations are made to the Principal and notified to the MACS Executive Director via the Safeguarding and Standards Team if the reportable allegation concerns the Principal
- ensure reportable allegations that involve employees are notified to the CCYP and responded to in accordance with the requirements of the RCS.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of Catholic Ladies' College and requires them to report allegations of reportable conduct to the Principal who must contact the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team. Allegations that concern the Principal can be referred to another member of the Leadership Team, the MACS Regional General Manager or directly to the MACS Executive Director via the Safeguarding and Standards Team.

Reportable conduct of Catholic Ladies' College staff, volunteers and others

Who is an employee?

For the purposes of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.), employee is defined as a person aged 18 years or over who is either:

- employed by the College whether or not that person is employed in connection with any work or activities of the College that relate to children
- engaged by the College to provide services, including as a volunteer, contractor, office holder or officer, whether or not the person provides services to children.

Key definitions

Child: Any person who is under the age of 18 years.

Mandatory reporting is a term used to describe the legislative requirement imposed on selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to government authorities. Where a mandated reporter forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a student or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, they are to report their concerns to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection.



Reportable allegation means any information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that an employee has committed either:

- reportable conduct, or
- misconduct that may involve reportable conduct,

whether or not the conduct or misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the course of the person's employment.

Reportable conduct means:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- any behavior that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child.

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

- a campus of the College
- online College environments, including email and intranet systems
- other locations provided by the College for a child's use including College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, or College community and other events.

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

- directly engaged or employed by the College 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.

Implementation

The College will ensure the reporting of any reportable allegation made against an employee to the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team. A reportable allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that an employee, volunteer or contractor has committed conduct that may involve reportable conduct. This includes where a reportable allegation is made against the Principal.

Note: A reasonable belief is more than suspicion. There must be some objective basis for the belief. However, it is not the same as having proof and does not require certainty. For example, a person is likely to have a reasonable belief if they:

- *observed the conduct themselves*
- *heard directly from a child that the conduct occurred*
- *received information from another credible source (including another person who witnessed the reportable conduct or misconduct).*

The Principal, a member of the Leadership Team, or the MACS Executive Director does not need to agree with or share the belief that the alleged conduct has occurred. The RCS is an allegations-based scheme. This means that the threshold for notifying the CCYP is low. All allegations must be referred to the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team for advice.

The MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team (or a delegate of the MACS Executive Director) on behalf of the Executive Director in consultation with the Principal or, where there is an allegation against a Principal, member of the Leadership Team or Regional General Manager will then:

- submit a notification to the CCYP within three days of the MACS Executive Director becoming aware of the reportable allegation
- meet the milestones and reporting requirements to the CCYP under the RCS.



Reportable conduct includes:

Sexual Offence	Sexual Misconduct	Physical Violence	Behaviour that causes significant Psychological or Emotional Harm	Significant Neglect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape or sexual assault • Sexual activity with or in the presence of a child • Grooming or encouraging a child to engage in sexual activity • Offences relating to child abuse material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour, physical contact, speech or other communication of a sexual nature • Physical contact without valid reason • Crossing professional boundaries • Voyeurism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, kicking, punching • Pushing, shoving, grabbing, throwing, shaking • Use of an object • Inappropriate restraint, excessive force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to violence or threats of violence • Anti-social behavior • Self-destructive behavior • Persistent hostility or rejection • Humiliation or belittling • Scapegoating 	<p>Deprived from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clothing or food • medical attention or care • shelter • supervision <p>Access to drugs or alcohol</p>

The above examples are not exhaustive and consideration should be given to other conduct which may need to be reported. Any reportable allegation listed above, or not listed above but which may constitute reportable conduct, will need to be immediately reported by the Principal. An allegation against the Principal should be referred to another member of the Leadership Team, the MACS Regional General Manager or directly to the MACS Executive Director via the Safeguarding and Standards Team.

It is important to note that existing mandatory reporting obligations have not changed. The College will report any allegation of abuse to the DFFH Child Protection. If the alleged conduct is potentially criminal in nature, Victoria Police must also be notified as a first priority and any investigation by Victoria Police will take precedence. Where the allegation falls under the mandatory reporting domain, the reporting to CCYP is in addition to reporting to Victoria Police and the DFFH.

Reportable conduct, mandatory reporting and reporting to the VIT

Reportable conduct allegations as listed above are referred to the CCYP. Any alleged conduct that is regarded to be of a criminal nature is to be dealt with as mandatory reporting and referred to Victoria Police and the DFFH as per the Child Protection – Reporting Obligations Policy.

If an employee against whom an allegation of reportable conduct is made is a registered teacher and the misconduct involves a charge, conviction or finding of guilt of a sexual offence, the College must notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) immediately under conduct that is reportable to the VIT.

Responsibilities of the Principal

It is the responsibility of the Principal (or for allegations against a Principal, the relevant leader) to ensure that all reportable allegations are referred to the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team as soon as they become aware of them, and to follow the advice and guidance of the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team (as authorised by the MACS Executive Director) to respond appropriately. This will usually include conducting an investigation or facilitating the conduct of an investigation. However, it is the ultimate responsibility of the Principal to notify any reportable allegation to CCYP.

Reporting to the CCYP

Upon becoming aware of a reportable allegation against an employee, the Principal, member of the Leadership Team or MACS Regional General Manager must contact the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team as soon as practicable in order to ensure that the following milestones and reporting requirements to the CCYP are met:



Within three business days	Within 30 calendar days	Advice on investigation	Outcomes of investigation	Additional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School contact details Name of the employee, volunteer or contractor Their date of birth Initial advice on the nature of the allegation Any police report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of the investigation Details of the school's response Details regarding disciplinary or other action proposed Any written response from the employee, volunteer or contractor regarding the allegation, proposed disciplinary or other action 	<p>As soon as is practicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> name of the investigator their contact details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of the investigation findings Details regarding disciplinary or other action proposed Reasons for taking or not taking action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promptly providing any further information to the CCYP as requested

Investigating reportable allegations

Catholic Ladies' College will ensure procedural fairness throughout the entire investigation process.

The Principal will ensure that for current employees the process set out in clause 13 of the Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018 (VCEMEA 2018) is followed. Further, the Principal will also ensure that all other relevant school-based policies and procedures (including Codes of Conduct, processes for managing and investigating complaints, misconduct, discipline, grievances, dispute resolution, and employee welfare and support), as well as any CCYP and other regulatory guidance, are considered to guide the investigation.

For an allegation against a current employee, this means that the Principal will follow the clause 13 process set out in the VCEMEA 2018 and follow the advice and guidance of the MACS Safeguarding and Standards and Employee Relations Teams.

In all cases, before any findings are made or disciplinary action is taken, the subject of an allegation will be:

- notified of any adverse information that is credible, relevant and significant
- given a reasonable opportunity to respond to that information.

The MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team (acting on the MACS Executive Director's behalf) in consultation with the Principal or MACS Regional General Manager (for allegations against a Principal) will determine when the subject of the reportable allegation should be first told about an allegation, in order to ensure that any police investigation is not prejudiced; child safety risks are appropriately assessed and mitigated; and the investigation is not compromised, but remains procedurally fair.

Initial investigation

Note: Upon receipt of a reportable allegation, the Principal or other relevant leader (for allegations against a Principal) will immediately contact the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team for advice.

The Principal or other relevant leader is then guided by the MACS Safeguarding and Standards Team (acting under the authority of the MACS Executive Director) to ensure an appropriate investigation is conducted into the reportable allegation/s by reference to the requirements of the RCS, together with any relevant guidance published by MACS and the CCYP.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the MACS Executive Director will make a decision on the reportable conduct findings recommended in the Investigation Report.

If the alleged conduct is potentially criminal in nature, Victoria Police must also be notified as a first priority and any investigation by Victoria Police will take precedence.



Recordkeeping and the Privacy Act

The College maintains records of reportable allegations, written reports and reportable conduct investigation findings indefinitely. The College must not publish information that would enable the identification of:

- a person who notified the CCYP
- a child in relation to whom a reportable allegation was made or a finding of reportable conduct was made.

The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) provides more information on the meaning of publish, which includes making the information publicly available in writing or email.

References

Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 (Vic.)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the College's four-year review cycle, or upon amendment to legislation.
- Update of the policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand.