



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.

Central to the mission of Catholic Ladies' College is an explicit commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment where the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual and physical wellbeing of our students is a priority.

All students enrolled at Catholic Ladies' College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our 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.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on promoting child safety and wellbeing in the school environment and safeguarding children and young people at Catholic Ladies' College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and occupational codes.

All Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at Catholic Ladies' College are expected to actively contribute to a school culture by respecting the dignity of its members, affirming the gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. All Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Acceptable behaviours

All Board Directors, the Principal and all our other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at Catholic Ladies' College are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school's child safety and wellbeing policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety, at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe educational and pastoral environment)
- taking into account the needs of all children and students
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children – particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance for discrimination and racism)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal, or other Child Safety Officers (Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing and/or College Counsellor (or a member of the College Executive team)
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the reportable conduct scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the schools reportable conduct policy
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal, or other Child Safety Officers (Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing and/or College Counsellor (or a member of the College Executive team)
- ensuring as quickly as possible that the child is safe if an allegation of child abuse is made
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or specific allegations or concerns about a registered teacher



- ensuring compliance with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.
- taking extra care (or additional steps) to protect children from abuse during high risk activities and times, such as overnight camps, counselling, first aid and bus travel
- respecting the privacy of children and their families and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know

Unacceptable behaviours

All Board Directors, the Principal and all our other staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at Catholic Ladies' College must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves (for example, toileting or changing clothes)
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- use physical means or verbal abuse to discipline or control a student
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- have contact with a child or their family outside school without the Principal's or child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons, private counselling or sport coaching); accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging) or their family unless necessary (for example, providing families with eNewsletters or assisting students with their schoolwork)
- use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents, guardians or carers
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children, unless the Principal has authorised the service of alcohol at College events (for example, Valedictory Dinner)

Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct published by the VIT. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.



Psychologists and school counsellors

In their dealings with students, psychologists and school counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- the Australian Counselling Association
- Speech Pathology Australia.

Sports and recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be 'good sports'
- explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity
- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

Breaches of this code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, Catholic Ladies' College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018 (VCEMEA 2018)* for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact the College Board Chair.

Where any other member of the school community, including volunteers and contractors, is suspected of breaching this code, the school is to take appropriate action, including (if applicable) in accordance with the *PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* policy.

In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body, such as the VIT.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct and will abide by it.

Signed: _____

Date:

Policy owner	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
Approving body/individual	Catholic Ladies' College Board
Approval date	1 July 2022 (previous CS Code of Conduct in accordance with MO 870 were approved between 2016 and 30.6.22)
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	May 2023