

# Catholic Ladies' College



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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Review 2		
Review 3		

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## 1. Introduction

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 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 ([The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), n. 9).

## 2. Purpose of the Policy and Statement of Commitment

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Catholic Ladies' College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our College. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures, actions and strategies developed ensure that a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the school, 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 College. The College's Child Safe Policy has been approved and endorsed by the College Board and is regularly reviewed by the Board.

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#). The eleven minimum Standards are:

- Standard 1: Culturally safe environments
- Standard 2: Leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 3: Child and student empowerment
- Standard 4: Family engagement
- Standard 5: Diversity and equity
- Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers
- Standard 7: Complaints processes
- Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness
- Standard 9: Child safety in physical and online environments
- Standard 10: Review of child safety practices
- Standards 11: Implementation of child safety practices

This policy applies to all school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with the following related school policies and procedures:

1. PROTECT: Identifying and responding to Abuse – reporting obligations
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Reportable Conduct Policy

## 3. 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](#)).

**The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at Catholic Ladies' College:**

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.



- Our College 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 wellbeing 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/carers.
- All adults in our College, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors and College Board directors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing, to identify and mitigate risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment 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.
- All members of the College community (including students and their families) are kept informed of child safety and wellbeing matters (where appropriate) and are involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, College Board directors, parents/legal guardians and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by the College Leadership team.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally (including under legislated information sharing schemes being Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVIS)) or pastorally.
- Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.

#### 4. Definitions used in this Policy

**Child** means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse** includes:

- (a) any act committed against a child involving:
  - (i) a sexual offence
  - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of:
  - (i) physical violence
  - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm
- (c) serious neglect of a child.

**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, disclosures or allegations of child abuse. (Ministerial Order No. 1359)

**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](#)

**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](#)

**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](#)



**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](#)

**Grooming** is when a person 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](#)

**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, registered teachers, school counsellors, religious clergy, 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](#)

**Reasonable Belief – mandatory reporting:** 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](#)

**Reasonable belief – reportable conduct scheme:** When a person has a reasonable belief that a worker/volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct. A reasonable belief is more than suspicion and there must be some objective basis for the belief. It does not necessitate proof or require certainty.

NOTE: the difference between the reasonable belief definitions under mandatory reporting and the reportable conduct scheme is the category of persons who are required to, or can, form the reasonable belief which forms the basis for a report.

**Reportable conduct:** Five types of reportable conduct are listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)* (as amended by the *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017*). These include:

1. sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of a child)
2. sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of a child)
3. physical violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm
5. significant neglect.

**School environment** means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours,:

- (a) a campus of the school
- (b) online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by Catholic Ladies' College for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- (c) other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use (including, but not limited to, locations used for school camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

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

- (a) directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- (b) a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work for Catholic Ladies' College
- (c) a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with MACS.

**Volunteer** means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for Catholic Ladies' College in the school environment.



## 5. Policy Commitments

All students enrolled at Catholic Ladies' College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The safety and 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, children with a disability, children who are unable to live at home, international students and LGBTIQ+ students.

### **Our commitment to our students**

- (a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled at Catholic Ladies' College.
- (b) We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- (c) We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them ensuring that they understand their rights (including to safety, information and participation), and by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- (d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- (e) We commit to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people enrolled in our College are met, including those who are most vulnerable.
- (f) We commit to recognising the importance of friendships and to encouraging support from peers to help children and students feel safe and less isolated.
- (g) We commit to developing a culture that facilitates and provides opportunities for children and student participation, and that strengthens the confidence and engagement of children and students by being responsive to their input.
- (h) We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- (i) We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

### **Our commitment to parents/ guardians and carers**

- (a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents/guardians and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their daughter(s).
- (b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents/guardians and carers about our child-safety and wellbeing practice, policies and procedures.
- (c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents/guardians and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children and young people.
- (d) We commit to open engagement and communication with parents, guardians and carers about our child safe approach and our operations and governance related to child safety and wellbeing.
- (e) We commit to ensuring that relevant information relating to child safety and wellbeing is accessible to parents, guardians and carers.
- (f) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- (g) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

### **Our commitment to our College staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors, clergy, and College Board directors)**

- (a) We commit to providing all Catholic Ladies' College staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles and to ensure that staff are attuned to signs of harm and are able to facilitate child friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise their concerns. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- (b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- (c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by Catholic Ladies' College staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors and College Board directors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- (d) We commit to providing opportunities for Catholic Ladies' College employees, volunteers, contractors, clergy, and College Board directors to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.



## 6. Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at Catholic Ladies' College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure a child safe culture in which 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).

The College has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

- Stephanie Evans, Principal
- Debbie Brock, Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
- Brad McKay, Counsellor
- Olivia Smith, Psychologist
- Joe Cunningham, Learning Diversity Leader
- Child Safeguarding Team

### 6.1 Guide to Responsibilities of School Leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at Catholic Ladies' College 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 and wellbeing. 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 people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff and volunteers
- ensuring that College personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to prevent, identify and address child safety and wellbeing matters
- ensuring that the school has in place appropriate risk management strategies and practices that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to children 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. 1359
- 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](#)
- ensuring the school understands and reports all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in accordance with the College's Reportable Conduct Policy
- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the College's prescribed role as an ISE.
- ensuring that the school monitors and reviews the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, on an annual basis.

### 6.2 Guide to Responsibilities of College Staff

Responsibilities of College staff (school employees, contractors and clergy,) and volunteers 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 policies, procedures and 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, including ways to prevent, identify and mitigate risks relating to child safety and wellbeing
- 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 College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- where risks of child abuse are identified, ensuring that action is taken to mitigate against those risks and that risks and actions are appropriately recorded.



### 6.3 Organisational Arrangements

The Principal has the overall leadership role in monitoring and responding to the policy, procedures and practices for child safety and wellbeing at Catholic Ladies' College in accordance with this policy. We have appointed a Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead/Officer and the role description is available in the staff handbook:

- The Child Safeguarding Team assists the Principal.
- The Child Safeguarding Team works in preventing, identifying and mitigating risks in child safety and wellbeing.
- The Child Safeguarding Team also supports the Principal to monitor implementation of school policies, procedures and practices, to monitor and review the risks associated with child safety and wellbeing (including identifying professional learning).

Catholic Ladies' College website and newsletter will provide information to keep parents and carers informed of child safety and wellbeing commitments, procedures and arrangements.

### 6.4 Expectations of our school staff and Volunteers re Child Safety Code of Conduct

At Catholic Ladies' College, we expect school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to proactively ensure the safety and wellbeing of students at all times, to identify concerns about child safety and wellbeing and to take appropriate action if there are concerns, about the safety and wellbeing of any student 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 and volunteers through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

### 6.5 Student Safety and Participation

At Catholic Ladies' College, 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 their concerns. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

The curriculum design integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe, as well as their understanding of their rights to safety, information and participation. Teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge and support student agency and voice are implemented. We ensure that students are offered access to a sexual abuse prevention program and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

We have developed appropriate education about:

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

We have also developed curriculum planning documents that detail the strategies and actions the school takes to implement its obligations to ensure that:

- children and students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation
- the importance of friendship is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated
- staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- we have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students
- we provide opportunities for children and students to participate and is responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant information in an age-appropriate way.





## 7. Reporting and Responding

Our College creates records relevant to any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and maintains and disposes of those records in accordance with security and privacy requirements and [Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards](#) (including minimum retention periods). Our College 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.), the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

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

Our College's [PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations](#), updated in January 2022, 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 under the reportable conduct scheme as well as mandatory reporting
- 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 child abuse and grooming under criminal law
- understand and comply with information sharing and record keeping obligations
- comply with reporting obligations under the reportable conduct scheme including obligations to report and investigate allegations of reportable conduct.

Our College has also established additional internal procedures and processes to help ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent, identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our College is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, it is able to share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the CISS or FVISS.

At Catholic Ladies' College, if any member of our school community has concerns for a child's safety or wellbeing they need to discuss, they can notify the school Principal, the Deputy Principal (the designated Child Safety Lead/Officer) or a Child Safety Officer.

Child Safety Officers at the College are:

- Stephanie Evans, Principal
- Debbie Brock, Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
- Brad McKay, Counsellor
- Olivia Smith, Psychologist
- Joe Cunningham, Learning Diversity Leader

If the Principal or Child Safety Officer is not available, then it should be discussed with a member of the school leadership team. Alternatively, any member of the school community may report directly to the responsible authority. The staff member, supported by the Principal or designated Child Safety Officer will follow the step-by-step guide to making a report as outlined in the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

## 8. Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

Catholic Ladies' College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing 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 College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Each job description for staff involved in child-connected work has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing for those in that role and the occupant's essential qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, ensure that we gather, verify and record the following information about any person we propose to engage:

- 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 and any essential or relevant 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 will also ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to the induction of new school staff and College Board into the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and wellbeing and child-connected work.

We have procedures and processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff and volunteers 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.

Catholic Ladies' College implements the following CECV guidelines:

- Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools
- Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools
- Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools
- NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools.

## 9. Child Safety and Wellbeing – Education and Training for School Staff

Catholic Ladies' College provides employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety and wellbeing 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.

At least annually, our professional learning and training addresses:

- staff's individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
- preventing, identifying and mitigating child abuse risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- the reportable conduct scheme
- our school's current child safety standards (including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and any other policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing, including in relation to managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse)
- guidance on recognizing indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations, including under the [Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards](#).

## 10. Diversity and equity – strategies and actions

At Catholic Ladies' College, we are committed to ensuring that equity is upheld, and that diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. We aim to ensure that:

- all school staff and volunteers understand the diverse circumstances of children and students
- our school provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students
- children, students, staff, volunteers and the College community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- the College pays particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students
- the College pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- support students with disability and/or additional learning needs and their families and act to promote their participation
- support students and families of diverse sexuality and/or gender identity and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensure that all Staff, relevant Volunteers and Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring that our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

### 11. Family engagement – strategies and actions

Catholic Ladies' College ensures 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. We aim to ensure that:

- families participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- we engage and openly communicate with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach
- all members of the school community have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing
- families, carers and other members of the school community have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices
- families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

### 12. Risk Management

At Catholic Ladies' College 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 annually review our risks and risk management strategies for child safety and wellbeing, evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of our risk controls, and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

It is the responsibility of the College Executive Team and College Board directors to annually review our Child Protection Program to ensure that it is working in practice and that the College is meeting its legal and regulatory obligations relating to child protection. We undertake this practice through tasks linked to risks in CompliSpace Assurance software.

### 13. Relevant Legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.)*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)*
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)* – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:
  - a) **Failure to disclose offence:** 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.
  - b) **Failure to protect offence:** 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.

- i) **Grooming offence:** 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.

## 14. Related Policies

### 14.1 Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) guidelines

- [CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools](#)
- [CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines](#)
- Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne – [Welcoming Each Other: Guidelines for Interfaith Education in the Schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne](#)
- Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM) – [Horizons of Hope – Vision, Context, Strategy, Practice](#)

### 14.2 School Policies

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
- Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at or involving the College or its Staff, Volunteers or Contractors
- Student Duty of Care Policies
- Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policies
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Recruitment, Selection and Induction Procedures

## 15. Breach of Policy

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, Catholic Ladies' College may start the process under clause 13 of the Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2018 (VCEMEA) for managing employment 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 Chair of the College Board. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

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 policies.

## 16. Review of this Child Safe Policy

At Catholic Ladies' College 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.

Policy owner	Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing
Approving body/individual	Catholic Ladies' College Board
Approval date	1 July 2022
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	May 2023