

Catholic Ladies' College



Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations

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Under the Stewardship of
Mary Aikenhead Ministries



LOVE HOPE COMPASSION JUSTICE



Catholic Ladies' College Ltd

(ACN 058 164 891) (ABN 44 058 164 891)

CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

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

In responding to this call Catholic Ladies' College is a Christ-centred community established to educate, in partnership with parents, women of faith, integrity, individuality and compassion, confident of their own worth as women and wholly involved in the transformation of society.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- describe how adults at the College identify and respond to child safety concerns and child abuse
- ensure our staff and College community report concerns about child abuse to relevant staff and authorities.

Scope/Intended Audience

This policy applies to any concern of child abuse or reportable conduct:

- by any adult engaged by the College or College Board (including e.g. College staff, volunteers, contractors and service providers)
- between students
- in the family
- in the community.

Child abuse and reportable conduct can occur in any physical or online environment and include grooming.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming
- physical violence against a child
- serious emotional or psychological harm against a child
- serious neglect of a child.

There are many types of child abuse. For further information, refer [PROTECT Types of Child Abuse](#) and [Child Safety Definitions](#)

Reportable Conduct includes:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child,
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child, or
- significant neglect of a child.

by any person engaged by the College including staff, volunteers, contractors and service providers. For further information see the *CLC Reportable and Notifiable Conduct Policy*.



Policy Statements

1. Every individual at the College has an important role to:
 - prevent child abuse (including grooming) in our College or during College activities
 - identify and respond to concerns of child abuse:
 - by an adult engaged by the College
 - between students
 - in the family
 - in the community.
2. The College has several other policies that describe actions we take to ensure students are safe and feel safe to raise a complaint. These include:
 - *CLC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
 - *CLC Child Safety Code of Conduct*
 - *CLC Complaints Handling Policy*
 - *CLC Mandatory Reporting Policy*

These policies are available on the [College Website](#)

3. Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, or allegation of child abuse

- 3.1 If a staff member becomes aware that a student is, or may be, experiencing, or is at risk of, child abuse (including grooming) they **MUST act** by reporting to the child safety contacts listed in *Appendix 1*.
- 3.2 All concerns must be reported even if the person raising the concern does not know if it is true.
 - Where the concern is about the child safety contact, the staff member must notify the Principal
 - Where the concern is about the Principal, the staff member must notify the Board Chair boardchair@clc.vic.edu.au
- 3.3 The College must respond to the report by following the relevant 4 critical actions depending on the source of the abuse:
 - [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse by an adult engaged by the school](#)
 - [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to student-to-student abuse](#)
 - [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse in the family](#)
 - [4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse in the community.](#)

Detailed guidance on the **4 Critical Actions** is set out on the [PROTECT website](#). This includes guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse made by a student or young person in a trauma-informed way and provide appropriate support, including suggested language to use.

4. Child safety contacts

- 4.1 The College has identified child safety contacts. These staff are responsible for managing child safety incidents. They are listed in *Appendix 1*.

Anyone can contact these staff to discuss a child safety concern. This includes parents/carers, staff, volunteers, students or anyone else who has concerns about abuse (including grooming).

These staff will:

- ensure that child safety concerns are taken seriously
- promptly and thoroughly manage the school's response
- arrange support for any student who is impacted by abuse
- communicate with any student who raises, or is affected by, a complaint or concern
- monitor overall compliance of the school with PROTECT and the relevant 4 Critical Actions.

5. Meeting our legal obligations

All College staff must take reasonable steps to minimise risks of harm to students in their care that is reasonably foreseeable. <https://www.vic.gov.au/legal-obligations-child-safety-frameworks>



Following the 4 Critical Actions ensures that our College takes all the necessary steps where there is a concern about abuse (or grooming). If any staff member is concerned that these processes have not been followed they must:

- raise their concerns with a Child Safety Officer or the Principal
- escalate to the Board Chair if they remain unsatisfied
- report concerns to the appropriate authorities (e.g. Victoria Police or Child Protection) in line with their [PROTECT legal obligations and child safety frameworks](#).

Further information on relevant legal obligations is provided in *Appendix 2*.

6. Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community, including:

- published on the College website
- included in staff induction processes and annual staff training
- communicated to the school community through school newsletters or CLC Connect
- included in volunteer induction processes and training for relevant volunteers
- included in contractor induction
- discussed in staff briefings or meetings
- included in staff handbook
- made available in hard copy available from school administration upon request.

7. Further information and Related Documents

The following College policies and guidance are relevant to this policy:

- [PROTECT policy and guidance](#)
- CLC Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- CLC Child Safety Code of Conduct
- CLC Reportable and Notifiable Conduct Policy
- CLC Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations Policy
- CLC Student Duty of Care
- *Ministerial Order 1359*

Review Schedule

Stage	Date	Ratified	Ratified by
Initiated	May 2026	June 2026	Board
Review 1			
Review 2			



Appendix 1: Child Safety Officers

CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS

Catholic Ladies' College has appointed the people listed below as the College's Child Safety Officers. Each Child Safety Officer is available to answer any questions that you may have with respect to our Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program.

The College's Child Safety Officers are your first point of contact for reporting child protection issues within the College community.

Name	Position
Stephanie Evans	Principal
Debbie Brock	Deputy Principal
Melanie Collins	Assistant Principal Students
Danielle Oaten	Learning Diversity Leader
Brad McKay	Counsellor
Rhiannon Tuffin	Social Worker/Year 7–10 Student Hub Officer



Appendix 2: Legal Obligations Relating to Reporting Child Abuse

There are various legal obligations to report child abuse to relevant authorities, which are listed below. This policy ensures compliance with legal obligations and child safety frameworks and the College's duty of care obligations. These include:

- **Mandatory reporting** to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, which applies where a mandatory reporter forms a reasonable belief a child has suffered, or is likely, to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and their parents/carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, them from that harm
- **Referring family violence or** child wellbeing concerns to The Orange Door, which can provide support and information for children, young people and families, including support relating to family violence, parenting and wellbeing
- **Reportable conduct**, which requires certain allegations against adults working in organisations that work with children (including schools) to be reported to the Social Services Regulator and investigated under the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- **Failure to disclose offence**, which requires all adults to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria
- **Failure to protect offence**, which requires school staff in a position of authority who become aware that an adult associated with their school poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, to take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

Further information about these legal obligations is available from:

- [PROTECT Legal Obligations and Child Safety Frameworks](#).