



Introduction

Catholic Ladies' College (the College, CLC) 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 the 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 the College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children and young people 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 and young people are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

Staff are expected to actively contribute to a culture that respects the dignity of its members and is affirming of 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 and young people.

Purpose

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

This Code of Conduct 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 1359: Implementing Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and Boarding Premises](#).

Scope

All Board Directors, the Principal, employees, contractors and volunteers (collectively referred to as 'Staff'), must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Child Safety Commitment Statement

The College has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and is deeply committed to upholding and embedding the highest standards of child safety. We are guided by our Catholic faith and the unique and unrepeatable dignity of every person in our care. We are dedicated to creating an inclusive and protective environment where every child and young person can feel and be safe. We are responsible for inspiring and enabling every child to flourish and enrich the world. Child safety is a shared responsibility between the College and the wider community.

Acceptable behaviours

All Staff at the College are required to declare and sign this Child Safety Code of Conduct upon appointment or engagement and annually thereafter.

They are responsible for supporting the safety of all children and young people by:

- adhering to the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and upholding the College's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect all children and young people from abuse
- treating everyone in the College 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, young people and students
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of all children and young people – particularly if they are telling you that they or another child or young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child or young person
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having no tolerance for discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- paying 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 lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child or young person
- reporting any concerns or allegations of child abuse to the Principal, or other Child Safety Officer (Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing, Assistant Principal - Students 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 Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the *CLC Reportable Conduct Policy*
- ensuring as quickly as possible that the child or young person 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.

Unacceptable behaviours

All 'Staff' at the College must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any special relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children or young people)
- exhibit behaviours with children and young people which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children and young people at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or young people or do things of a personal nature that a child or young person 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 or young people (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children or young people
- use physical means or verbal abuse to discipline or control a student
- discriminate against any child or young person, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or young person or their family outside school without the Principal's or



Child Safety Officer's knowledge and/or consent or the College 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 or young person (including by social media, email, instant messaging) or their family unless necessary and declared to the College (for example, providing families with e-Newsletters or assisting students with their schoolwork)
- use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account or telephone
- exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses
- where Staff or those providing religious ministry have existing relationships outside of school with students and / or families this should be made known to the Principal on commencement.
- photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the parents, guardians or carers
- consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs when responsible for the supervision and care of students or work with children or young people
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at College events in the presence of students, with limited exceptions that must be approved by the Principal.

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 College 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.

However, Psychologists and Counsellors employed directly by the College must comply with the policies of the College, including the College Privacy Policy.

Sports and recreation

Staff involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children and young people 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 any 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.

Breaches of this code

Where College employees are suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the College may start the process under Clause 13 of the *Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2022 (CEMEA)* for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

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

Where any other member of the College community, including volunteers and contractors, is suspected of breaching this Code, the College is to take appropriate action, including (if applicable) in accordance with the CLC Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy [available here](#) and the Victorian [PROTECT Guidance](#) available at <https://www.vic.gov.au/protect-schools>

In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body, such as the Social Services Regulator (SSR) or VIT.

Related policies and documents

- CLC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- CLC PROTECT: Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy
- CLC Reportable Conduct Policy
- CLC Mandatory Reporting Policy

Legislation and standards

- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises
- Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2022 (CEMEA)
- PROTECT: Supporting guidance to help schools to identify and respond to child abuse

Policy owner	Deputy Principal
Approving body/individual	Catholic Ladies' College Board
Approval date	11 August 2026
Previous Approval	12 August 2025
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	August 2027

Declaration

I, _____,

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

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____