



St Catherine's Moorabbin



St Paul's Bentleigh



St Peter's Bentleigh East

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

### Safeguarding Children and Young People

*Central to the mission of the Federated Schools of St Catherine's Moorabbin, St Paul's Bentleigh and St Peter's Bentleigh East is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.*

#### **Purpose**

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at *the Federated Schools St Catherine's Moorabbin, St Paul's Bentleigh and St Peter's Bentleigh East* against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, school policies/procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and personnel.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board members at *the Federated Schools of St Catherine's Moorabbin, St Paul's Bentleigh and St Peter's Bentleigh East* are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms 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.

#### **Acceptable behaviours**

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school's child-safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children 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)
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have 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 and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)

- 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 school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role).
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- reporting any child safety concerns to the School Principal or Co-Ordinating Principal
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.

### Unacceptable behaviours

Staff and volunteers 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, such as 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 contrary to the beliefs of the organisation
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching); accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate. Staff members must inform the Principal in writing of such contact; this will be marked confidential and filed within the Staff member's Personal Record File. These will remain on file until the staff members leave the school or until the children turn 18. ***(This dot point is not applicable to parents of children currently enrolled within the school who are volunteering.)***
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child attending the school
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or drugs in the presence of children at school or at school events

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Child Safety Officer within each school and /or (Principal or member of the leadership team).

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

## Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafte](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafte).

**Child abuse** includes—

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

**Child-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**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 or allegations of child abuse.

**School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

**School staff** means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
  - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
  - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - directly engaged or employed by a school 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<sup>1</sup>.
- **school governing authority** means:
  - the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or

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<sup>1</sup> *minister of religion* has the same meaning as in the *Working with Children Act 2005*.

- the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
- the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

*Explanatory note: There is a wide variety of school governance arrangements. Depending on the way a school is constituted and operated, the governing body for a school may be the school board, the school council, or some other person or entity. The school governing authorities may share or assign responsibility for discharging the requirements imposed by this Order, in accordance with the school's internal governance arrangements.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_