

Code of Conduct

St Joseph's College Mildura

January 2022



Purpose

St Joseph's College Mildura is committed to:

- zero tolerance of child abuse;
- listening to and empowering children and young people; and
- keeping children and young people safe.

St Joseph's College has particular responsibilities for safeguarding of children and young people as required by the *Ministerial Order No. 1359*: <https://www.safeguardingservices.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Ministerial-Order-1359.pdf>

(MO 1359).

This places accountability for managing the risk of child abuse with the college. Consistent with MO 870, MEL requires schools to have appropriate arrangements to regulate the conduct and decisions of school staff for the benefit of its students.

These arrangements include implementing and complying with the MEL Child Safe Policies and having clear and comprehensive procedures and reporting mechanisms. The objective is for MEL and the wider school community to be confident in the school's capacity to make and implement appropriate decisions, with child safety front of mind.

As partners with parents/carers, in Catholic education and open to God's presence, MEL Schools pursue fullness of life for all students and the school communities. The schools ensure the care, wellbeing, and protection of its students in keeping with the Catholic tradition, which celebrates the sanctity and unique dignity of each person.

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people against sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

All staff, volunteers, external providers and contractors, clergy and school advisory council members of the college 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, external providers, contractors, visitors, clergy, and school council 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
- 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 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 of 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 directly to the Deputy Principal Students as the child safety officer.
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership or directly to the Deputy Principal Students as the child safety officer.
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- 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 certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher

In line with our Mercy Code of Conduct, VIT and AITSL Standards and Child Safe Policies including Ministerial order no. 1359 there are comprehensive guidelines in our college that must be followed. These include:

- As part of our Child Safe Guidelines, establishing professional boundaries with students. The staff/teacher-student relationship is not equal. Staff are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students, which means that there is always an inherent power imbalance. Please ensure that students are not on first name basis with you. Whilst you may perceive this action as harmless or even friendly the boundaries of the relationship may be blurred and interpreted in different ways. Students are required to address you with the appropriate salutation i.e.: Ms/Miss/Mrs/Dr/Mr/Father not solely by your first name, nickname or surname.

- Appropriate professional dress.
- Appropriate and respectful speech and interactions.
- Punctuality.
- Preparation.
- Making prayer a part of their day.
- Reading, understanding and correctly following college policies and procedures.
- Reading and keeping up to date with Kaleidoscope, skoolbag and newsletters, particularly Knowledge Bank.

Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, external providers and contractors, clergy and school council members 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 which 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
- 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 or the Deputy Principal Students' knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching), or without a valid context. 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 etc) or their family (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their schoolwork) without a valid context (e.g. a familial relationship exists)
- without a valid context use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- without a valid context exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents/carers
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children
- consume alcohol at school or at school events in the presence of children, other than where the Principal has given explicit approval to drink moderately (example Yr 12 Graduation).

Statement of Commitment

I, _____ as an employee of St Joseph's College, acknowledge and declare that I will abide by the Safeguarding Children and Young People: Code of Conduct which I have read and understood.

Name: (printed)

Signature:

Date: