



**ST MARY'S SCHOOL MANSFIELD  
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE  
CODE OF CONDUCT**

**St. Mary's Primary School Mansfield**  
**Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct**

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**ST. MARY'S VISION STATEMENT.....**

**To Live,  
To Love,  
To Grow in Christ.**

**At St. Mary's, we believe.....**

- That staff and children continually work and grow together to deepen their relationship with God and one another.
- We try to provide for one another, an atmosphere where we feel, we belong, are cared for, respected for our giftedness, and are challenged to work to our fullest potential.
- That parents are the first educators of their children, and we recognise our responsibility for the development of the child as a whole person.
- We must empower children to reach their full potential spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and creatively.
- There is a need for open communication between parents and
  - teachers in regard to programs and the welfare of the children.

As a result of the above, we hope that the children will become well-adjusted, secure and happy members of the Catholic Church and society.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel. (CECV 2016)

### **Rationale:**

St Mary's School has the important responsibility for keeping children safe. At St Mary's we already take steps to protect children from abuse. Standard three (clause 9 of the Ministerial Order) requires that the school governing authority develop, endorse and make publicly available a code for all school staff.

The standard has four specific requirements. They are that the code of conduct:

1. Has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment.
2. Sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children.
3. Takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff such as registered teachers), and the needs of all children.
4. Is consistent with the school's safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

Please note that the Ministerial Order defines some terms broadly. Some examples and list of definitions can be found at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe).

### **Purpose:**

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

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board/school council members at St Mary's School 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.

### **Principles for adult's behaviour in undertaking child-connected work:**

Some simple principles should guide an adult's behaviour when undertaking child-connected work such as:

- The adult/child relationship should be professional at all times.
- An adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child.
- An adult should not be alone with a child unless there is line of sight to other adults.
- An adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school.

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### **Acceptable behaviours:**

All staff, volunteers, Advisory Board members, Parents and Friends members, parents, clergy, contractors 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 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*.
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role).
- 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 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.

### **Unacceptable behaviours:**

All staff, volunteers, Advisory Board members, Parents and Friends members, parents, clergy, contractors 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 child safety officer's (if the school has appointed someone to this role) 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.
- 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 school work).
- Use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account.
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses.
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians.
- Work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, confirm I have been provided with, read and will abide with the above St Mary's Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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