Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedures HOLY NAME





1. Introduction

Holy Name is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

2. Purpose

These procedures demonstrate the strong commitment to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. They provide an outline of the procedures, actions and strategies that will be implemented to ensure that a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the school, to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the school.

These procedures take 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 No.1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards — Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises.

3. Scope

These procedures apply to all school employees, volunteers, those in religious ministry and contractors (**Staff**) whether they work in direct contact with students. They also apply to school advisory council (SAC) members where indicated.

The procedures apply to all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers.

The procedures should be read together with other MACS child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes including:

- Code of Conduct for MACS Staff
- MACS Child Safety Commitment Statement
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse Reporting Obligations Policy and associated procedures
- Reportable Conduct Policy

4. Responsibilities of School Leaders

MACS, the school's governing authority, the Principal, and school leaders at our school recognise their responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety and wellbeing. Responsibilities include:

creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe

- ensuring that Aboriginal children's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- upholding high principles and standards for all Staff
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- creating an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and all are encouraged to report an allegation of abuse to relevant authorities.
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening, induction and ongoing Staff professional learning Staff
- ensuring that Staff have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to, and ability to prevent, identify and address child safety and wellbeing matters
- ensuring that appropriate risk management strategies and practices are in place that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policies and procedures in relation to children and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the minimum requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359 are met
- ensuring specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three criminal offences introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and in line with PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse Reporting Obligations Policy is taken
- ensuring all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme are reported in accordance with the school's Reportable Conduct Policy
- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the school's prescribed role as an Information Sharing Entity (ISE)
- ensuring that the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls are monitored and reviewed, on an annual basis and after any significant child safety incident at the school.
- promoting open discussion of child safety issues within the school community at leadership meetings/staff meeting/SAC meetings

5. Responsibilities of School Staff

Responsibilities of School staff include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal school policies and procedures in the course of their work, if they form a Reasonable Belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- when one to one interactions occur between an adult and a child they are conducted in either an open space or line of sight
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- implementing inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students
- undertaking regular training and education to understand their individual responsibilities and obligations in relation to child safety, and the wellbeing of children and young people, including ways to prevent, identify and mitigate risks relating to child safety and wellbeing
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- where risks of child abuse are identified, ensuring that action is taken to mitigate those risks, and that risks and actions are appropriately recorded.

- specific strategies used to encourage, protect and support persons who bring forward child safety concerns addressed in child friendly complaints procedure, child friendly student code of conduct and addressed at assemblies. Confidentiality is ensure when a child brings up a complaint or issue.
- strategies in your school that engage staff with student voice
 - Processes for acting once risk is identified
 - Identify what has happened
 - Inform all staff dependent on nature of incident
 - Liaise with parents
 - Principal/Deputy Principal record all incidences in the incident register
 - Identify and implement appropriate consequences for the child that meets the situation
- Embedding child safe practices, respectful relationships in all lesson content where possible and appropriate

6. Organisational arrangements

The Principal has the overall leadership role in monitoring and responding to the policy, procedures and practices for child safety and wellbeing in our school in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team or nominated staff assist the Principal.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team works in preventing, identifying and mitigating risks in child safety and wellbeing.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team also supports the principal to monitor implementation of school policies, procedures and practices, to monitor and review the risks associated with child safety and wellbeing (including by and to identify professional learning.

Our school's website and newsletter will provide information to keep parents and carers informed of child safety and wellbeing commitments, procedures and arrangements.

7. Expectation of our school staff and volunteers Code of Conduct for MACS Staff and Child Safety Conduct of Conduct

At our school, we expect School Staff to proactively ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, to identify concerns about child safety and wellbeing and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any child at the school.

The Code of Conduct for MACS Staff sets out the clear expectations for appropriate behaviour of all School staff and Volunteers and the Child Safety Code of Conduct recognises the critical role that School staff play in protecting the students in our care, against abuse and/or neglect.

All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the codes of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements. At the beginning of each year these policies are addressed with all staff. All new staff undergo induction of policies and procedures.

8. Student safety and participation and empowerment

At Holy Name, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them including expressing their identity. This may include expressions of culture, sexuality and gender.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report their concerns. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

The curriculum design integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe, as well as their understanding of their rights to safety, information and participation. Teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge, and support student agency and

voice are implemented. We ensure that students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

We have developed appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending our school
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

We have also developed curriculum planning documents that detail the strategies and actions the school takes to implement its obligations to ensure that:

- children and students are informed about all their rights, including to safety, information and participation
- the importance of friendship is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated
- staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- we have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students
- we provide opportunities for children and students to participate and is responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
 - Differentiation occurs across the school curriculum and this is evident in the Learning Diversity Policy
 - Each year the students start off by exploring and unpacking the Child friendly child safety policy and are explicitly reminded about the Child friendly Student Code of Conduct and the Child friendly complaints procedure. In this presentation there is a poster referring to the United Nations Rights of the Child.
 - There is a child friendly Complaints procedures slideshow which is shown and discussed with the students
 - Wellbeing programs are used to empower and educate our students in the area of wellbeing. Programs that have been used include: The Resilience Project, Butterfly Body Bright, Social Thinking, Carlton Respects, Power to Kids and aspects of the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships program. Below are other examples
 - Lunch time clubs
 - Grade 5 and Prep Buddy program
 - Day for Daniel, RUOK day, eSmart safety week and Safer Internet Day are some examples that Holy Name support student empowerment
 - Holy Name encourages its students to lead through encouraging student voice through the opportunity to take part in student leadership roles, running assemblies, taking part in student wellbeing surveys.
 - School rules are visible in every classroom, dispositions explained and modelled, students are reminded of right behaviour at assembly and positive behaviour is acknowledged through shout outs and disposition awards
- Strategies around cultural safety, including Aboriginal culture include:
- **Professional learning** on Aboriginal histories, cultures, and contemporary perspectives.
- Training on cultural safety, unconscious bias, racism, and inclusive teaching practices.
- Visible recognition such as Acknowledge of Country
- Ensuring policies and practices reflect inclusive language, respect, and cultural awareness.
- Valuing students' cultural identities and supporting participation in cultural practices (e.g., NAIDOC Week)
- Respectful use of language, names, and terminology.

We support students to identify, discuss and report their concerns.

We listen to children, take their views seriously, and are committed to addressing any concerns that they raise with us.

Students impacted by a child abuse or child safety matter will be provided with support to assist them to feel safe at school and develop protective factors. Supports will be tailored to each individual student and circumstance. Supports provided to students at our school may include:

- regularly communicating with the students and their parents and carers where appropriate
- convening a Student Support Group of school wellbeing staff and teachers to plan, support and monitor affected students
- developing Student Support Plans for students affected by the incident to ensure appropriate levels of care and support are provided
- access to counselling/Psychologist
- referrals to external services such as family violence services, Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA), and/or appropriate allied health professionals

Where external authorities are investigating a report of abuse or risk of abuse, it is the role of the principal of our school to ensure students are supported throughout interviews at the school.

9. Reporting and responding

Our school creates records relevant to any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and maintains and disposes of those records in accordance with security and privacy requirements and Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards (including minimum retention periods) and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Procedures. Our school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

Our school's <u>PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy</u> sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

Our policy assists Staff and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a reasonable belief is formed under the reportable conduct scheme as well as mandatory reporting
- make a report of a child or young person who may need protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law, and their legal obligations relating to child abuse and grooming under criminal law
- understand and comply with information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- comply with reporting obligations under the reportable conduct scheme including obligations to report and investigate allegations of reportable conduct. Refer to the <u>Reportable Conduct</u> <u>Policy</u>.

Our school has also established additional internal procedures and processes to help ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent, identify and respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our school is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, confidential information can be shared with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the CISS or FVISS.

At our school, if any member of our school community has concerns for a child's safety they need to discuss, they can notify the school Principal, the Deputy Principal or the designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Lead/Officer, who is our Learning Diversity/Wellbeing Leader.

If the Principal or Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer is not available, then it should be discussed with a member of the school leadership team. Alternatively, any member of the school community may report directly to the responsible authority.

The staff member, supported by the Principal or designated Child Safety and Wellbeing Officer will follow the step-by-step guide to making a report as outlined in the <u>Four Critical Actions for Schools:</u> Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse.

10. Screening and recruitment of School Staff

Our school leadership team members will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the Code of Conduct for MACS Staff, Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Each job description for staff involved in child-connected work has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing for those in that role and the occupant's essential qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we ensure that we gather, verify and record the following information about any person we propose to engage:

- proof of personal identity
- confirmation that the person has a current Working with Children clearance
- review of the results of a recent National Police Check
- evidence of current professional registration (as relevant)
- evidence of any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications
- the applicant's history of work involving children
- references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children. We will
 also ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to the
 induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures
 governing child safety and wellbeing and child-connected work.

We have procedures and processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff and volunteers to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration. Refer to the Child Safety Recruitment Procedures.

The principal or nominated staff ensures the implementation of the following guidelines published by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) and updated by the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) from time to time:

Engaging External Labour Providers and Casuals – A guide for schools

Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools

Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools

Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools

NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools

At Holy Name, a check is made on any prospective employee or volunteer external to the school.

Two referees are to be included in the initial application and a conversation held and recorded by a member of leadership which is generally the Principal or Deputy Principal. Holy Name reserves the right to call any school principal where the applicant has worked, even if they not been listed as a referee.

11. Child safety and wellbeing training for school staff

Our school's leadership team members provide employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of and openness to, and ability to address child safety and wellbeing matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

At least annually, our professional learning and training addresses:

- staff's individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
- preventing, identifying and mitigating child abuse risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- the reportable conduct scheme
- our school's current child safety standards (including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and any other policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing, including in relation to managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse)
- guidance on recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm, including their mandatory reporting obligations.
- guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations, including under the <u>Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards</u> and our <u>Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Procedures.</u>
- Through our induction program, staff at Holy Name are walked through the process of making a report as set out in the Protect Documents. Holy Name is also committed to continued Professional Development to ensure all staff understand their obligations to child safety, such as completion of the annual Mandatory Reporting e-modules, DSE Disability modules etc.

12. Diversity and equity – strategies and actions

At our school, we are committed to ensuring that equity is upheld, and that diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. We do not tolerate discrimination, racism or bullying. Our school Staff will identify and address discrimination, racism and bullying.

We aim to ensure that:

- all school staff and volunteers understand the diverse circumstances of children and students
- our school provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students
- children, students, staff, volunteers and the school community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- the school pays particular attention to the needs of students with disabilities, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and LGBTIQ+ students
- the school pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Holy Name is committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment where all students feel valued and supported. To address discrimination, bullying and racism, we implement a

comprehensive set of strategies across our policies, curriculum and daily practice. These include ongoing professional learning in wellbeing for staff on inclusive education and cultural competence; embedding respectful relationships, digital safety and anti-racism education within our curriculum; and regularly reviewing our school policies and wellbeing frameworks to ensure they align with current best practice. We promote student voice through wellbeing programs, leadership opportunities at assemblies and other events and classroom discussions, and we host school events that celebrate cultural diversity (Italian Day) and strengthen community connections. Our procedures for reporting and responding to incidents are clear and consistently enacted, ensuring that all concerns are addressed promptly, fairly and in partnership with families. Together, these strategies help us foster a learning environment where every student can thrive free from discrimination, bullying and racism.

Holy Name's expectations regarding respectful behaviour, inclusion, and the prevention of discrimination, bullying and racism are communicated clearly and consistently to staff, students and families through our website, newsletters and at assemblies. Staff are informed through induction processes, regular professional learning, policy updates and ongoing dialogue at staff meetings. Students engage with these expectations through classroom teaching, wellbeing programs, assemblies and restorative conversations that reinforce our shared responsibilities. Families are kept informed through our school policies, newsletters, the school website, enrolment information and regular communication from teachers and leadership. By ensuring that all members of our community understand these expectations and the procedures for reporting and responding to concerns, we maintain a united and proactive approach to fostering a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment.

To fulfil Holy Name's diversity and equity obligations, our school implements a coordinated set of strategies and actions designed to prevent discrimination, bullying and racism, and to promote a safe and inclusive environment for all. We provide ongoing professional learning for staff focused on cultural competence, inclusive pedagogies, anti-racism practices and restorative approaches. Our curriculum explicitly teaches respect, empathy and intercultural understanding, and incorporates learning experiences that reflect the diversity of our school community. We review and update key policies and procedures regularly to ensure they align with current legislation and best practice, and we maintain clear processes for reporting, investigating and responding to incidents. We promote student voice through leadership opportunities, wellbeing initiatives and classroom dialogue, and we strengthen community partnerships through culturally inclusive events and communication. Together, these actions ensure that equity and inclusion are not only stated expectations but are actively embedded in our school culture, daily routines and long-term planning.

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne – <u>Welcoming Each Other: Guidelines for Interfaith Education in the Schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne</u>

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) – <u>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</u> <u>Education Action Plan</u>

CECV – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives

CECV - Assessing and Intervening with Impact

VCEA – New arrivals and refugees

CECV – Parent Guide to Program Support Groups

CECV - Personal Care Support in Schools

CECV – Positive Behaviour Guidelines

ESafety Commissioner. Cool, beautiful, strange and scary

MACS - Allways: A guide to supporting all learners in all ways always

MACS - Religious Education Curriculum

VCEA ASTI Education Plan

Victorian Curriculum F–10

Victorian Department of Education (DE) Out-of-Home Care Education Commitment

Victorian DE – Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships, incorporating a Catholic context

8 ways: Aboriginal pedagogy

Family engagement – strategies and actions

Our school staff inform families, carers and other members of the school community about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school. We aim to ensure that:

- families participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- we engage and openly communicate with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach
- all members of the school community have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing
- families, carers and other members of the school community have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices
- families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- Our school supports and facilitates the participation of Aboriginal children, students and families
- the Engaging Families in Child Safety Procedures outlines the strategies in place in our school.

13. Risk management

At our school, we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and annually review our risks and risk management strategies for child safety and wellbeing, evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of our risk controls and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring a child safety risk register is developed, maintained and regularly reviewed. This risk register takes into account the local risks and hazards identified in school environments.

At Holy Name, we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and annually review our risks and risk management strategies for child safety and wellbeing, evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of our risk controls and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

To ensure the safety of all students and staff at Holy Name all potential risks are considered and mitigated as soon as possible. We require any external providers to hold a WWC card and present this at the school reception prior to entry. Temporary barriers surround areas where contractors may be working to ensure the safety of children.

When children are in breach of technology user agreement, individual parents are contacted and strategies are put in place to avoid further misuse.

Any allied health providers must complete and sign external provider documentation and have the parents consent prior to working with individual students onsite. All visitors must sign in at the office and provide a current WWCC as well as wear a printed identification. Any external providers working with children work in areas that are visible at all times.

14. Communication

The Principal is to make the policy and procedures for child safety are publicly available. Information about child safety is communicated in age and culturally appropriate ages to best assist our school community. The Principal notifies the school community when this policy and the school's processes and strategies are updated through the school's communication channels.

15. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Procedure can be found in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Glossary of Terms.

16. Related policies and documents

Related MACS policies and documents

Code of Conduct for MACS Staff

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Holy Name Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Procedures

Holy Name Child Safety Risk Register

Holy Name Child Safety Recruitment Procedures

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Holy Name Engaging Families in Child Safety Procedures

PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

Resources (external to MACS)

Engaging External Labour Providers and Casuals - A guide for schools

Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools

Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools

Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools

NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools.

17. Legislation and standards

Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) - including three criminal offences under this Act:

Policy information table

Approving authority	Director, Child Safety and Risk
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Superseded documents	Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedures – v1.0 – 2023
Publication	Gabriel, CEVN, school website
School document owner	
School review on	