

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

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### Introduction

Central to the Vision of St. Paul's Primary School 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.

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

### Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour by adults towards children and young people. It aims to protect children and reduce any opportunity of abuse or harm to children. This Code of Conduct also provides anyone engaged by St. Paul's Primary School with guidance on how best to support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

### Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff members (teaching and non-teaching), clergy, CRTs, volunteers, members of the Parent Partnership Team and contractors engaged by the school.

### Acceptable behaviours

All staff members (teaching and non-teaching), clergy, CRTs, volunteers, contractors and members of the Parent Partnership Team are responsible for supporting the safety of children by complying with the following 'acceptable behaviours':

- » Reporting any breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the Principal and/or the School's Child Safety Officer immediately.
- » Adhering to the School's Child Safety Policy and associated procedures at all times.
- » Promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.
- » Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- » Treating everyone in the community with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions and modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment.
- » Using positive and affirming language to all children.

## **Acceptable behaviours (Continued)**

- » Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child or young person has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child.
- » Taking account of the diversity of all children and young people, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and children and young people who are vulnerable.
- » Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification.
- » Promoting the religious background, cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people, including those from diverse backgrounds by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination.
- » Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child or young person.
- » Reporting all child safety complaints, concerns, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct immediately to the Principal and/or the School's Child Safety Officer immediately.
- » Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958.
- » Complying with guidelines published by St. Paul's Primary School with respect to child protection.
- » If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.
- » Using school email accounts and devices to contact children and families.

## Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff members (teaching and non-teaching), clergy, CRTs, volunteers, contractors and Parent Partnership Team members must not:

- » Ignore or disregard any child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- » Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism, such as the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children and young people.
- » Exhibit behaviours with children, which may be construed as unnecessarily physical, such as inappropriate sitting on laps.
- » Put children at risk of abuse.
- » Do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- » Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature, including discussions about personal, social, lifestyle or medical details, in the presence of children and young people.
- » Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or personal email addresses with children or young people.
- » Have unauthorised contact with children or young people 'on line' via email, social networking sites, text messaging or other means unless necessary, such as when providing families with e-newsletters or assisting children and young people with their school work.
- » Display any behaviour, in person or 'on-line', which could be construed as inappropriate or disrespectful to those who may view it, in particular children, young people and those from Aboriginal and diverse cultural backgrounds.
- » Maintain relationships with children and their families outside of school without the knowledge of the Principal, a member of the Leadership Team or Child Safety Officer. This includes unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching); accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street is appropriate.
- » Use inappropriate language in the presence of children and young people.
- » Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language in the presence of or with children.
- » Express personal views on cultures, race, ethnicity, sexuality or disabilities in the presence of children and young people.

- » Discriminate against any child because of culture, race, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- » Attend work under the influence or effects of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- » Consume alcohol without the consent of the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team at school, at a school event or in the presence of children or young people.
- » Use any form of illegal drugs at school.
- » Photograph or video children without the consent of their parents or guardian.
- » Use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account.
- » Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- » Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline a child or young person.

## **Breaching the Code of Conduct**

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, St. Paul's Primary School may start the process under clause 13 of the Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013 (VCEMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the principal is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the parish priest or the employer. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Where clergy, volunteers, contractors and members of the Parent Partnership Team are suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, St. Paul's Primary School will take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

## Acknowledgement

I have read and understood this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Principal Name: Damian Casamento

Signature:

