



Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

SACRED HEART PRIMARY SCHOOL

Central to the mission of Sacred Heart 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 Sacred Heart 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 School Board members at Sacred Heart 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.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and School 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
- 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's leadership
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.

Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and School Board 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, sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or doing 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 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 enewsletters 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 while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children, with the exception of school/family social functions such as the Christmas Concert and special celebrations. Sacred Heart School is committed to abiding by liquor licensing requirements, the responsible service of alcohol and consumption in moderation. In addition to this the school encourages community members to have a nominated designated driver for such events.

(Adapted from Source: VRQA)

Breaches to the Code of Conduct

Where an employee is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, Sacred Heart 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 this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact the School Governing Authority. Relevant notification should also be made to the Director of Catholic Education, Diocese of Sandhurst.

Where any other member of the school community is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the Principal is to make the necessary reports or to seek advice from the Catholic Education Office Sandhurst.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct and I understand my obligations under the Code of Conduct.

Signed: _____ Date: _____