Child Safety Commitment Statement

All students enrolled at St. Patrick’s School have a right to feel safe and be safe. Any child visiting St. Patrick’s School has the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any impediments for their safety.

St. Patrick’s School commits to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in our school through:

1. **Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.**

   At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

2. **Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns.**

   Schools, in partnership with families, will ensure children and young people, are engaged and active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their safety.

   This means that the views of staff, children, young people and families are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Children and young people are also provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

3. **Implementing rigorous risk management and employment practices.**

   Schools will systematically and continually identify and assess risks to child safety and will eliminate (where possible) or reduce all potential sources of harm. Effective risk management will be embedded in school life through effective, transparent and well-understood policies, procedures and practices.

   Schools will employ highly competent and professional staff who are formed and challenged to maintain the safety of all students. The high-quality of staff appointments will be upheld through rigorous employment and staff review processes and practices.

   Catholic education will stay abreast of current legislation and will meet their legislative duties to
protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Government, 2016), mandatory reporting, grooming, failure to disclose and failure to protect requirements.

Kathryn Bendall has been appointed as the Child Safety Officer for 2016 with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to Child Safety.

This statement will be disseminated to the school community via the staff handbook, parent information booklet, newsletters and enrolment procedures.

This statement will be reviewed annually.