




# St. Patrick's School, Nhill

## Safeguarding Children and Young People

### Code of Conduct

Updated: 2019

Review: 2022

<b>Endorsement – School Governing Authority</b>		
Fr. Peter Hudson, Parish Priest	Signature 	Date 8/10/2019

***As partners in Catholic Education and open to God's presence, we pursue the fullness of life for all. St. Patrick's School is a Child-Safe School.*** (School Vision)

St. Patrick's School ensures the care, wellbeing and protection of its students in keeping with the Catholic tradition, which celebrates the sanctity and unique dignity of each person.

#### Definitions

Ministerial Order 870 defines **school staff** as an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

#### Purpose

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

All school staff at St. Patrick'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.

#### Acceptable behaviours

All school staff 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 and/or 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 child safety officer.
- 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 child safety officer.
- 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.
- reporting to the Commissioner for Children and Young People any behaviours that fit under the Victorian

Reportable Conduct Scheme.

### Unacceptable behaviours

All school staff 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 with 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 physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or 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 outside of school in an unauthorised capacity without the knowledge of the child's parents, the school's principal or the school's child safety officer, unless a pre-existing relationship exists or there is a familial relationship. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is unavoidable and appropriate
- engage in undisclosed or unauthorised private meetings with a child that is not your own child.
- engage in inappropriate personal communications with a child through any medium, including any online contact or interactions or by email.
- Post online any information about a child that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- 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.

*(Adapted from Source: VRQA)*

### Breaches of this Code / Reporting Concerns

St. Patrick's School reserves the right to enforce appropriate consequences for the breach of any section of this Code of Conduct. Such consequences could include loss of employment, loss of visitation and volunteering rights, limited or nil access to school grounds and property, and/or potential termination of enrolment for children whose parents/carers/family members are in breach of the Code of Conduct.

All school staff should be aware of the process for dealing with breaches of this Code of Conduct as outlined below.

- Breaches by staff, parents/carers/family members, contractors, School Advisory Council members and volunteers are reported to the Principal (Child Safety Officer).
- Breaches by the Principal are reported to the school's governing authority or the Director of Catholic Education (who will then liaise with the school's governing authority).
- Breaches by the school's governing authority are reported to the Bishop or Vicar General (as per the Diocesan Code of Conduct). In such situations, principals may seek advice from the Diocesan Professional Standards Coordinator or the Director of Catholic Education.
- Criminal matters are reported directly to Victoria Police.

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is at immediate risk of abuse, the Police should be contacted on 000.**

### Acknowledgement

I confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct.

Name	Signature	Date / /
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