



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG

135 Aphrasia Street, Newtown VICTORIA 3220 / Ph: 03 5226 8100
Fax: 03 5221 6983 / Email: sjcoffice@sjc.vic.edu.au / ABN: 74 114 857 147

Parent Code of Conduct Child Safety and Respectful Relationships

Introduction

At St Joseph's we are committed to nurturing respectful relationships and active partnerships with you as parents, guardians and caregivers (referred to as 'parents' for the rest of this document). We believe that our students' learning journeys are enriched through positive and reciprocal home and school relationships.

St Joseph's has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at the College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. Parents 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.

Parents are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children outlined in this Code of Conduct. This code takes into account the diversity of the College environment, including but not limited to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability, and children who are vulnerable.

As parents, you act as one of the most influential role models in your child's life. We therefore seek your support in promoting and upholding the core values of the school community and its culture of child safety and respectful relationships.

The values and culture at St Joseph's allows children to learn, teachers to teach, and other community members to participate in education, free from harassment, violence, intimidation or vilification. Parents should set an example for their children and the children of others.

This Code of Conduct is intended to guide you in your dealings with staff, other parents, students and the wider school community. It articulates the school's key expectations of both staff and parents with regard to respectful relationships and behaviours. It also specifies the school's position with regard to unacceptable behaviours that breach our culture of respect.

This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with:

- EREA Code of Conduct
- Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures
- Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting Obligations) Policy and Procedures
- Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures

Our Culture of Child Safety and Respectful Relationships

Among students, staff and parents we strive for the following:

- zero tolerance against child abuse;
- adherence to the College's Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures;
- being vigilant and taking all reasonable steps to protect the students in the College's care from abuse or harm;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability;
- respecting the language, customs, religions and cultures of a student;
- a respect for the innate dignity and worth of every person;



- an ability to understand the situation of others;
- a cooperative attitude in working with others;
- integrity, honesty and candour in all dealings;
- acceptance of others regardless of their background, age, race, gender, sexuality, religion or race;
- open, positive and honest communication;
- the ability to work respectfully and courteously with other people;
- an inclusive community; and
- personal responsibility for all actions.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that parents will:

- support the school's Catholic ethos, traditions and practices;
- support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment;
- understand the importance of healthy parent/teacher/child relationships and strive to build the relationships;
- adhere to the school's policies, as outlined on the school website; and
- treat staff and other parents with respect and courtesy.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that parents will not:

- engage in any form of child abuse, including behaviour that could constitute grooming;
- engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a student that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including because of the student's or another person's race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or disability;
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (for example, personal social activities);
- use inappropriate language in the presence of students;
- express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of students;
- consume alcohol or drugs at College or at College events in the presence of students;
- supply any student with drugs or alcohol.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that staff will:

- be vigilant and taking all reasonable steps to protect the students in the College's care from abuse or harm;
- treat everyone in the College community with respect, modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment;
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the students are safe, in accordance with the College's policies and procedures;
- not ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- communicate with you openly and honestly regarding your child's learning, development wellbeing and safety;
- engage with, and listen to, the views of volunteers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures;
- commit to transparent decision-making with volunteers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people;
- commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues;
- provide opportunities for involvement in your child's learning;
- maintain confidentiality over sensitive issues;
- ensure a timely response to any concerns raised by you.

Staff are accountable to their own Child Safety Code of Conduct which outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviours above those listed and this is available on the College Website.

Extracurricular and Sporting Events

We recognise that parents are often actively involved in the sporting and extracurricular events of their children. We encourage parents to participate in such activities and to support their children, however we also make it clear that we have high expectations of parents at these events and activities.

At these events, especially sporting events, parents are expected to:

- encourage their children to participate;
- never ridicule, berate, discourage or otherwise interfere with your child or another child;
- uphold the principles of good sportsmanship and fair play;
- never yell, abuse or otherwise interfere with a sporting official, coach or other person;
- never incite, encourage or commit acts of violence;
- never use foul or abusive language;
- never interfere in an activity.

Raising Concerns and Resolving Conflict

Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy.

A “child safeguarding-related complaint” is any disclosure, allegation, suspicion, concern or internal report of:

- a breach of the College’s Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
- a child safety incident or concern alleged to have occurred, be occurring or be at risk of occurring at the College or a College event
- child safety incidents or concerns involving College Staff, Volunteers or Contractors
- other staff misconduct related to the Child Safeguarding Program (such as a procedural breach of the Child Safeguarding Program).

A child safeguarding-related complaint also includes any complaint about the College’s response to or management of a child safety incident or concern, including complaints alleging non-compliance with our Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policies and Procedures.

This policy is available on the College Website.

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure

In raising concerns on behalf of your child, or making a complaint about the school’s practices or treatment of your child, **we expect that you will:**

- listen to your child, but remember that a different ‘reality’ may exist elsewhere;
- observe the school’s stated procedures for raising and resolving a grievance/complaint;
- follow specified protocol for communication with staff members, including making appointments at a mutually convenient time and communicating your concerns in a constructive manner; and
- refrain from approaching another child while in the care of the school to discuss or chastise them because of actions towards your child;
- refer the matter directly to your child’s teacher for follow-up and investigation by the school.

In responding to your concerns or a complaint, **we expect that staff will:**

- observe confidentiality and a respect for sensitive issues;
- ensure views and opinions are heard and understood;
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful;
- ensure a timely response to concerns/complaints; and
- strive for resolutions and outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties.

This policy is available on the College Website.

Staff Safety and Wellbeing

St Joseph's College places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our staff. We regard certain behaviors as harmful and unacceptable insofar as they compromise the safety and professional wellbeing of our staff. The behaviors that compromised the safe environment and are not tolerated include, but are not limited to:

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone;
- physical or verbal intimidation;
- aggressive hand gestures;
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments (emails/social media) to or about a staff member;
- racist or sexist comments; and
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

When a parent behaves in such unacceptable ways, the principal or a senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation.

Where a parent's behavior is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to the staff member and others, we may exercise our legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the parent entering the school premises. In an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to the staff member and his/her property, the matter may be reported to the police for investigation.

Conclusion

At St Joseph's College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.

(Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9).