



# Catholic College Sale

## RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING CHILD SAFETY INCIDENTS AND CONCERNS PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

### 1.0 POLICY AUTHORITY

The Board of Catholic College Sale Limited (the Board) governs the College. Based on the principle of subsidiarity and in keeping with the Board's Delegations Schedule, the Board delegates a broad range of duties, functions, powers and authority to the Principal of Catholic College Sale (the College). This includes the effective implementation of these *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns Procedural Guidelines* and the compliance obligations outlined herein.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

These Procedural Guidelines complement and are an extension of the College's *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy*.

The guidelines present additional information and direction on matters that include:

- Reportable Conduct
- Child Safety-related Staff Misconduct
- Student Sexual Offending
- Reporting Obligations – Mandatory and non-mandatory reports and reporters
- Reporting Incidents or Concerns to the College
- Follow-Up Investigations
- Information Sharing.

The guidelines assist College staff and personnel.<sup>1</sup>, and students, families and other adults associated with the College, to raise concerns about child safety and to proactively support our child-safe culture and practices.

### 3.0 CHILD SAFETY INCIDENTS OR CONCERNS

At the College, we call a safety incident or concern **any** behaviour that may be:

- a breach of our *Child Safety Code of Conduct*;
- child abuse, grooming or other harm;
- reportable conduct;
- other child safety-related staff misconduct.

It does not matter whether the conduct or behaviour is by a staff member, another student, a parent/carer or any other person on College premises or at College events.

The following terms, as they appear and are defined in the College's *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy*, all fall into the category of a child safety incident or concern:

- a sexual offence;
- physical violence;
- serious emotional or psychological harm;
- serious neglect.

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<sup>1</sup> In these guidelines, the term 'personnel' refers to Board members, volunteers, contractors, other service providers, religious and chaplains involved with the College.

## 4.0 REPORTABLE CONDUCT

The College has a legal obligation to investigate and report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) any incidents or allegations of employee “reportable conduct,” or of employee misconduct, that may be “reportable conduct”, as defined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.).

An allegation of 'reportable conduct' is made where a person has a 'reasonable belief' that an employee has engaged in:

- a sexual offence, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child/young person; OR
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child/young person; OR
- significant neglect of a child/young person; OR
- misconduct involving any of the above.

The scope of 'reportable conduct' is wide and includes information about something that is alleged to have occurred outside the course of the person's employment or engagement with the school. This may include family violence committed by an employee in front of their own child.

## 5.0 CHILD SAFETY-RELATED STAFF MISCONDUCT

“Misconduct” is defined by the CCYP as conduct that is a departure from the accepted standards of the role and is intentional or seriously negligent.

At the College, child safety-related staff misconduct includes:

- breaches of our *Child Safety Code of Conduct* and our child safety policies/procedures;
- purposeful neglect of duties/responsibilities;
- alcohol and/or other substance abuse;
- physically, verbally or emotionally abusive behaviour with or in the presence of students;
- other behaviour or conduct that risks the safety or well-being of students or others at the College.

Child safety-related staff misconduct is considered a child safety incident.

## 6.0 STUDENT SEXUAL OFFENDING

Once a child is 10 years or older, some sexual behaviour can constitute a sexual offence. A sexual offence includes rape, sexual assault, indecent acts and other unwanted sexualised touching, all of which are offences under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.).

It is widely recognised that determining whether a student's sexual behaviour amounts to sexual offending may be difficult. College staff are advised of the importance of considering the context of any alleged sexual behaviour of students, taking into consideration their developmental age and cognitive functioning, so that an informed decision about appropriate action can be made.

The College references the True Traffic Lights® Framework to enable staff to identify, recognise and respond to all forms of student sexual behaviour. The Traffic Lights® Framework categorises student sexual behaviour as green, orange or red light. As a general guide:

- **Red light sexual behaviours:** are those that are problematic or harmful, including forceful, secretive, compulsive, coercive or degrading sexual behaviours. These behaviours signal the need to provide immediate protection and follow-up support.
- **Orange light sexual behaviours:** are those that are outside normal behaviour in terms of persistence, frequency or inequality in age, power or ability. These behaviours signal the need to monitor and provide extra support.

- **Green light sexual behaviours:** are those that are normal, age-appropriate, spontaneous, curious, mutual, light-hearted and easily diverted experimentation. These behaviours provide opportunities to talk, explain and support.
- All green, orange and red light behaviours require some form of action and support.
- Most red light (harmful) sexual behaviour by a student aged 10 or over that is directed at another person would be considered student sexual offending. Some orange light (concerning) behaviours could also be student sexual offending.
- Orange and red light behaviours may therefore require external reporting.

College staff/personnel must report their concerns about student sexual offending to the Principal or another Child Safeguarding Officer (Appendix A). The Principal has primary responsibility for managing the College's response. However, it is important to note that reporting internally does not mean that all reporting obligations have been met. In some circumstances, staff/associates must also report to Victoria Police or DFFH.

**NOTE:** A key guide to the College's response is the 2018 DET resource titled PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending. It presents procedures & guidance on:

- Defining Student Sexual Offending
- Knowing Your Obligations
- Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending.

## 7.0 OBLIGATIONS TO REPORT

There is a number of legal reporting obligations that the College and staff/personnel must fulfil when responding to child safety incidents or concerns. These are summarised in the College's *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy*.

### 7.1 Mandatory Reporters

Although everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse or other harm, some professionals are legally required to make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if, during the course of their professional work or carrying out duties of their office, they form a belief that a child/young person/student is in need of protection.

At the College, the following people are Mandatory Reporters:

- Teachers;
- the Principal;
- medical practitioners
- nurses
- registered psychologists
- persons in religious ministry
- Wellbeing support officers.

## 7.2 Non-Mandatory Reporters

Under child safety law, non-mandatory reporters are persons who hold professional and moral obligations to report a child protection incident, disclosure or suspicion.

Although non-mandatory reporting to DFFH Child Protection is voluntary under the law, the College expects that **all** staff and personnel **must**, in certain circumstances, make wellbeing and protective intervention reports to DFFH Child Protection in circumstances that include:

- significant concerns for the well-being of a child (well-being reports);
- a child whom the person believes on reasonable grounds to be in need of protection (protective intervention reports);
- a child whom the person believes on reasonable grounds is in need of therapeutic treatment because they are exhibiting sexually abusive behaviours (therapeutic treatment reports).

Non-mandatory reporting to the Police is also expected of **all** staff and associates in circumstances that include:

- sexual offences committed by a student under the age of 18 against another person;
- concerns for a student's immediate safety;
- knowledge or suspicions that a student aged 18 or over is being abused or harmed, but only if the student consents to the report;
- where a student is partaking in an illegal activity that is extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the student.

## 8.0 PROCESS FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OR CONCERNS TO THE COLLEGE

It is critical that College community members tell us about all child safety incidents or concerns that occur at, or otherwise involve, the College. This enables the College to ensure the safety and well-being of students and to comply with its legislative reporting obligations.

We call any reports made to the College about child safety incidents or concerns at or involving the College or its staff members a "child safety-related complaint."

### 8.1 Reports from Students

There are no limits on how or to whom students at the College can disclose any child safety incident or concern, or make a complaint about a staff member, volunteer or contractor. We have varied child-focused pathways to enable all students to report child safety incidents or concerns.

Students are encouraged to raise the concern or complaint with a trusted adult of their choice at the College (for example, their Pastoral Teacher, Year Level Coordinator, House Leader or a Child Safeguarding Officer). This trusted adult will take the concern/complaint seriously and explain the steps the student or the College can take to resolve the issue.

If a student has not been able to resolve the issue to their satisfaction, or if they are reluctant to approach College staff for assistance, a student's parents, guardians or carers may choose to raise the matter on behalf of their child and have it resolved.

## 8.2 Reports from parents, guardians or carers, families and other community members

Parents, guardians, carers, family members, and other community members who have concerns about a student's child safety at the College are asked to contact the Principal or another Child Safeguarding Officer (**Appendix A**). They may also use the procedures set out in our *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy*.

## 8.3 Reports from College staff and personnel

Staff/personnel **must** report any and all child safety incidents or concerns involving our students to one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers (**Appendix A**) or, if the matter involves the conduct of a staff member, directly to the Principal.

Staff/personnel must also follow our procedures for responding to incidents or disclosures of child abuse or other harm, or suspected child abuse or other harm, including by making any required reports to external agencies (refer to the College's *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy*).

If the Principal is the subject of the complaint or allegation of misconduct, or reportable conduct, please contact the Chair of the College Board.

## 9.0 FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIONS

Depending on the nature of the incident, complaint, allegation or concern, after receiving the child safeguarding-related complaint, the Principal will:

- conduct an internal investigation of the incident or complaint, led by the Principal or an external investigator;
- determine whether the conduct in question amounts to child safeguarding-related staff misconduct, as defined above and/or reportable conduct that must be further investigated and reported to the CCYP;
- if required by law or by our child safety policies and procedures, report the matter to the DFFH Child Protection, the Police and/or other relevant external agencies;
- conduct a risk assessment in consultation – if an external report has been made – with the Police or DFFH Child Protection, to identify and mitigate any ongoing risks to student safety and wellbeing;
- ensure that support is provided to any students, staff members and family members impacted by the incident, concern or complaint.

If DFFH Child Protection or the Police are investigating the alleged conduct, that investigation takes precedence, and the College's investigation will **only** proceed with their permission.

When conducting an internal investigation, the College follows the National Office of Child Safety's Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People.

### 9.1 Investigating behaviour by a student against another student

Responding to this kind of child safeguarding-related incident or complaint involves considering the College's duty of care both to any student who is a victim and to the student who is the alleged perpetrator, as well as to other students.

The College references the True Traffic Lights® Framework to enable staff to identify, recognise and respond to all forms of sexual behaviour. The Principal will also be guided by the 2018 DET resource titled PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending.

## **9.2 Investigating non-staff members on College premises or at College events**

Where the child safety incident, or the child safeguarding-related complaint, involves behaviour by a person who is neither a current or former College student, nor a current or former staff member (for example they are a parent, guardian, or carer or a visitor whose behaviour occurs on College premises or at a College event), the Principal's investigation is generally limited.

It may involve only a risk assessment and a subsequent review of our systems, policies, and procedures to ensure the future safety and well-being of our students.

## **9.3 Investigating conduct that amounts to reportable conduct**

When a child safety incident, concern or complaint alleges conduct that amounts to reportable conduct, the Principal is required by law to notify the CCYP and to conduct an internal investigation.

When conducting these internal investigations, the Principal will be guided by the:

- CCYP's Guidance for Organisations: Investigating a Reportable Conduct Allegation
- DOSCEL Guide to Reporting Conduct in Catholic Schools under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

In addition, further risk assessments will be conducted during the internal investigation and at the end of that investigation.

## **9.4 Investigating breaches of the Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct that do not amount to reportable conduct**

If a child safeguarding-related complaint has been made about the conduct, and it is determined through the College's investigation that misconduct or a minor breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct has occurred, the Principal will enact disciplinary and corrective actions.

## **9.5 Investigations' record keeping**

Records are kept at each stage of the investigation process, including:

- records received or created during investigations (such as notes of interviews and documents received);
- records of findings;
- records of actions proposed and taken.

These are kept in a safe and secure location.

## **9.6 Reviews of investigation procedures and outcomes**

If a child safeguarding-related complaint has been made, and the complainant and other people involved in the matter are not satisfied with the management or outcome, the complainant and/or other involved people may request an internal review of:

- the procedures undertaken;
- findings made;
- disciplinary actions proposed or taken; and/or
- other outcomes (including a decision not to make a finding or to take disciplinary or other action).

Requests for internal reviews should be made to the Principal.

## 10.0 INFORMATION SHARING

Appropriate confidentiality about a child safety incident or concern will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either for pastoral reasons or legal requirements (including under legislated information sharing schemes such as the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

The College takes great care to assess the relevance and appropriateness of sharing information about a child safety incident or concern, or a child safeguarding-related complaint, before providing any information about it to the wider College community. This is because even the confirmation of an incident or allegation can lead to the identification of a victim.

Generally, information that may identify the victim of the incident, concern or complaint will not be shared with the wider College community without the consent of the victim and/or their parent/carer.

However, if the matter involves reportable conduct, it is an offence to disclose information that would enable the identification of a person who notified the CCYP of the matter, or of a child in relation to whom a finding of reportable conduct was made. Therefore, that kind of information cannot be shared with the wider College community.

The College will consult with any relevant external agencies (such as DFFH Child Protection or Police) to determine when, what and by whom information can be shared.

Special issues may arise that require an adjustment to normal information-sharing practices. Legal impediments may impact the timeliness of disclosing information, the type or amount of information that is disclosed and to whom the information is disclosed, particularly in the case of reportable conduct allegations.

## 11.0 APPENDIX

A - The College's Child Safeguarding Officers

## 12.0 RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Record Keeping Policy
- Child Safety Policy – Student Input Version
- Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy
- Child Safety Information for Volunteers
- Privacy Policy
- Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Policy.

## 13.0 APPROVAL AND REVIEW

At Catholic College Sale, we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend that these Procedural Guidelines will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

<b>Approved by</b>	CC Sale Ltd Board
<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	Principal
<b>Date(s) Reviewed or Updated</b>	September 2025
<b>Next Review Date</b>	September 2027



## Catholic College Sale Executive Child Safe Committee

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## Catholic College Sale Child Safeguarding Committee

The Catholic College Sale Child Safeguarding Committee is comprised of Child Safeguarding Officers, who receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child safeguarding within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address
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School Captains	Student Representatives		



## The Chief Child Safeguarding Officer

The Deputy Principal Learning and Wellbeing is the College's Chief Child Safeguarding Officer. They have additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being the first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community, coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents, and ensuring continuous improvement to the College's child safety practices and culture.

## Role Responsibilities of Child Safeguarding Officers

The Child Safeguarding Officers work with College Leadership, staff, students, volunteers, and the broader community to create a child-safe environment in the College. Their duties include:

### Promoting a child safety and well-being culture

- Build awareness of child safety at staff and parent meetings, through newsletters and staff bulletins;
- Ensure the College's child safety policies and procedures are current and fit for purpose, publicly accessible, known and implemented;
- Promote a culture of listening to students and families and acting on their child safety concerns;
- Support staff and volunteers to focus on the child safety needs of vulnerable students.

### Providing support and guidance

- Be a point of contact for child safety concerns for staff, volunteers, students and parents, guardians or carers;
- Provide guidance to students, staff and volunteers on child safety policies and procedures;
- Work with College Leadership to respond to child safety incidents;
- Maintain current skills and knowledge to support child safety and wellbeing, including:
  - child-focused complaint processes, mandatory reporting obligations and the Four Critical Actions
  - student rights, participation and empowerment
  - Aboriginal cultural safety and inclusive practices to meet students' diverse needs
  - child safety risk management, including online safety
  - child safety information sharing and record keeping obligations
  - working with relevant agencies to refer students and families to appropriate support
  - keeping up with emerging research and best practice guidance in child safety and wellbeing.
  - Child Safety Officers Poster

**The agenda of the Committee must be based on *Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises* (Ministerial Order No. 1359).**