



Catholic College Sale

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

At Catholic College Sale (CC Sale), we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

We recognise the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our College is a safe, supportive and inclusive environment which respects and fosters the rights, dignity and self-esteem of all children and young people.

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct promotes the care and wellbeing of children and young people and reduces opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It sets out the expected behaviour of all College staff and personnel¹ in fostering a culture of child safety in our environments. The Code is signed by staff and personnel to ensure there is a shared understanding of and commitment to the College's child-safe culture and practices.

This Code of Conduct is intended to complement child protection legislation, other related CC Sale policies and procedures, and other professional standards, codes or ethics that apply to College staff and personnel.

The Principal and College Leadership Team will:

- implement and monitor this Child Safety Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and review arrangements for a strong child safe culture across all our environments;
- provide training and support to staff and personnel to enable this Code to operate effectively.

Scope

All CC Sale staff and personnel, and any other adult involved at the College in child-connected work, are required to comply with this Child Safety Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour.

The Code applies across all physical and online environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by our College for a student's use (for example, a school camp). The Code enables every adult at CC Sale to understand the important role they play in ensuring that the wellbeing and safety of children and young people are at the forefront of their actions and decision-making.

Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability, those unable to live at home, international students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students.

¹ In this Code, the term 'personnel' refers to Board members, volunteers, contractors, other service providers, religious and chaplains involved with the College.

Expectations – Acceptable Behaviours

Staff and personnel of Catholic College Sale must:

- Treat students and families in our College community with respect, both within and outside the College environment;
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused, or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ+) students;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries around students. This includes avoiding unmonitored communications and ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a student;
- Report any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers;
- Understand and comply with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns Policy* and the Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines, PROTECT: Four Critical Actions.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensure as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable Conduct

Staff and personnel of Catholic College Sale must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- Develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism, that develops a relationship of dependency, that exploits an individual's vulnerability to form an intimate relationship, and/or that could amount to 'grooming' behaviour;
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context;
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate;
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or in a therapeutic setting;
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity;
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting or other digital technologies), except where that communication is reasonable in the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities, or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter;
- Make a 'friend' request to a student or accept a 'friend' request from a student through a social media platform;

- 'Follow' a student on a social media platform, unless it is objectively appropriate (for example, where the student is also a family member of the staff member);
- Photograph or video a student without their consent and/or that of their parent or carer, except where required for duty of care purposes;
- Work with students while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Teachers

Teaching staff are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian teaching profession's Code of Conduct issued by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities;
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect;
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language;
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm;
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters;
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference;
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

Breaches of this Code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the Principal may start the process for managing this under the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement (VCEMEA)*. In certain contexts, a report may be required to Victoria Police, DFFH Child Protection, the VIT and/or the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). The outcomes of these reports and follow-up investigations may result in disciplinary consequences. In the case of serious breaches, termination of employment may result.

Where a volunteer, contractor, other service provider, religious and/or chaplain involved with the College is suspected of breaching any obligation within this Code, the Principal will take appropriate action in accordance with the College's *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns Policy*. In certain contexts, a report may be made to an external authority and may result in the termination of the person's contract or engagement.

Reporting Concerns

All breaches and suspected breaches of this Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal.

The College's *Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns Policy* includes information from the DET guidelines, [PROTECT: Four Critical Actions](#) on how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse, and procedures for reporting child abuse concerns and incidents to relevant College staff and authorities.

Whenever there are concerns that a child or student is in immediate danger, Victoria Police should be contacted on 000.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact the Chair of the College Board.

Related College Policies

- Anti Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Information and Agreement for Volunteers and Contractors
- Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy
- Complaints Management Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Recruitment and Engagement of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors Policy
- Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns Policy (and accompanying Procedural Guidelines)
- Staff Social Media Policy

References

- State of Victoria, *Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, Ministerial Order No. 1359
- Department of Education and Training (DET) 2018, *PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools*
- Department of Education and Training (DET) 2018, *PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending*

Code History and Review

At Catholic College Sale, we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this Code of Conduct to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

Approved by	CC Sale Ltd Board
Person(s) Responsible	Principal
Date(s) Reviewed or Updated	June 2022
Next Review Date	June 2024

Child Safety Code of Conduct Agreement

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understood this Code of Conduct and I agree to adhere to its standards and expectations. I understand that any violation of the Code shall result in my being subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Name:

Role/position:

Signature:

Date:

NOTE – OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Copy of this Code of Conduct to be provided to all CC Sale staff and personnel

Original signed copy of this Code and agreement to be retained by the College; copy to be provided to staff members and personnel.