

Code of Conduct: Safeguarding Children and Young People

Catholic Regional College North Keilor

August 2016

At Catholic Regional College North Keilor it is essential that there is clarity for all staff in relation to their responsibility and accountability for ensuring child safety and a child safe environment.

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding our students at **Catholic Regional College North Keilor** against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement our other policies and professional standards related to the way we interact with our students.

The College encourages an environment in which relationships are responsive and respectful and in which students' sense of security and belonging is promoted. The following code is designed to fulfil this commitment and to comply with the responsibilities of school staff and others who interact with children contained in *Ministerial Order No 870 – Child Safety Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools*, which establishes minimum standards for maintaining child-safe environments; as well as the school's obligations under the *Crimes Act (1958)*; together with the *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* for all adult members of the community to disclose, or protect a child from, sexual abuse. This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Safe Policy and Policy for Protection of Children and Managing the Risk of Child Abuse.

Code of Conduct

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and school council members at Catholic Regional College North Keilor 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 and the College values of Faith, Respect, Resilience and Compassion. All members of the College community are required to observe child safe principles and the expectations for acceptable behaviours towards, and in the company of, our students.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, contractors, clergy and school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of our students 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 our students from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/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 of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of our students with a disability (for example, during Connections Sessions or through curriculum-based activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a student
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal or Deputy Principals and ensuring any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal or Deputy Principals
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- ensuring that the child(ren) are in a safe environment as quickly as possible should an allegation of child abuse be made
- 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.

Unacceptable or questionable behaviours

All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, contractors, clergy and school council members must:

- not ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse, and also

1. Through their actions:

- not use physical contact to punish or discipline a student
- encourage equality in relationships with children so that favouritism is avoided (for example, avoid the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- not exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
 - It is recognised that close physical contact may sometimes be necessary, for example when demonstrating gymnastic skills, music or dance moves and other physical activities but the student's permission should always be sought prior to instruction.
- protect our students from the risk of abuse in the school environment, for example, by ensuring, as far as practicable, keeping the door open and/or remaining clearly in view during individual interactions. This includes while students are on camps, excursions, study tours or any other school authorised activity either on school property or elsewhere
- not initiate unnecessary physical contact with students or do things of a personal nature that the student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes (except where care of a student's special needs require this and parent permission has been obtained).

2. In their conversations and correspondence via any medium:

- not use inappropriate language in the presence of our students
- not have discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of our students
- not make jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature
- not use or condone obscene gestures or pornographic material
- avoid expressing personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of our students

- not discriminate against any student; because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability

3. Contact outside the school, including; personal, telephone, online and social media connections. Staff must:

- maintain professional relationships with all members of the College community. Where staff have personal relationships with families in the community they must communicate this to the Principal
- not have a personal relationship with a student unless they have permission of the parent and College Leadership. Unexpected/incidental contact with a student, e.g. seeing a student in the street, is deemed appropriate
- ensure online contact with a student or his/her family is for educational purposes/ purposes relevant to your role by using the school's recognised communication systems (Also refer to the College's Social Media Policy)
- not take photographs or videos of students without the consent of the parent or guardians. Exceptions to this include if images of students are taken only for designated school purposes. It is advised that these images should not be stored on a personal device and should be transferred to a school file as specified in a timely manner
- not publish or upload photographic or audio material of a student to any location without the consent of the student's parent / guardian and the school
- not work with our students whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- not consume alcohol at school or at school events in the presence of our students unless with the knowledge and permission of the Principal.

Adherence to the Code of Conduct is reinforced:

- in the induction training for new leadership members, staff and volunteers
- as part of refresher training for existing leadership members, staff and volunteers
- in information for parents/carers and other persons associated with the College regarding the behaviour that can be expected from the organisation's leadership, staff and volunteers
- in employment advertisements and contracts which adhere to the compliance requirements

Should a breach/s of the code be suspected or identified, that staff will refer to the organisational and reporting protocols and procedures of the College

Non-compliance with this Code of Conduct may be grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, disciplinary action can be up to and including termination of employment. Depending on the circumstances, the school may also refer the matter to the police.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the **Code of Conduct** and have read the expectations stated.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy: 2 August 2016 Review Date: Dec 2017