



Adopted by College Council  
Date: August 2022  
Last Review: September 2022

## **CHILD SAFETY and WELLBEING POLICY**

### **Part One**

#### **1. Rationale**

All adults have a Biblical mandate to protect children. Schools are organisations established to manage the care and education of children, and as institutions they must protect children through their systems, structures, policies and practices. A Christian school is an organisation that ought to function as a pro-social collaborative community where parents and staff partner together for the care and education of the children.

#### **2. Christian Doctrine is Intrinsic to Education and Operations of this College**

The College's foundational doctrines are the Christian Bible, the Apostles Creed, and the traditions of the Christian church. The College's doctrines and Christian traditions are intrinsic to Christian education, including teaching and learning, as well as to all operations of the College. The community-based nature of the learning environment of this school mean it is an intrinsic requirement that all staff including non-teaching staff align with the foundational doctrines listed above.

#### **3. MCC Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct**

##### **Preamble**

This MCC Child Safety Code of Conduct is developed to be synchronised with, and complementary to the VIT Code of Conduct for members of the Victorian teaching profession. The VIT Code of Conduct is not subject to this MCC Child Safety Code of Conduct. This MCC Child Safety Code of Conduct will not cover every situation. It is based on Ministerial Order 1359. All children have the right to be protected, and adults working in a school have the responsibility to do all that they can to protect children. Therefore, if a staffer violates this MCC Child Safety Code, College management will be compelled to take responsive action, or disciplinary action, including possible suspension from duties, or immediate dismissal in the case of a very serious violation.

##### **MCC Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct**

Our College sets these expectations of behaviours for all adults interacting with students within our sites or at school-related events...

1. Always speak and act in a way to proactively protect the safety of students, including the cultural safety of Indigenous students
2. Behave appropriately towards students; physically, emotionally
3. Build a culture of belonging, and both proactively and responsively prevent bullying, teasing, disempowerment, racism towards, or humiliation of students

4. Communicate in an affirming way with students: speak constructively and listen actively, and build an environment where they do the same for each other
5. Demonstrate behaviour aligned with Jesus' teachings and demonstrate the College's Core Values: Christ-centredness, Excellence, Community, Respect, Passion for Teaching and Learning.
6. Enable inclusion and participation of disabled students, and of students from diverse language or cultural backgrounds, and actively establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Indigenous students are respected and valued.
7. Hold study-discussions or assistance-discussions with more than one student at a time, and create safe transparency by using venues with clear line-of-sight
8. Never use physical punishment, or even inappropriate tackling or rough playing
9. Only discuss topical or unsettling matters with students in a way appropriate to their age, and only within the context of curricular teaching and learning
10. Protect students from discrimination and prejudices, including your own
11. Refrain from any form of sexual conduct with a student, including making sexually suggestive comments, or disclosing sexually suggestive material
12. Refrain from either: closely befriending or favouring, or the opposite, exclusion or alienation of students
13. Refrain from inappropriate physical contact with students, and be aware of the differences (eg, a non-invasive, quick, affirming pat on a shoulder in some contexts may be acceptable, whereas a lingering touch, or stroking, or touching hair is unacceptable)
14. Refrain from personal/non-professional communications with students, and communicate electronically only through official school email or school Learning Management Systems
15. Refrain from photographing students apart from events and images that are specifically for official use in College publications or celebrations, and delete images of students from personal devices once the legitimate, work-related purpose has been fulfilled
16. Report violations of this policy; internally to management, and externally as professionally appropriate, and take immediate action according to professional practice to ensure any child's immediate safety. Reports made under the MCC Whistleblower Policy, may be treated as a report under the MCC Code of Conduct or actioned under the MCC Whistleblower Procedure
17. Supervise students in a way that takes into account their age-related vulnerabilities
18. Treat all students with equivalent favour
19. Treat confidentiality with professionalism, honour students and their privacy as professionally appropriate
20. Use spaces wisely, eg. use staff toilets, and do your best to avoid using student toilets
21. Vigilantly observe and respond to situations concerning child protection matters

#### **4. How this Policy relates to Governance and Management, Staff and Volunteers**

All adults involved in Governance, or as Employees, or as Volunteers carry a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and protection of children. Notwithstanding that, it is the responsibility of those in Governance and Senior Management roles to ensure the implementation of this policy.

## 5. The Eleven Standards

The Victorian Government has introduced new legislation expressed as eleven standards. The standards are as follows...

- Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
- Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- Standard 4: Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
- Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
- Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
- Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focussed
- Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
- Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
- Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
- Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

### Part Two – The Eleven Policy Statements and Procedures

#### Statement 1 relates to Standard 1

##### 1. Statement about Culturally Safe Environments for Indigenous Students

#### Policy Statement:

MCC will establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.

#### Procedures to Support Policy:

It is the intention of MCC that all of the policies, procedures, systems and processes of the school taken together, create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal students and their families. This means that the school will ensure that:

1. a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
2. strategies are embedded within MCC which equip school staff, students, volunteers and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students. (See POL 11 Welfare and Engagement Policy for details)
3. measures are adopted by MCC to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism within the school environment are addressed with appropriate consequences. (See POL 11 Welfare and Engagement Policy for details)
4. MCC actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion by Aboriginal students and their families.

## **Statement 2 relates to Standard 2**

### **2. Statement about Child Safety and Wellbeing being embedded in Leadership, Governance and Culture**

#### **Policy Statement:**

MCC will ensure that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.

#### **Procedures to support Policy:**

To ensure this, MCC has developed and made publicly available this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrating our commitment as a school to child safety.

- a. **Quarterly Reviews** - The governance body of MCC will ensure implementation through quarterly reviews. Over a span of one year, these reviews take the form of:
  1. a review of the policy itself (see Section 6 below for details of review of recruitment procedures)
  2. a quarterly training/refresher for all staff and governance members, in the implementation of this policy (see Section 8 (points 1-7) below for details of the areas to be covered within this training/refresher)
  3. a staff survey or face-to-face session to ensure take-up and understanding of the policy
  4. an onsite inspection of the campuses to ensure child-safety hazards are being eliminated (Inspection checklist appended below)
- b. **MCC Risk Management Strategies** - In order to focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment every inspection of the school venues considers the school environment and the characteristics and needs of our students.
  1. Every meeting at all levels of the school has Child Safety as a standing agenda point.
  2. A register of risks of child abuse is maintained in the office of the Principal's Assistant. This register records any noted risks, and the responsive actions that are taken. It is important that the age and other aspects of the nature of the children are taken into account in identifying and mitigating risks of child abuse.
  3. Records of the above are retained for minimum retention periods in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards. (see POL03 Privacy Policy)

## **Statement 3 relates to Standard 3**

### **3. Statement about Student empowerment**

#### **Policy Statement:**

MCC will ensure that students are empowered about their rights, they will be given the opportunity to participate in decisions affecting them and they will be taken seriously.

#### **Procedures to support Policy:**

This means that students are informed about their rights to safety, to information and to participation. We are a school that recognises the importance of friendships, and support from peers is encouraged, because it helps students feel safe and be less isolated.

Our staff are to remain attuned to signs of harm. (See Child Safety Code of Conduct above) We will facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-

making and raise their concerns. MCC has strategies in place to develop a culture that gives agency and voice to students. (See POL 11 Welfare and Engagement Policy for details) MCC will ensure students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

The school will develop curriculum planning documents that detail the strategies and actions MCC will take to implement student empowerment.

#### **Statement 4 relates to Standard 4**

##### **4. Statement about Family Engagement**

###### **Policy Statement:**

MCC will ensure that families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

###### **Procedures to support Policy:**

This will mean that families participate in decisions including policy matters related to child safety, and that MCC engages and openly communicates with families and the school community about its child safe approach. MCC will ensure that relevant information is accessible through our website. (see MCC website)

#### **Statement 5 relates to Standard 5**

##### **5. Statement about Diversity and Equity**

###### **Policy Statement:**

MCC will ensure that equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

###### **Procedures to support Policy:**

We as a school, work to understand the diverse circumstances of students. We provide support and respond to vulnerable students.

We also pay particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from minority cultural and linguistic backgrounds, indigenous students, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and students who are non-mainstream in relation to their gender or sexuality.

We work to ensure that students, staff, volunteers and the school community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

#### **Statement 6 relates to Standard 6**

##### **6. Suitable staff and volunteers**

**Policy Statement:** MCC will ensure that people working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

###### **Procedures to Support Policy:**

To fulfil the above policy statement, we will clearly state in our recruitment advertisements the job's requirements, duties, responsibilities, essential qualifications and experience regarding child safety and wellbeing. All applicants for jobs as well as volunteers will be informed about MCC's child safety practices including the code of conduct. (see Policy 21 Recruitment and Employment Policy)

When recruiting employees, MCC will sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance, or any equivalent background check; and where the person will be engaged in child-related work, collect and record: (1) proof of the person's identity; (2) information about any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications; (3) the person's history of work involving children; (4) references that address the person's suitability for the job and for working with children. (see Policy 21 Recruitment and Employment Policy)

Registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching is an equivalent background check. MCC will also ensure that school staff, members of the governing body, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of the role, and which includes: (1) - information on the child safety code of conduct; and (2) - where relevant to the role, the child safety and wellbeing policy and the procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse; (3) their responsibilities to students, information sharing and reporting obligations, and record keeping obligations. (see Policy 21 Recruitment and Employment Policy)

MCC will also ensure that ongoing supervision and people management of staff and volunteers focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

#### **Governance Audit of these Procedures**

As part of the cyclical review by the governing bodies (Board of Directors and College Council), these CSS recruitment protocols will be audited. The suggested inclusions in this audit are:

- Advertising: checking that recruitment adverts include worded reference to the fact that applicants are expected to be compliant with the Child Safety Standards.
- Interviews: checking with interviewers, and (successfully appointed) interviewees to confirm that there was discussion during the interview about the need for a culture embedding the CSS and the implementation of MCC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Referees: checking that referees are contacted, and that the questions to referees include questioning to see if the referee has any reason to be concerned about CSS in relation to the applicant.

#### **Statement 7 relates to Standard 7**

##### **7. Statement about Processes for Complaints and Concerns being Child Focussed**

#### **Policy Statement:**

MCC will ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

#### **Procedures to Support Policy:**

In order to support this policy statement, MCC has a publicly available complaint-handling policy that is accessible, child-focused, culturally safe and easily understood by the school community. (see POL08 Complaints and Grievances Policy) POL08 outlines the process for making a complaint about MCC or the behaviour of any person within MCC (for example staff, volunteers, contractors, families, children or students). POL08 clarifies the roles and responsibilities of leadership, school staff, and volunteers in relation to handling complaints; and the process for dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the code of conduct and obligations to act and report.

## **Statement 8 relates to Standard 8**

### **8. Statement about Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness**

**Policy Statement:** MCC will ensure that staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

#### **Procedures to support Policy:**

**School Staff** - To fulfil the above policy statement, MCC will ensure that, at least annually, school staff receive training and information on child safety that includes:

1. the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy of the school;
2. the Child Safety Code of Conduct of the school;
3. guidance on recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other students;
4. guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing, and supporting colleagues who disclose harm;
5. guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for students;
6. guidance on their information sharing and record keeping obligations; and
7. guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

**Volunteers** - MCC will also ensure that volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive training and information that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness required to keep students safe and that is appropriate to the nature and responsibilities of their role, including what type of training and information is appropriate to their role. And ensure that school staff and volunteers are supported to implement the child safety and wellbeing policy of the school to the extent that it is applicable to their role and responsibilities.

**Governing Bodies** - ensure that, at least annually, appropriate training and guidance is provided to the members of the governing bodies about individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse; child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment; and the child safety policies, procedures and practices of the school.

## **Statement 9 relates to Standard 9**

### **9. Statement about Child Safety in physical and online environments**

**Policy Statement:** MCC will ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed.

**Procedures to support Policy:** To fulfil the above policy statement, MCC will...

1. ensure that the child safety and wellbeing policies, and the procedures and practices of the school enable school staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks in school environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
2. develop and endorse a statement regarding online conduct and online safety that is consistent with this child safety and wellbeing policy and practices, and child safety code of conduct of the school. (see POL02 Communications Policy)
3. ensure the procurement policies of the school for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of students. This is because MCC procure a wide range of goods

and services, some of which may be obtained at no cost. Child safe procurement policies apply regardless of the value of the product or service.

### **Statement 10 relates to Standard 10**

#### **10. Statement about Review of Child Safety Practices**

**Policy Statement:** MCC will ensure that the implementation of Ministerial Order 1359 is regularly reviewed and improved

**Procedures to support Policy:** To fulfil the above policy statement, MCC will...

1. review and evaluate the child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices of the school after any significant child safety incident, or at least every two years, and improve where applicable.
2. ensure complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement.
3. report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to school staff, volunteers, the school community, and families and students where appropriate.

### **Statement 11 relates to Standard 11**

#### **11. Statement about Implementation of Child Safety Practices**

**Policy Statement:** MCC will have policies and procedures that document how MCC is safe for children, young people and students.

**Procedures to support Policy:** To fulfil the above policy statement, MCC will...

1. Implement practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with Min. 1359.
2. Ensure that the policies and procedures and related statements and records:
  - a. address all Child Safe Standards
  - b. are understood such that they can be implemented by all relevant school staff, the governing body and volunteers
  - c. are championed and modelled by leaders
  - d. are documented and easy to understand
  - e. are informed by best practice models and stakeholder consultation.

### **Appendix One: Responding to Indications of Child Abuse**

Adults of Melton Christian College share the responsibility for ensuring children are safe from harm, and that includes our responsibility to report abuse.

1. Rarely but sometimes an adult might need to report child abuse urgently/immediately without further consultation among Pastoral Care or Senior Management staff. Thus, it is sometimes appropriate to report to DHS or Police first, then in all cases of reporting, it is important that Pastoral Care and/or Senior Management staff be notified immediately afterwards. Senior Management will notify insurers as appropriate.
2. In response to less urgent scenarios of concern, adults who have concerns about children being abused should initially speak to the Head of Pastoral Care to see what actions and/or reporting may already be underway in that case, and then confirm that verbal communication with an email that includes (by CC), the Head of School and the Principal for their information.
3. Adults who suspect child abuse but who are unsure about the appropriate way to report that suspicion should contact Child FIRST (part of DHS) in the Melton area; see the



appendix below, or if they see the need to respond to more urgent or serious cases, they should contact Child PROTECTION (part of DHS) see the appendix below.

4. Adults who have immediate concerns about child's immediate safety may need to call Police on 000

### **Appendix Two – Reporting to Child FIRST or reporting to Child PROTECTION**

1. **Child FIRST** A referral to Child FIRST (Child FIRST Melton: 1300 138 180) should be considered if the reasons for concern have a low to moderate impact on the child. Also, if the immediate safety of the child is not compromised.
2. **Child PROTECTION or POLICE?** To report concerns that are life threatening ring Victoria Police 000. To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit, call the Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78 (24 hours, 7 days)

### **Appendix Three – Governance Audit of these Protocols**

As part of the cyclical review by the governing bodies (Board of Directors and College Council), these CSS recruitment protocols will be audited.

The suggested inclusions in this audit are:

- Advertising: checking that recruitment adverts include worded reference to the fact that applicants are expected to be compliant with the Child Safety Standards.
- Interviews: checking with interviewers, and (successfully appointed) interviewees to confirm that there was discussion during the interview about the need for a culture embedding the CSS and the implementation of the MCC Child Safe Policy.
- Referees: checking that referees are contacted, and that the questions to referees include questioning to see if the referee has any reason to be concerned about CSS in relation to the applicant.
- Employment History: checking to see that the applicant's employment history looks realistic and that if there are unexplained elements, time-gaps, or inconsistencies, these are cleared up before an employment position is offered to the applicant.

## Appendix Four - Child Safe Standards: Governance Audit Interview

### Interview Guide Questions

- To what extent do you see an organisational culture of child safety being embedded throughout the departments you work within?
- In what ways do the school’s leaders embed a culture of child safety?
- What part do you see the governing bodies (Board of Directors and College Council) playing in the effort to embed an organisational culture of child safety?
- Would you describe yourself as familiar with MCC’s child safe policy?
- Can you tell me any of the elements that the policy includes?
- Are your colleagues generally familiar with the child safe policy?
- Do you ...
  - think that the governing bodies (Board of Directors and College Council) would be familiar with the policy?
  - get a sense that the governing bodies promote the policy?
- Would you say that you are familiar with the VIT Code of Conduct, and the additional points that establish the College’s expectations for appropriate behaviour with children?
- Can you tell me any elements of these Codes of Conduct?
- Do you have the opportunity among the MCC community to promote familiarity with the VIT Code of Conduct, and the additional points that establish the College’s expectations for appropriate behaviour with children?
- Are there ways that you can take part in screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel?
- Would you know what to do to respond to and to report suspected child abuse?
- Would you say your colleagues always work to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse?
- Would you say that the school leaders encourage staff always to work towards appropriate participation and empowerment of children?
- Would you say that the staff here do always work towards appropriate participation and empowerment of children?

### Appendix Five - Child Safe Standards checklist for inspection of school site, campus

Campus:	Areas Inspected
Date:	Inspected by:
Additional info about inspection:	

Observations supporting CS	Suitability	.....Comments.....	Rating
Cleaners cupboards access/egress			

Cleaning chemicals storage areas			
Corners of buildings			
Corridors and their usage			
Cubbies			
Cupboard access			
Doors and windows			
Emergency assembly areas			
Equipment storage areas			
External - Out of bounds areas			
External - Pathways			
External - plantations			
External - Plants, shrubs and trees			
Food storage areas			
Furniture - classroom			
Furniture - exterior			
Hidden corners external			
Hidden corners internal			
Kitchens, kitchenettes			
Lighting in corridors			
Lighting in rooms and corridors			
Lighting in storerooms			
Lighting to cupboards			
Location of doors, windows			
Lockable cupboards			
Open visibility generally			
Outdoor - boundaries and fences			
Outdoor - Car-park areas			
Outdoor - Driveways			
Outdoor - playground equipment			
Outdoor - Retaining walls			
Outdoor – steps and slopes			
Play areas visibility			

Shedding, containers, etc			
Stairs/stairwells and access			
Storage areas access/egress			
Storage rooms			
Visibility around exit doors			
Visitor access			
Void areas			
Walkways			
Walls			
Waste processing areas			
Water storage tanks areas			

**Risk rating** – Very High, High, Medium, Low  
(VH, H, & M, are to be responded to with immediate interim safety measures)

**Additional information or observations ...**
