



# St Michael's Collegiate School

## Safeguarding Students and Children Policy

Reference	Date Last amended	Date of next review	Status
HR13	17 September 2020	September 2022	Approved by: Board

### 1. Purpose

St Michael's Collegiate School (Collegiate) is a not-for-profit school providing education services to students and children from early learning to Year 12, with ages ranging from 2 to 18 years, based in Hobart, Tasmania.

Collegiate is committed to the safety, wellbeing and protection of all students and children in our care. This commitment includes the provision of a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and requires all employees, volunteers and visitors to model and encourage exemplary behaviour that protects students from harm.

We promote equity and respect diversity by:

- actively anticipating children's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities;
- by giving all children access to information, support and complaints processes; and

paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those who are unable to live at home. We nurture a culture where children feel safe and have a voice in decisions that affect them. The School has the responsibility to ensure that every member of our community understands the responsibility they have and the important role they play to ensure the safety of all children in our care. We will take a proactive and preventive role in child safety and support a climate where all people feel safe to report concerns. The School is committed to following employment procedures that accord to the principles of the Australian Childhood Foundation's Safeguarding Children Program.

We take seriously our responsibility to deliver a learning environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. Our Board approves and endorses Collegiate's commitment to safeguarding students and children from abuse and neglect.

It is the responsibility of all at Collegiate, from the Board, Principal and Senior Management to staff and volunteers, to understand the important responsibility they have to:

- protect students and children from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our people;
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the students and children to whom we provide a service; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs and services.

We expect all within our organisation, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from such harm by:

- adopting the practices and behaviour we have set as our standard when carrying out their roles, and
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to our management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

This Safeguarding Students and Children Policy (Policy) has been adopted by the St Michael's Collegiate Board.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all personnel involved with Collegiate.

## 3. Related documents

The following Collegiate policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Code of Conduct;
- Child Protection Policy;
- Mandatory Reporting Policy;
- Staff use of Social Media Policy;
- Safeguarding Practices and Behaviours Guidelines; and
- Professional Responsibilities of the Teacher.

## 4. Related Legislation

In upholding this Policy, the following legislation must be considered by all Collegiate personnel:

- Child, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997.
- Family Law Act 1975
- The Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 or Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act 1998
- Equal Employment Opportunity Act 1987
- Workplace Relations Act 1996
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995

## 5. Definitions

Refer to Appendix 1 – Definitions.

## 6. Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for the development, endorsement and regular review of this Policy, ensuring that the School has appropriate resources to effectively embed a culture of safeguarding students and children. The Governance and Risk Committee is the sub-committee of the Board that works with Management to ensure that risks are appropriately managed and that policies, procedures and other documents are reviewed before recommendations are made to the Board. The Board delegates the implementation of the Policy to the Principal. The role of each entity in relation to the development and compliance of this Policy is detailed in the table at Appendix 2 - Responsibilities.

## 7. Our Commitment

St Michael's Collegiate School endorses and supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (ratified in Australia in 1990). The Convention recognises that children under the age of 18 years need special care and protection.

In recognition of our support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we make the following commitments and expectations with the purpose to protect the children, young people and families who access our activities, programs, services and facilities:

### **We are committed to safeguarding children & young people**

Through our Safeguarding Children Policy, we document our clear commitment to safeguarding students and children from abuse and neglect. We communicate our commitment to all of our personnel and give them access to a copy of our Policy.

### **Our personnel know the behaviour we expect**

We ensure that each person involved in our delivery of services to students and children understands their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding students and children from abuse and neglect. We utilise clear position descriptions which clearly state relevant safeguarding requirements. We have a code of conduct, which is approved and endorsed from the highest levels of our organisation that outlines our expectations for behaviour towards students and children. Our personnel are given a copy of and have access to the code of conduct. Our personnel indicate, in writing, that they have read and are committed to the code of conduct.

### **We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable**

We have appropriate measures in place to minimise the likelihood that we will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with students or children. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:

- our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for positions;
- face-to-face interviews are held which includes safeguarding-related questions;
- two professional reference checks are undertaken; and
- screening checks are undertaken, including identity, criminal record, working with children checks and qualification checks.

### **Induction and training is part of our commitment**

We provide all new personnel with information during their induction about our commitment to Safeguarding including our Safeguarding Students and Children Policy, Code of Conduct and Mandatory Reporting Policy. We have a process for ensuring all of our personnel complete Safeguarding Children training. We support ongoing education and training for our personnel to ensure safeguarding information is provided in an ongoing way.

### **We encourage the involvement of children, young people and their parents**

We involve and communicate with students and children, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children and their carers (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- our commitment to safeguarding children and their rights;
- the behaviour we expect of our personnel and of themselves; and
- our policy about responding to child abuse.

We have processes for encouraging two-way communication with children and families. We seek their feedback and have a process for responding. We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and involvement.

### **Our personnel understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse**

Our policy for responding to child abuse is approved and endorsed from the highest levels of our organisation, and applies to all our personnel. The policy states that:

- personnel must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concerns with policies, practices or the behaviour of personnel.
- personnel must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements
- personnel must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect including who will receive reports
- failure to report is serious misconduct

Our personnel are given a copy of and have access to the policy and understand the implications of the policy for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

### **We maintain and improve our policies and practices**

While the Board has overall responsibility for policies and practices, it recognises the importance of commitment from Board, Management, Staff and others in order to successfully implement policies and procedures that safeguard student and child safety including wellbeing. We are committed to maintaining and improving our policies, procedures and practices to safeguard students and children from neglect and abuse. We have assigned responsibility for maintaining and improving our policies and procedures to a 'Safeguarding Children Program Coordinator' (Collegiate's Chief Operating Officer).

We monitor our personnel and external providers to ensure appropriate practice and behaviour, and policies are followed. We communicate with our personnel to ensure that they understand our policies and that the policies are effective in the work place. We require our personnel to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with students and children and we review police record and Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) checks periodically.

We have formally reviewed our service delivery to identify and document potential risks to students or children. We undertake formal reviews, at least annually, to identify and document potential risks to students or children associated with our service delivery. We have a procedure to undertake annual reviews, as part of our ongoing compliance with safeguarding requirements.

## **Our commitment to maintaining a child safe culture**

It is a requirement that Collegiate adopt this Policy as a minimum standard and that Collegiate become and remain compliant, at all times with, the Seven Standards of the Safeguarding Children Accreditation Program of the Australian Childhood Foundation. The Standards, as set out below, when implemented in their totality, support our organisation to develop and maintain an effective child safe culture across all of its activities, programs and services.

Standard One	Commitment to Safeguarding Children
Standard Two	Staff roles and conduct
Standard Three	Recruitment and screening
Standard Four	Staff induction and training
Standard Five	Involving children and parents
Standard Six	Child abuse reports and allegations
Standard Seven	Supporting a child-safe culture

## **8. Records and documentation**

We retain archived records of changes to this document through our policy procedures.

## **9. Communication**

Collegiate commits to ensuring this Policy is communicated to:

### **Service users**

- on our website
- in age-accessible formats for students and children
- as part of enrolment forms and program information provided to parents and families

### **All 'Involved' Staff**

- during recruitment and induction processes
- in minimum compulsory training on safeguarding students and children policies and procedures
- on agendas for team meetings
- when there are any updates or changes to this document

## **10. Monitoring and review**

This document will be reviewed at least every 3 years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Board and/or Principal. We retain records to document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

External audit and verification based on a sample, conducted by the Australian Childhood Foundation shall occur at 3 yearly intervals.

This Policy is issued by order of the Board of St Michael's Collegiate School, represented by:



**Dr Adam Forsyth**  
**Principal**

## Appendix 1 – Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All persons with responsibility for delivering services to students or children;</li> <li>Anyone involved in dealing with reports or allegations of child abuse or with access to children's or young people's records;</li> <li>All Board Members, the Principal(CEO), Senior Management Staff and staff including those whom we employ directly, those we employ indirectly through other groups or organisations, and all those who are involved as volunteers.</li> </ul>
<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a child that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Verbal</i> (name calling, put downs, threats);</li> <li><i>Physical</i> (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting);</li> <li><i>Social</i> (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or</li> <li><i>Psychological</i> (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).</li> </ul>
<b>Child</b>	A person under the age of eighteen years.
<b>Safeguarding Code of Conduct</b>	The Safeguarding Code of Conduct aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to the students and children in the St Michael's Collegiate School Community. The Safeguarding Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with students and children.
<b>Direct role in providing activities, programs and services to students and children</b>	A direct role is considered one that has contact with students and children that is not incidental, but normally part of providing a service, program or activity for students and children. This direct delivery may require regular physical contact and forms of ongoing communication. For example, coaching, bus drivers.
<b>Emotional or psychological abuse</b>	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
<b>Family Violence</b>	<p>Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life.</p> <p>Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Exposure to family violence places students and children at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.</p>
<b>Grooming</b>	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all.

Term	Definition
<b>Harm</b>	<p>Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;</li> <li>• sexual abuse or exploitation;</li> <li>• a single act, omission or circumstance; and</li> <li>• a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.</p>
<b>Other persons</b>	<p>All staff and volunteers who work for the organisation whether in a paid or unpaid capacity.</p>
<b>Physical abuse</b>	<p>Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.</p>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.</p>
<b>Sexual exploitation</b>	<p>Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution.</p>

## Appendix 2 – Responsibility

Entity	Role / Responsibility
<b>Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development, endorsement and annual review of this Policy.</li> <li>• Ensure that the School has appropriate resources to effectively embed a culture of safeguarding students and children.</li> <li>• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging students and children in support of this Policy and its expectations.</li> <li>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare.</li> </ul>
<b>Principal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the commitment to this Policy and its expectations.</li> <li>• Support policy review on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance to the Policy via an inbuilt review mechanism.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this policy.</li> <li>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare.</li> <li>• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging students and children in support of this Policy and its expectations.</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Management Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all involved staff understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation. This includes induction, a minimum of one compulsory training session, and regular discussion and guidance at supervision and team meetings.</li> <li>• Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst relevant member stakeholders.</li> <li>• Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/work procedures and guidelines are in place to support child protection practice in accordance with the expectations of this Policy.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy.</li> <li>• Ensure to support Personnel in a joint way with a decision to initiate any form of action to protect a child from abuse, neglect, grooming or exploitation.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any Staff member involved in a matter relating to or responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.</li> <li>• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging students and children in support of this Policy.</li> <li>• Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified.</li> <li>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection and member welfare.</li> <li>• Ensure that our staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practices in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching or volunteering with children and families.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policies relevant to safeguarding students and children.</li> <li>• Undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding students and children.</li> <li>• Seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy.</li> <li>• Take action to protect students and children from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation.</li> <li>• Assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.</li> </ul>

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

<b>VERSION</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>	<b>EDITED BY</b>	<b>CHANGE DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>POLICY OWNER</b>
1	January 2017	New	New	Deputy Principal
2	March 2018	HR	Update to include reference to ACF Safeguarding Code of Conduct	
3	August 2018	FL	Incorporating ACF feedback	Deputy Principal
4	August 2020	BC, AH, FL	Update to terminology in the document, reference to Pool staff and inclusion of the latest ACF criteria.	Deputy Principal