



ST MICHAEL'S PARISH SCHOOL ASHBURTON

Code of Conduct

May 2016

1. Rationale

Registered schools have an important responsibility for keeping children safe and are therefore, already taking the necessary steps to protect children from abuse.

The St Michael's Parish School Code of Conduct has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment and sets explicit standards about the ways in which school staff, volunteers, visitors and school council members are expected to behave with children. St Michael's is committed to providing a culture of child safety in the school and is dedicated to having zero tolerance towards child abuse.

All school staff, volunteers, visitors and school council members of St Michael's are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

2. Acceptable Behaviours

All personnel, that is, school staff, volunteers, visitors and school council members of St Michael's are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to the St Michael's Parish School Child Protection Policy at all times and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- treating everyone with respect;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if being told that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification);
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having zero tolerance towards discrimination);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not left alone with a child;
- reporting any child safety concerns to the St Michael's Parish School Leadership Team or Child Safety Officer;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the St Michael's Parish School Leadership Team or St Michael's Parish School Child Safety Officer, and ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/ren are safe and any allegation is reported to the police or child protection;
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*;
- 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; and
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

3. Unacceptable Behaviours

School staff, volunteers, visitors and school council members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps);

- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or conduct actions of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves (for example, toileting or changing clothes);
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities);
- put children at risk of being exposed to pornographic or sexually explicit material;
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- discriminate against any child (including, but not limited to, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability);
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership or child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent, or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is deemed acceptable;
- have any online contact with a child (including via social media, email, instant messaging, etc.) or their family (unless necessary, for example, providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work);
- use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account;
- exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses;
- photograph or video a child without the consent of their parents or guardians;
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs; and
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code of conduct to St Michael's Parish School leadership or Child Safety Officer.

4. Definitions

A full list of definitions for *Ministerial Order No. 870* is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafef.

4.1 Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence; or
 - an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence; or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

4.2 Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

4.3 Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

4.4 School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

4.5 School staff means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service; or
 - employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act; or

- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- in a non-government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
 - directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
 - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
 - a minister of religion¹
- **school governing authority** means:
 - the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
 - the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
 - the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

Explanatory note: There is a wide variety of school governance arrangements. Depending on the way a school is constituted and operated, the governing body for a school may be the school board, the school council, or some other person or entity. The school governing authorities may share or assign responsibility for discharging the requirements imposed by this Order, in accordance with the school's internal governance arrangements.

5. Evaluation

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed as part of the St Michael's School Improvement Plan review cycle.

6. Ratification

This Code of Conduct was ratified by John Whitehouse (SAC Chairperson) in May 2016.

¹minister of religion has the same meaning as

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

I agree to adhere to the St Michael's Code of Conduct.

Full Name:

Signature:

Date:

¹ *minister of religion* has the same meaning as in the *Working With Children Act 2005*.