



Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) schools operate with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and are owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

## 1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the strategies and actions in place to ensure that families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school.

## 2. Scope

These procedures apply in St John the Apostle

## 3. Principles

The following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Parents and Carers are given the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- Our school engages and openly communicates with Parents, Carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach
- Relevant information relating to child safety and wellbeing about their child or children will be available to parents and carers
- Parents, Carers and other members of the school community can provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Parents, Carers and other members of the school community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

## 4. School Commitment

Our school is committed to ensuring that all members of our school community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing.

The Principal and school leaders at our school recognise their responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing.

The Principal ensures the following actions and strategies are implemented to ensure we meet this commitment.

### 4.1. School leadership actions and strategies

- Provide timely updates about child safety policies, procedures, and initiatives through newsletters, the school website, information sessions and community forums.
- Communicate any changes to child safety legislation or school requirements in clear and accessible language.

- Ensure child safety and wellbeing policies are publicly available, easily understood, and regularly reviewed.
- Promote these policies to families, carers and students, encouraging feedback and questions.
- Invite families and carers to participate in consultations, working groups and surveys related to child safety.
- Encourage community involvement in the review and development of child-safe practices.
- Ensure staff complete mandatory child safety training and maintain a strong understanding of their legal and ethical responsibilities.
- Provide age-appropriate education for students about their rights, healthy relationships, help-seeking and protective behaviours.
- Ensure that all members of the school community understand the processes for raising concerns, reporting misconduct and responding to child safety issues.
- Promote multiple, confidential reporting avenues for students, parents and staff.
- Engage with families and community groups to ensure strategies support diversity, cultural safety and the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of communication and engagement strategies related to child safety.
- Respond to community feedback and incidents by strengthening practices and updating policies as needed.

## 4.2. Actions and strategies for Staff

School Staff also have a responsibility to support MACS, the school's governing authority, and school leaders in communicating and engaging with Parents, Carers and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility are listed below.

- Actively model and uphold the school's child safety values, code of conduct and behavioural expectations.
- Demonstrate respect, inclusion and cultural safety for all students and families in everyday interactions.
- Provide Parents and Carers with timely, accurate and sensitive communication regarding student wellbeing, safety concerns or behavioural issues, in line with school procedures.
- Use accessible, respectful and age-appropriate language when communicating with students about safety and wellbeing topics.
- Inform families and Carers about relevant child safety policies, procedures and expectations.
- Direct community members to appropriate school policies or staff when questions or concerns arise.
- Remain vigilant in identifying signs of harm, neglect or abuse, and follow mandated reporting requirements promptly and accurately.
- Support students who disclose safety concerns and ensure they understand they will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Participate in meetings, interviews and community events that promote student safety, wellbeing and connection.

- Encourage open communication from Parents and Carers and listen to concerns without judgement.
- Reinforce student voice by listening to their views about safety, wellbeing, learning and relationships.
- Deliver or support child-safety and wellbeing education programs that help students understand their rights and how to seek help.
- Approach communication thoughtfully to ensure all families—including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, students and families, and students with disability—feel welcomed, respected and heard.
- Seek support from leadership or specialist staff where additional cultural or communication needs are identified.
- Engage in ongoing professional development in child safety, wellbeing, cultural safety and respectful communication.
- Apply new knowledge and practices to strengthen engagement with Parents, Carers and students.

## 5. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this document can be found in the [Glossary of Terms](#).

### **Carer**

Refers to those with permanent care, foster care or kinship care arrangements.

### **Parent**

A person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person. This may include a biological parent or another person who has been granted parental responsibility by a court order.

### **Parental responsibility**

All the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority, which by law, parents have in relation to their children.

### **Principal**

The role of the principal in a MACS school is to lead and manage the planning, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the education of all students.

### **Staff**

Staff or staff member refers to the MACS board, board committee and working party members, MACS executives, principals, employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers in MACS schools and offices. The term includes those involved in religious ministry.

### **Volunteer**

A person who performs work without remuneration or reward for MACS or a MACS school.

## 6. Related policies and documents

### **Related MACS policies and documents**

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedures

Protect – Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

## Policy information table

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