



Catholic Regional College Sydenham Policy: Child Safe

Catholic Regional College Sydenham has developed the following Child Safe Policy. This Policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse.

The Policy forms the foundation of the College's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the College's culture with respect to child safety.

It is designed to be published on our public website as well as communicated through other mediums such as newsletters, our annual report and in induction and welcome packs for Federation of CRC Council members, staff and Volunteers. A PDF version of Catholic Regional College Sydenham's Child Safe Policy is available [here](#).

The College's Child Safe Policy has been approved and endorsed by the College's Federation of CRC Council and is regularly reviewed by the Federation of CRC Council.

Our Child Safe Policy

Introduction

"The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. 'The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.'" (Congregation for Catholic education 1997, par. 9)

At Catholic Regional College Sydenham we strive to live, learn and teach together in a community guided by Gospel values. We believe the care, safety and wellbeing of young people is a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel.

Catholic Regional College Sydenham is entrusted, in partnership with parents/guardians/caregivers, with the total education of our students. Staff, therefore, have a duty of care to students during College operating hours and at other times when a staff/student relationship exists. Staff fulfill this duty by taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions, which they can reasonably foresee, would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student.

Under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Students 2009–2020, protecting students is everyone's responsibility – parents, communities, governments and businesses all have a role to play. In Victoria, a joint protocol involving the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)



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Child Protection, the Department of Education and Training (DET), licensed student's services and Victorian schools, including Catholic schools, exists to protect the safety and wellbeing of students.

Objectives

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College;
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College; and
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Catholic Regional College Sydenham is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

At Catholic Regional College Sydenham we have a **zero tolerance** for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Catholic Regional College Sydenham is also committed to:

- Reporting to DHHS Child Protection all suspicions, allegations or disclosures of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect;
- Reporting to DHHS Child Protection when a belief is formed that a student has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed;
- Making the student's ongoing safety and wellbeing the primary focus of decision-making at all times;
- Sharing appropriate information, expertise and resources with other service providers supporting students and to cooperate at all times with all agencies in order to protect children;



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- Protecting and promoting the cultural and spiritual identity of students and encouraging them to maintain their connection to their family or community of origin; and
- Enabling a student involved in a child protection issue and the student's family to access appropriate services in order to reduce the long-term effects of abuse or neglect.

Child Safe Values and Principles

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. The College environment is expected to be safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering.
7. The College community is dedicated to the protection and safety of all students as reflected in the [**CECV Commitment to Child Safety**](#), the College Charter of Rights and Responsibilities and this Policy.
8. The College community embeds a zero tolerance to child abuse.
9. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
10. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, [**Direct Contact Volunteers****](#), Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with children.
11. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.



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12. Child protection training is mandatory for all Federation of CRC Council members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers. The College will ensure that training is provided by way of induction and annual renewal training to ensure that everyone in the College community knows and understands their role in the protection of children and in ensuring a zero tolerance approach to child abuse is embedded in the culture and practice of the College's operations.

13. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff adhere to child protection legislation and policies.

14. Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed either legally or pastorally.

15. All children have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/carers.

16. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.

17. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

18. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

19. The child protection strategies apply to all facets of the College environment (inclusive of physical and online environments) both on and off school property.

20. The College community is required and directed to report any incidents of reported or suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

***Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.*

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines "direct contact" as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- *physical contact;*
- *face to face contact;*



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- *contact by post or other written communication;*
- *contact by telephone or other oral communication; or*
- *contact by email or other electronic communication.*

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in College camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

Child Protection Program

Catholic Regional College Sydenham is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening Federation of CRC Council members, staff, Direct Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers;
- procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct;
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;
- a child protection training program;



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- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards); and
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Catholic Regional College Sydenham's induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.

Additional, ongoing child protection training is provided at least annually.

Staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers are supported and supervised by the College's [Child Safety Officers](#) to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child protection.

Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Catholic Regional College Sydenham, the Federation of CRC Council and staff, as well as Volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

Federation of CRC Council

Each member of the Federation of CRC Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the College's Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the College and are responsible for holding the Principal and the Leadership Team accountable for effective implementation.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the College's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the College.

The Principal, together with the Leadership team, shall ensure that staff receive adequate preventative and risk management training through induction and professional learning (online training modules) in relation to child safety and protection policies and procedures, inclusive of mandatory reporting, on an annual and ongoing basis. They shall also ensure that the College's pastoral care program and structures reflect all child safety and protection policies and procedures. This will include a peer to peer training program developed for all students at Catholic Regional College Sydenham, given the College is a senior secondary campus.



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The College's Child Safety Officers

A number of staff members have been nominated as the College's Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Staff Members

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. This includes signing off on the Code of Conduct. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Safety Officers.

Direct Contact Volunteers

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection Program, particularly this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Safety Officers.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with College administrative functions.



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Third Party Contractors

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and College cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the Third Party Contractor.

External Education Providers

An external education provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College.

The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All external education providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All external education providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Catholic Regional College Sydenham may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

Reporting and Responding to Concerns

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for the Federation of CRC Council, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College's nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains



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detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College's [Child Safety Officers](#).

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Catholic Regional College Sydenham will ensure that the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are followed in relation to responding to a child abuse case or suspected child abuse report.

Expected Outcomes

Catholic Regional College Sydenham staff work respectfully and collaboratively with families and communities.

All Catholic Regional College Sydenham staff are educated on child safety and protection and are aware of and adhere to their professional obligations and responsibilities.

All allegations receive a prompt response and are clearly documented in accordance with evidence procedures for court hearings.

The College has an established Child Safety Committee, whose terms of reference are to ensure the protection of students, adequately report information to regulatory authorities and maintain and update College policies and procedures, as well as design the training and induction programs to ensure all are aware of their obligations. The Child Safety Committee comprises of:

- A Deputy Principal (representing the Principal when they are unable to attend meetings personally), otherwise both the Deputy Principal and the Principal will be in attendance;
- The College's Child Safety Officers;
- Learning Enhancement Leader: Students with Additional Needs
- A College Psychologist; and
- Senior Cluster Coordinator.

The following staff have specific roles in relation to child safety and protection at the College



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- College Leadership Team – policy review and development;
- Director of Community Engagement – Child Safety Officer;
- College Psychologist – adequate reporting procedures; and
- Convener of Student Support Programs - adequate reporting procedures.

Child Safety Standards

Catholic Regional College is committed to enacting the seven minimum child safety standards with an overarching principle of inclusion which applies to each of the standards. The intention of these Child Safe Standards is to make schools consider and address child abuse situations and risks in an integrated and proactive fashion.

Ministerial order No. 870 ensures that school governing authorities must take account of the diversity of children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and children who are vulnerable.

These standards are:

1. Organisation culture for Child safety
2. Child Safety Policy
3. Code of Conduct
4. Human resources practices
5. Protect: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse
6. Reducing or removing risks of child abuse
7. Empowerment of Children

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS
Responding to Student Sexual Offending

PROTECT VICTORIA POLICE VICTORIA GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CECV

1 IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and those involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000** for urgent medical and/or police assistance
- reporting to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maximise the integrity of the premises (e.g. remove and preserve evidence)

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report incidents, responses and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible.

VICTORIA POLICE
All responses to 000

DHS CHILD PROTECTION
If you believe that:

- the victim's parent/careers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
- the student who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
 - aged over 16 and under 18 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address their behaviour
 - may be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse.

INTERNALLY
ALSO report internally to:

- **School Principal and/or Leadership Team** (if not contact Government Schools, DET Security Services Unit, Catholic Schools, Diocesan education office

You must identify a contact person at the school for future liaison with Victoria Police and/or Child Protection and seek advice about contacting parents/careers (see **Action 3**).

See the **Four Critical Steps for Schools Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse** for further guidance in these circumstances.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CAREERS

Your Principal **must** consult with **Victoria Police** or **DHS Child Protection** to determine what information can be shared with parents/careers of all impacted students. They may advise:

- **not to contact the parent/careers** if it is inappropriate, where contacting the parent/careers is likely to re-traumatise a victim and has requested that their parent/careers not be notified.
- **to contact the parent/careers** and provide agreed information.

Must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for students who are victims in a student sexual offence AND students who have engaged in a sexual offence. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. This support should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals, outlining support strategies. Strategies may include the development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

As a school staff member you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

- You **must** act by following the 4 critical actions as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a suspicion that a student is a victim of a student sexual offence and/or a student has engaged in sexual offending.
- You **must** act as well if you are unsure and have not directly observed student sexual offending (e.g. if a victim or another person tells you about the offence or sexual offending).
- You **must** use the **Responding to Student Sexual Offending** helpline to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

CONTACT

DHS CHILD PROTECTION ADFS North Division 1800 864 8777 South Division 1800 864 795 East Division 1300 360 391 West Division (toll) 1800 076 899 West Division (toll) 1800 864 977	CHILD FIRST welfare helpline VICTORIA POLICE 000 or contact your local police station DET SECURITY SERVICES UNIT 035 908 826 STUDENT INCIDENT AND RECOVERY UNIT 035 9637 3534	EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH 035 9637 236 DIOCESAN OFFICE Melbourne 035 9487 0226 Ballarat 035 6337 7555 Sunshine 035 9225 8505 Shepparton 035 5445 2337 INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA 035 9625 7290
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AFTER HOURS
After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 1378



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Policy and Program Review

Catholic Regional College Sydenham is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

Managed by: Principal and Deputy Principal - Staffing	Contact Persons: Principal, Deputy Principal – Staffing, Deputy Principal – Students, Director of Community Engagement and Principal’s PA	Approved by: Principal, Deputy Principal - Staffing
Version: 1 - 25/3/2015 2 – 2017 3 – 25/2/2019 4 – 31/12/2019	Date Ratified: Leadership Team: Version 5 – 3/9/2020 Federation of Catholic Regional College Council: September 2020	Next Review Date: Leadership Team: September 2021 Federation of Catholic Regional College Council: September 2021