



OUR LADY OF SION COLLEGE

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Purpose

Our Lady of Sion College Mission statement calls us to always 'speak the truth in love' and compels us to act in the pursuit of 'justice and truth'. Consistent with our mission, the Our Lady of Sion College community is committed to providing a child safe environment. Our Child Safety Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding the young people of Our Lady of Sion against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, school policies/procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as they apply to all College staff and visitors.

Expectations

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and College Board members at Our Lady of Sion College are compelled to actively contribute to a school culture that respects its members. As such they are obligated to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and College Board members at Our Lady of Sion College will be required to sign a declaration that they have been provided with a copy of the Our Lady of Sion Code of Conduct and submit it to the Principal prior to commencing work or when amendments to Code are made. All declarations will be retained by the College.

Visitors to the College will also be required to sign an electronic declaration that they have read the Our Lady of Sion Code of Code upon arrival at the College Reception.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff and visitors are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the College's Child Safety policy and upholding the CECV statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment
- treating everyone in the College community with respect by modelling positive and respectful relationships
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and those with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- ensuring, where practicable, meetings with an individual student or small group of students occur in College meeting rooms, open spaces or classrooms with clear visibility
- understanding all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- When a Reportable Conduct allegation is received by the Principal, the Principal will follow the expectations as outlined by the relevant statutory authorities and the Commission for Children and Young People.
- When the allegation is made against the Principal, contact will be made to the Chair of the Members of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion who will follow the expectations as outlined by the relevant statutory authorities Commission for Children and Young People.
- In all circumstances, allegations of criminal conduct must be reported to the Victorian Police as the first priority.

In the event of an allegation of child abuse being made, the person to whom the allegation is made should:

- listen and respond to the child(ren), whether they are telling you about their safety or the safety of another child
- report any child safety concerns to the College Principal or Deputy Principals
- report any allegations of child abuse to the College Principal or Deputy Principals
- ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)

Unacceptable behaviours

College staff and visitors 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 do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- 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 because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have inappropriate contact with a child or their family outside of the College
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or personal email addresses
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc) or their family unless necessary for example, by providing families with newsletters or assisting students with their school work
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

Definitions

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* (Vic)(grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence, or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm, or
 - serious neglect of a child

Child refers to any enrolled student of Our Lady of Sion College

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.

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.

College 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 College
- online College environments (including email and intranet systems)

- other locations provided by the College for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events)

College staff being: an individual working in a College 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
- Members of the College Board
- a minister of religion
- religious

Reportable Conduct is broken down into listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*:

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect.

Reportable Conduct Scheme provides a system to independently oversee and regulate responses to suspected child abuse. It provides a pathway to prevent people who shouldn't work with children from working with children. It offers a centralised reporting to the Commission for Children & Young People of any allegations against 'employees', regarding child abuse and misconduct involving children.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the Our Lady of Sion Code of Conduct.

Signed: _____ Date: _____