



# ENGAGING FAMILIES IN CHILD SAFETY

## Policy

*“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” – Philippians 4:13*

### Introduction

As a Religious Institute school, Our Lady of Sion College is governed by Our Lady of Sion College Ltd and is conducted in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church as interpreted by the Archbishop of Melbourne.

Catholic education is an active partnership between family and school, where families are recognised as the first and ongoing educators of their children. Schools and families partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for young people’s faith formation, learning, safety and wellbeing.

The College also maintains a strong commitment to the charism and educational mission of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion. This charism enlivens and guides all our practices, structures and relationships and is critical to the realization of the mission of the College.

At Our Lady of Sion College, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our 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 (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

### Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at Our Lady of Sion College 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.

This Policy takes into account the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

### Principles

At Our Lady of Sion College, the following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement.

- Families and carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach
- All members of the school community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Families, carers and other members of the school community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, 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.

### Implementation

Our Lady of Sion College 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 at Our Lady of Sion College.

We implement the following strategies and actions to ensure that we are able to meet this commitment.



## School Leaders

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at Our Lady of Sion College recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- utilising this policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies and practices
- supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their communication and engagement skills and to understand the value and importance of effective communication and engagement
- identifying opportunities for parents and carers to participate in decisions that affect their child's safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available via our website so that they are easily accessible to families, carers and other members of the school community
- engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing. For example, through Parents' Association meeting that are open to all parents and carers
- creating opportunities to ensure that members of the school community are adequately informed about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing e.g. College newsletter, Parents' Association meetings and the College website
- communicating the College's Code of Belonging on enrolment so that parents and carers have a clear understanding of ways they can contribute to a child safe culture within the community.

## School staff, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy

School staff, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy at Our Lady of Sion College also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- creating and maintaining open lines of communication with families, carers and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- liaising with parents and carers in relation to any concerns and/or decisions that affect their child and giving them the opportunity to contribute to any discussions, where appropriate
- ensuring that parents, carers and others in the school community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring they act in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing.

## References and related resources

This Policy applies to school employees, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with related school policies and procedures, including:

1. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities
4. Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context
5. Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners
6. Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing

## Review

Last Review: 2022

Next Review: 2024 (or when updated by MACS)