



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.” Mark 9:37

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. 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 realisation of the mission of the College.

Central to the mission of Our Lady of Sion College is an explicit commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment where the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual and physical wellbeing of our students is a priority.

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).

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school
(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n. 9).

All students enrolled at Our Lady of Sion College have the right to feel safe, and be safe. The wellbeing of the young people in our care will always be our priority, and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where students are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on promoting child safety and wellbeing in the school environment and safeguarding the young people at Our Lady of Sion College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and occupational codes.

All Our Lady of Sion College, Members, Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy at Our Lady of Sion College are expected to actively contribute to a school culture by respecting the dignity of its members, affirming the gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of our students, as noted below. All Members, Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Acceptable Behaviours

All Our Lady of Sion College Members of the Company, Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy at Our Lady of Sion College are responsible for supporting the safety of our students by:

- at all times, adhering to the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety



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- taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- taking into account the needs of all students
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students – particularly if they are telling you that they or another student has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young person's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance for discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a student
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns to a member of the Child Safety Team and Principal or if they are unavailable to a Leadership team member. If the concerns involves the Principal, the Chair of the College Board should be contacted boardchair@sion.catholic.edu.au
- ensuring as quickly as possible that the student is safe if an allegation of child abuse is made
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)
- understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the Reportable Conduct Scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the College's Reportable Conduct Policy
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or specific allegations or concerns about a registered teacher (Principal's responsibility)
- ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

Unacceptable behaviours

All Our Lady of Sion College, Members of the Company, Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy at Our Lady of Sion College must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any special relationships with students or a young person that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment)
- exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, touching or hugging a student)
- put students 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 (for example, toileting or changing clothes)
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of students
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students
- discriminate against any student, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- work or engage with students while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- have contact with a student or their family outside school without the knowledge of the Principal or Deputy Principal Student Wellbeing via the College's established disclosure and



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consent process; accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate

- have any online contact with a student (including by social media, email, instant messaging or their family unless necessary for example, providing families with eNewsletters or assisting students with their school work). All online communication must be via the College email or school approved online platforms, eg Google classroom
- 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 student without the consent of the parents, guardians or carers, or the student
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of students.

Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct published by the VIT. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

Psychologists and School Counsellors

In their dealings with students, psychologists and school counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- the Australian Counselling Association
- Speech Pathology Australia.

Sports and Recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist students to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be 'good sports'
- explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity
- avoiding situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle. The latter requires the written permission of the parent/carer.



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Breaches of this Code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, Our Lady of Sion College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018* (VCEMEA 2018) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact the Chair of the Our Lady of Sion College Board at:

boardchair@sion.catholic.edu.au

Where any other member of the school community, including volunteers and contractors, is suspected of breaching this code, the school is to take appropriate action, including (if applicable) in accordance with the *PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* policy.

In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to Victoria Police, the Commission for Young People and Children (CCYP) and/or a regulatory body, such as the VIT.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct and will abide by it.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Related policies:

- Our Lady of Sion [Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- Our Lady of Sion [Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy](#)
- [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)

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