



Safeguarding Children

Code of Conduct

St. Gerard's

July 2016

Central to the mission of St. Gerard's is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children at St. Gerard's against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

All staff, volunteers, clergy and board members and contractors at St. Gerard's are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms 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 children, as noted below.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, clergy, board/school council members and contractors, are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child (Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child - psychologist, individual lessons one to one in class, Reconciliation, windowless rooms, change rooms, Altar Servers)
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the principal and/or the school's Leadership team

- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the principal and/or a member of the Leadership team.
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe

Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, clergy, board/school council members and contractors, 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 which 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
- 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 contact with a child or their family outside of school without the Principal's knowledge and/or consent (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- Have online contact with a child by the use of social media, personal email accounts and/or instant messaging or their family (unless necessary or school related activities/learning; eg by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with students
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- Work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

The Ministerial Order provides the following definitions:

Child abuse includes:

- (a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - i. a sexual offence
 - ii. an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - i. physical violence
 - ii. serious emotional or psychological harm
- (c) serious neglect of a child. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

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.

School 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:

- All areas of the school
- Online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events.

School staff being; an individual working in a school 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
- A minister of religion.

Minor Review: July 2017

Major review: July 2020