



**St Paul the Apostle**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, DOREEN

## **Commitment to Child Safety**

Dear Parents,

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe all of the time. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse.

At St Paul the Apostle Primary School, Doreen, we strive to maintain a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. We are committed to continually reviewing our Child Safe policies and practices to ensure that every effort is made for ongoing improvement of our Child Safe environment.

We at St Paul the Apostle Primary School, Doreen, recognise that some groups of children are particularly vulnerable we are committed to promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal/linguistically diverse children and also promoting the safety of children with a disability.

Please find attached the CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety and the St Paul the Apostle Child Safe Policy.

Yours sincerely,

Phil Doherty

**Principal**



# Catholic Schools Child Safe Schools

## **CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety**

A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools

The Statement is intended to provide the central focus for child safety<sup>1</sup> across Catholic education in Victoria, built around a unified understanding of the moral imperative and overarching commitments that underpin our drive for improvement and cultural change.

*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)

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as 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.

The CECV has a universal expectation for the protection of children. It is resolutely committed to ensuring that all those engaged in Catholic education in Victoria promote the inherent dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, including aboriginal children, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.


Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe. When allegations of abuse concerning children and young people are raised, Catholic schools will take prompt action to have these appropriately referred and investigated. While the context and reality at each Catholic school will differ, the fundamental issues of understanding effective practices in child safety and identifying and responding to child harm remain the same. All schools must strive for continual improvement that is responsive to emerging thinking, evidence and practice, so as to eliminate the possibility of abuse occurring in the first place.

Creating child-safe school environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by schools, families and their communities. It is marked by collaboration, vigilance and proactive approaches across policies, procedures, curriculum and practices.

Every person involved in Catholic education has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

<sup>1</sup>As defined by the Victorian Government Special Gazette No. 2 (2016), 'children and young people' in this document refers to those children and young people enrolled as students in Catholic schools in Victoria.





The CECV commits to providing a **safe and nurturing culture** for all children and young people in Victorian Catholic schools through:

## **1 Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.**

At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a safe and nurturing culture, schools will actively and continually develop and review all policies, processes and practices, informed by emerging thinking and evidence.

## **2 Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns.**

Schools, in partnership with families, will ensure children and young people, are engaged and active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their safety.

This means that the views of staff, children, young people and families are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Children and young people are also provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

## **3 Implementing rigorous risk-management and employment practices.**

Schools will systematically and continually identify and assess risks to child safety and will eliminate (where possible) or reduce all potential sources of harm. Effective risk management will be embedded in school life through effective, transparent and well-understood policies, procedures and practices.

Schools will employ highly competent and professional staff who are formed and challenged to maintain the safety of all students. The high-quality of staff appointments will be upheld through rigorous employment and staff review processes and practices.

Catholic education will stay abreast of current legislation and will meet their legislative duties to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Government 2016), mandatory reporting, grooming, failure to disclose and failure to protect requirements.

### References

Congregation for Catholic education 1997, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Vatican, Vatican City, accessed 24 February 2016 [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_27041998\\_school2000\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html).

Victorian Government, *Education and Reform Act 2006*, Special Gazette No. 2, Thursday 7 January 2016, accessed 24 February 2016 [www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf).



# St Paul the Apostle

CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, DOREEN

## Child Protection: Child Safe Policy

Updated July, 2018

At St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School we believe:

- In a school where child safety is of paramount importance at all times.
- In building relationships based upon mutual respect, trust and care in an environment of justice, equality, compassion and hope.

### Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe all of the time. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance for child abuse. At St Paul the Apostle Primary School, Doreen, we strive to maintain a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. We are committed to continually reviewing our Child Safe policies and practices to ensure that every effort is made for ongoing improvement of our Child Safe environment. We at St Paul the Apostle Primary School, Doreen, recognise that some groups of children are particularly vulnerable and we are committed to promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal/linguistically diverse children and also promoting the safety of children with a disability.

### Purpose Or Rationale

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the whole school community of St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen, leaders, staff, volunteers, students, their families, to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and procedures developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including all forms of abuse.

### Children's Rights To Safety And Participation

The staff and volunteers of St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen, encourage students to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.



### **Valuing Diversity And Inclusion**

We value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) and their families
- promote the personal safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life

### **Recruiting Staff And Volunteers**

St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen, will apply the most thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working With Children Checks (WWCC) for all staff and volunteers. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for staff and volunteer positions.

Please refer to St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen: Recruitment Policy & Procedures.

### **Supporting Staff And Volunteers**

St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen, provides support and supervision to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated. We have a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Please refer to St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen, various Code of Conduct Statements.

### **Reporting A Child Safety Concern Or Complaint**

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct, and store the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures

- *Child Safe Reporting and Responding Policy*
- *Child Safe Reporting Procedure*
- *Child Safe Responding Procedure*
- *Complaints Handling Policy*
- *Community Grievance Policy*
- *Mandatory Reporting Policy*

The Principal has been appointed as Child Safety Officer with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to Child Safety.

### **Risk Management**

Risk management is an approach that minimises the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. Our Risk Management Plan outlines and details all aspects of risk across our whole school environment (on site and off site school activities) with specific activity risk assessments. In addition to our general Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse and harm to our students.

### Related Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policies and procedures of St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen, concerned with Child Safety, Pastoral Care and Wellbeing:

- *Child Safe Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children:* Implemented at St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen, in the following ways:
  - Shared expectations for learning, defining learner dispositions, learning space manifestos for students attending school
  - Positive Behaviour Management Policy & Procedures
  - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships
  - SWELL Week and Days – Social Emotional Learning Curriculum
  - Child abuse awareness and prevention
    - Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships Program taught annually, embedded across curriculum and through inquiry (P-6 students)
- Catholic Education Melbourne *Information for Schools – Child Safe Organisations*
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Child Protection and Safety Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Child Protection – Failure to Disclose Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Child Protection – Failure to Protect Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Child Protection – Working With Children Checks Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Anti-Bullying Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Community Grievance Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Complaints Handling Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Camps Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Excursions Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Wellbeing Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Pastoral Care Policy
- St Paul the Apostle Catholic Primary School, Doreen Yard Duty Policy