St. Therese's School, Essendon
Safeguarding Children and Young People
Child Safety Policy - Summary Document

Rationale

St. Therese's School is committed to the safety of our children. To this end, the school has developed a culture of child safety and has implemented policies and procedures to ensure that there is zero tolerance of child abuse in our school.

The school's policies and procedures provide the foundation for and commitment to child safety by ensuring:

- all school staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors comply with a code of conduct which addresses child safety. St. Therese's School recognises and considers existing professional codes of conduct when developing child safety codes of conduct such as Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- recruitment processes are in place to manage and reduce the risk of child abuse. In addition, processes shall be in place to ensure that there are appropriate staff induction programs, staff professional development and staff supervision arrangements to ensure a child-safe environment
- policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse shall enable individuals to take the appropriate course of action to protect the safety of students
- the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of risk management strategies to ensure child safety in the school environment
- children feel safe to report abuse and have processes in place to ensure that students are empowered to raise any child safety concerns. St. Therese's School will support students to develop appropriate knowledge and skills so that children can identify and communicate when they don't feel safe.

Goals

- To create and maintain a child safe school environment.
- To ensure that strategies, policies, procedures and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly students who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities, or Indigenous, cultural or linguistic background.
- To continue to develop and review policies and procedures to implement the child safe standards and communicate information about them to the school community (including staff, parents and students) and conduct appropriate professional development activities.

Implementation

The following outlines the key processes and strategies which enable St. Therese's School to create and maintain a child safe school environment. These will be implemented to ensure that our school complies with the standards outlined in Ministerial Order 870.

Standard 1 - strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

- Principal, Deputy Principal and Student Wellbeing Leader are identified with the role & responsibility of ensuring Child Safety is embedded in the school culture.
- St Therese's philosophy is contained within the school's vision, core values, strategic intent, School Improvement Plan and Annual Action Plan.
- Policies and procedures outline the responsibilities and processes for staff to respond to the care, safety and wellbeing of students, including all school environments and relevant outside of school hour activities (e.g. school camps). These are found in policies such as Camps Policy, Off-site Supervision Policy, Duty of Care Policy, Code of Conduct, Communication Policy.

Standard 2 - a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

- Pastoral Care policy includes a commitment to a culture of child safety and to zero tolerance in regard to bullying of any kind.
- Restorative Practices approach gives voice to children and contributes to a culture which promotes safety for all.
- Clear procedures are in place which demonstrate a commitment to a culture of child safety, including all school environments and outside of school hours.
- Child Safe Policy developed in 2016 and regularly reviewed.

Standard 3 - a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

- Role descriptions are contained within *Letters of Appointment* for staff, including those involved in child-connected work in all school environments and outside of school hours. In addition, the *Staff Handbook* lists guidelines and expectations for duties and responsibilities related to child safety.
- Archdiocese of Melbourne *Code of Conduct for the Caring of Children* applies contractually to the Out of School Hours Care facility (currently contracted to *OSHClub*) and its staff
- Code of Conduct for all teaching, non-teaching staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors developed and instituted in 2016.

Standard 4 - screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

- School has policies and procedures that apply to all staff involved in child-connected work in all school environments and outside of school hours. They include consideration of child safety for recruitment, induction, professional development and supervision of staff.
- All teaching staff are required to have the NCRC, all non teaching staff are required to have a WWCC and a NCRC and parent helpers / volunteers are also required to hold a WWCC.
- Policies and practices include Child Protection - Reporting Obligations Policy, Working With Children Policy, Duty of Care Policy, Letter of appointment, Staff Handbook.
- Staff undergo regular training through staff meetings and on-line modules.

Standard 5 - process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

- There are policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse that apply to all staff involved in child-connected work in all school environments and outside of school hours.
- Child Protection - Reporting Obligations Policy is regularly reviewed by staff and relevant staff undertake the on-line professional development module on an annual basis.
- Staff have access to the cross–sectoral protocol, *Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools* and the DET PROTECT portal (example below)

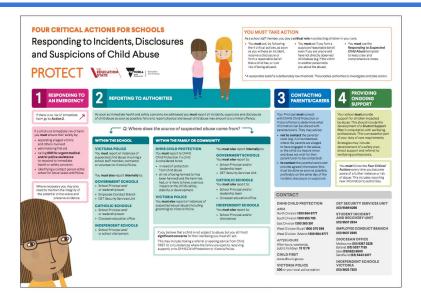Standard 6 - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Risk management strategies are developed & implemented regarding child safety in school activities via OHS audit procedures (risk assessments) within the OHS Policy and environments (e.g. gated security, ID badges, sign in procedures).
- Risk management related to online school environments (including email and intranet systems), including (where applicable) child safety outside of school hours, occurs via the school's *Acceptable User Policy* and cyber safety information distributed to teachers, parents and students annually.
- Assistance and advice is sought via the Children's eSafe Commissioner's website related to Cyber Safety.

- Assistance and advice is sought via the Cyber bullying unit at Moonee Ponds Police Station related to Cyber Safety.

Standard 7 - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

- The school encourages the development of 'Student Voice' in each classroom at each year level. Students contribute to the development of classroom rules at the start of each year and set their own personal goals. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback to school staff to assist planning at all stages of the learning cycle.
- The school reinforces and promotes children's awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour via classroom class meetings, circle time, the Restorative Practices approach and through *Making Jesus Real* (MJR) approach used in Years 3 - 6.
- The school supports students understanding of their rights to feel safe through units of work conducted at the beginning of the year and enable students to raise child safety concerns in all school environments and outside of school hours via class meetings and their Student Representative Council. The Child Safe Standards have been written in child friendly language by the SRC and are displayed as posters in all classrooms. All communication related to student safety at school will be handled with strict confidentiality. When the school receives information deemed a threat to a student's safety, school staff have mandatory reporting procedures they need to follow.
- Implementation of educational strategies covering resilience and healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality) occurs in targeted teaching, social skill programs and through specific Inquiry units.

Processes are in place that are inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly children who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities or Indigenous, cultural, or linguistic background via specialist intervention programs, social skilling and specialised education programs. Specific, needs based programs (e.g social skilling, Levelled Literacy Intervention, Reading Recovery, Fun Friends) occur 'at point of need' during the school day.

| **Evaluation** | This Policy will be reviewed as part of a cyclical process in accordance with the School Improvement Plan (SIP). |

Document Control

Version	Author	Purpose/Change	Date
0.1	Various STS L'ship Members	Initial policy drafting	2016
0.2	D. Parry	Various updates throughout policy	Mid 2018
1.0	S. Waters	Various updates throughout policy	2019