St Michael’s Primary School, Traralgon

Code of Conduct

Safeguarding Children at St Michael’s

Our Vision
St Michael's is a catholic community inspired by the life of Jesus. We are life-long learners and thinkers who have the courage to live our beliefs.

Our Mission
St Michael's is a school called to serve the families of St Michael's Parish, Traralgon. We are committed to nurturing personal achievement in an environment where relationships are authentic and collaborative.

Our Strategic Intent
At St Michael's we believe that we can make a difference in the lives of children by developing and nurturing spiritual awareness through the teachings of Jesus Christ and by our example. Our children are supported in becoming independent, responsible and confident learners for life, enabling them to reach their full potential. We provide a safe, meaningful learning environment, which considers children's individuality and supports children's ongoing academic, social, emotional and spiritual development within a contemporary global society. Our community is sustained through sharing leadership, common goals and working together. We have a genuine commitment to developing contemporary teaching and learning practices that promote opportunities for children, as individuals, to learn within a structure that is flexible and caters for a variety of needs and learning styles.

Purpose
This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children at St Michael’s Catholic Primary School against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes. Where a staff member breaches the Code, St Michael's may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

All staff, visitors, volunteers, contractors, clergy and Advisory board members at St Michael's School 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, visitors, volunteers, contractors, clergy and Advisory Board are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Behaving as a positive role model to students
- Following the school’s Child Protection & Safety Policy and upholding the school’s statement of commitment to child safety at all times.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- Signing in and out when entering and leaving school premises.
- Intervening when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- 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 children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability.
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns to the school’s leadership and Child Safety Officers; ensuring that all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 are met.
- Ensuring that the safety of children is managed quickly when an allegation of child abuse is made.
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegation or concerns about a registered teacher.
- Maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of students and their families by only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.
- Ensuring that any online contact with families is conducted professionally.
- Ensuring all school staff provide written confirmation informing school leadership and Child Safety Officers of contact with a child or family outside of school (e.g. tutoring, private lessons, sport coaching, social gatherings).
- Only communicating with parents/carers using personal communication channels/devices (such as personal email account/mobile phone) with school leadership or Child Safety Officer’s permission.

Unacceptable Behaviours
All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and Advisory Board must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Develop any ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism.
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be interpreted as unnecessarily physical.
- Put children’s safety at risk by working 1:1 in an area not visible to others.
- Isolate a child outside classroom or in unsupervised space.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact or behaviour with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature or use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Express personal views on cultures, races or sexuality in the presence of children or discriminate against any child, because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- As a school staff member, have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school’s leadership or Child Safety Officer’s knowledge (unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons, sport coaching or social gatherings). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street is appropriate.
- Engage in personal online communications (social media, email, instant messaging) with a student outside of school hours without school’s leadership or Child Safety Officer’s knowledge.
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post online any information about a student that may identify them without parental/carer consent.
- 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.

Our Child Protection Program includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy that provides detailed guidance for all staff and volunteers (direct and indirect) on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at St Michael’s.

Report Any Concerns
The Program also includes information for members of the School Advisory Board, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to Jan Fitzpatrick and Jenny Hanrahan, St Michael’s Child Safety Officers.

It also includes procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact Jan Fitzpatrick and Jenny Hanrahan, St Michael’s Child Protection Officers.

Communications will be treated confidentially on ‘a need to know basis’.
Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

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

Signed: ___________________________________  Date: __________