



# ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

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“Let your light shine”

## Child Protection and Safety Policy

**Reviewed: Term 3 2016**

**Ratified by School Board:**

### **Commitment to Child Safety**

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have the right to feel safe and be safe in all school environments and outside of school hours. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create 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.

### **Basic Beliefs:**

- That our school community nurtures the development of the whole child.
- Providing programs and support that meet the individual needs of all students (social, emotional, educational, psychological, spiritual, physical and behavioural).
- This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the whole school community of St. Mary's, 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.
- All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have a right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create 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.

### **Organisation**

- The staff and volunteers of St. Mary's School 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.

**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 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
- St. Mary's 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.
- At St. Mary's we will provide support and supervision to all staff and volunteers so people feel valued, respected, affirmed in their work and fairly treated.
- At St. Mary's, Mooroopna, we adhere to the Code of Conduct as per SSEB "Employment in Catholic Education, Diocese of Sandhurst" document. (Document attached to this policy)
- At our school all staff are reminded of their obligation to record any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct, (as per SSEB "Employment in Catholic Education, Diocese of Sandhurst" document) 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
- We will ensure all Staff know the responsibilities / application and due process of Reporting in regard to protecting the students.

- *Child Safe Reporting and Responding Policy*
  - *Complaints & Disclosure Policy*
  - *Complaints Procedure*
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- 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.
  - The Principal & Deputy Principal have been appointed as Child Safety Officers with specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or students in relation to Child Safety.

**Attachments:**

“Employment in Catholic Education, Diocese of Sandhurst” document.”

SANDHURST SCHOOL EDUCATION BOARD

# Employment in Catholic Education

**DIOCESE OF SANDHURST**



EMPLOYMENT  
IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION  
DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

# Introduction

Dear Colleagues

I invite you to read this document, Employment in Catholic Education carefully. It is a statement of our key understandings and commitment as professionals to each other and to the families whose children we teach and serve. It is a document imbued with the core understandings of the Catholic Church and of the ministry of education. It embraces all roles within our schools and is informed by contemporary professional expectations as well as visionary and sound theology.

This document is intentional in celebrating all roles within Catholic education – everyone present in our communities is an educator. Some of us have formal qualifications which require particular responsibilities whilst others are educators by their presence, compassion and relationship with students, families and co-workers.

*“When we go back to a list of the qualities that made our best educators so effective, we probably notice that so much of what made them significant in our lives was not what they did, but who they are as human beings”*

(Zehm & Kottler, 1993:2)

We need the ‘variety and unity of gifts’ (Corinthians 12:4) to fulfil the mission of Catholic education! Education author Christopher Day encourages us all when he states:

*‘Educators with a passion for teaching are driven by hope rather than optimism. They are hard-working, practical people who know their craft and like their pupils. They are sustained as active learners by their own sense of moral purpose...they understand that teaching is emotional as well as intellectual and practical work. They are not heroes or heroines but they are heroic!’*

(Passion for Teaching 2004:177)

Education is always a human encounter! We understand it best as a work of love which nourishes and nurtures students, families and colleagues to fullness of life. We are committed to your growth and development and exhort you to continue to grow and enrich the lives of the students whom you teach and the colleagues with whom you minister each day.

Blessings

**Mr Paul Desmond**

*Director of Catholic Education – Diocese of Sandhurst*

February 2015

**Note:** unless it is stated otherwise, the responsibilities and requirements outlined in this document apply to all staff in Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sandhurst (teaching and non-teaching staff alike), even though these responsibilities and requirements will be fulfilled in different ways.

## **1.0 Commitment to the Church's Mission within Catholic Education**

***Each Staff Member in a Catholic school shows through her/his professional and personal life a commitment to the Church's mission in Catholic education.***

Therefore, each staff member undertakes to:

- 1.1** accept, support and promote the value and principles of Catholic education within the mission of the Church in an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, loyalty, integrity and truthfulness;
- 1.2** contribute to the ongoing formation of the school as a faith-enriched community with the Eucharist as its centre and Christ as its model;
- 1.3** recognise and acknowledge the rich history and unfolding story of the Catholic Church and Catholic education within the Parish and the Diocese;
- 1.4** participate in the development and realisation of the school's own vision and mission;
- 1.5** engage with the poor, alienated and marginalised with understanding and compassion and support policies and decisions to create conditions supporting this;
- 1.6** strive, through daily interactions and example, to develop students' understanding and acceptance of Catholic teachings, values and practices; and the following of the Person of Christ;
- 1.7** assist students in the dialogue of faith and culture in their daily lives within a changing world in the light of the Gospel message of love, truth and freedom;
- 1.8** develop and maintain an adequate understanding of, and commitment to, those aspects of Catholic teaching that touch upon her/his life-style and areas of responsibility;
- 1.9** strive to live out her/his personal vocational commitment in a community of colleagues.

## **2.0 Responsibility of the Employing Authority to the Staff member**

***The school's employing authority acknowledges the co-operative professional relationship between the school and the staff member.***

Therefore, the employing authority commits to:

- 2.1** making available copies of school policy documents, Sandhurst School Education Board (SSEB) policies, diocesan policies and CECV policies, regulations and industrial agreements to the staff member as appropriate;
- 2.2** providing a formal letter of appointment which includes a description of the staff members position and the requirements of the position;
- 2.3** providing a supportive professional environment, including appropriate induction programmes and reasonable access to professional development;
- 2.4** providing a staff handbook (or equivalent) which describes general organisational details and expectations of professional staff;
- 2.5** providing opportunities for all staff to participate in the Faith life of the school;
- 2.6** just and equitable processes, interactions, opportunities and outcomes for all staff;
- 2.7** providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and supportive of staff wellbeing, including appropriate resources, facilities and training.
- 2.8** encouraging staff to pursue a healthy balance between the personal and professional areas of her/his life.

### **3.0 Responsibilities of Staff to School and Employing Authority**

***Each staff member acknowledges a co-operative professional relationship with her/his school and employing authority.***

Therefore, the staff member undertakes to ensure that she/he:

- 3.1** is honest, truthful and acts with integrity at all times in her/his relationship with the Employing Authority and the delegated school leaders;
- 3.2** adheres to contractual commitments and respect appraisal commitments in accordance with relevant policies and industrial agreements;
- 3.3** supports and complies with the development and implementation of school and Diocesan policies and CECV policies, regulations and industrial agreements;
- 3.4** provides high quality professional service to fellow staff, students and parents/guardians;
- 3.5** commits to appropriate and regular Professional Development in line with school and Diocesan policy;
- 3.6** models a public lifestyle that provides a positive role commensurate with Catholic teaching and practice;
- 3.7** seeks to fulfill all legal obligations such as those involving Duty of Care, Occupational Health and Safety, Copyright, Privacy and Confidentiality, and Child Protection;
- 3.8** maintains appropriate relationships with current and past students at all times, including through digital media, according to school and VIT policy and standards;
- 3.9** acts responsibly in the use of resources in a sustainable and equitable manner;
- 3.10** maintains an appropriate professional registration, such as with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) to teach in the State of Victoria, or its equivalent where required; or will maintain a valid and current

Working With Children Check, and advise the employing authority immediately if such a Check is withdrawn, or may be withdrawn;

**3.11** does not operate beyond the limits of her/his competence and qualifications;

**3.12** positively promotes the school in the wider community.

**Note:** *“Relevant Policies” may include:*

*School/SSEB/Diocesan/CECV/Orders/Congregations.*

## **4.0 Commitment to Competence and Professionalism**

***Each staff member, as a competent professional, is committed to Catholic education and to ongoing professional development.***

Therefore, the staff member undertakes to ensure that he/she:

- 4.1** endeavours to nurture the particular gifts and talents of all students;
- 4.2** is caring and responsive to students with special needs and respects individual diversity;
- 4.3** supports and contributes to the leadership of the school and exercises personal leadership appropriately;
- 4.4** builds and maintains collaborative partnerships in relationships with colleagues;
- 4.5** participates, when appropriate, in Diocesan professional development teams and programs and supports the school in collaborating in Professional Learning programs across clusters and the Diocese and broader community;
- 4.6** strives to maintain a healthy balance between personal and professional areas of her/his life.
- 4.7** assists and supports newcomers to, and all those involved in, Catholic Education;
- 4.8** recognises and interacts appropriately with other professionals outside the immediate school environment and school system.

## **5.0 Commitment to the Learning and Professional Development of Students**

***Each staff member shares in promoting the formation of the whole Person. Teaching staff have a particular responsibility for this through positive rapport with students and through a well-planned school curriculum which should enhance student learning and personal development.***

Therefore, the teacher undertakes to ensure that he/she:

- 5.1** integrates values consistent with Catholic teaching into all areas of the school curriculum;
- 5.2** presents and models learning and growth in faith as a life-long and life-giving process through the development of critical thought, reflection and community action in the light of Gospel values and consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- 5.3** strives to provide effective learning and teaching through continual professional development;
- 5.4** acts in a professional manner among staff, students and the community and in a manner consistent with the requisite Professional Standards and Code of Ethics of the Victorian Institute of Teaching, including the use of digital media.
- 5.5** provides a diversity of creative and effective learning experiences to enable all students the opportunity to gain access to the knowledge, skills and values required for full, active and fruitful participation in society;
- 5.6** uses appropriate student assessment procedures consistent with school policy, and provides meaningful feedback to students and parents;
- 5.7** teaches in a way that addresses each student's development with an understanding of the conditions and processes which facilitate learning for students;
- 5.8** leads students through facilitation, co-ordination, word and example towards greater responsibility for their own learning;

- 5.9** recognises and caters for different styles and rates of learning across curriculum areas;
- 5.10** is accredited or agrees to gain accreditation within a specified timeframe to teach in the Catholic school in accordance with CECV policy;
- 5.11** is accredited or agrees to gain accreditation, if applicable, to teach Religious Education in the Catholic School, in accordance with CECV policy;
- 5.12** participates in school-level curriculum development and evaluation consistent with Catholic ethos and approved policies and guidelines.

## **6.0 Commitment to Student Pastoral Wellbeing**

***Each staff member of a Catholic school performs an essential personal role in the teaching ministry of the Catholic Church. This goes beyond the need for professional skills and competence as staff bring to the students a realisation and knowledge of the richness and joy of a life lived in accordance with Gospel values.***

Therefore, within her/his particular responsibilities, the staff member undertakes to:

- 6.1** exercise a duty of care towards all students, consistent with school and Diocesan policy as well as community expectations;
- 6.2** recognise values and protect the uniqueness, potential and dignity of each student;
- 6.3** be sensitive to each student's religious, social and cultural background and affirms the richness of this diversity;
- 6.4** foster the development of each student's self-concept and their ability to interact harmoniously and productively with others;
- 6.5** support students in developing increased responsibility for personal decision-making and action in accordance with Gospel values;
- 6.6** be committed to justice and equity for all students, in all interactions, educational opportunities and outcomes;
- 6.7** use agreed instructional and behavioural practices and interventions;
- 6.8** support and actively promote a safe and positive school environment;
- 6.9** foster relationships with students which are based on trust, honesty and integrity.

## **7.0 Partnership with Parents/Guardians**

***Each staff member understands that the family is the primary focus and nurturing “centre” of children and young people and therefore works in partnership with parents/guardians towards the development of each student.***

Consequently, the staff member undertakes to ensure that he/she will act in a way which:

- 7.1** is sensitive and responsive to the complexity and diversity of modern family life and to the many social, psychological, financial and other pressures faced by families, and respects the uniqueness and value of each student’s family background;
- 7.2** values and promotes the role of parents/guardians as their child’s/children’s first and foremost educators by:
  - 7.2.1 recognising accountability and responsibility to the parent/s or guardians of the students;
  - 7.2.2 working in partnership with parents/guardians through establishing appropriate communication channels to facilitate such partnership;
  - 7.2.3 creating a warm and welcoming climate for parents at classroom and school levels, based on courtesy, mutual trust and open communication;
  - 7.2.4 participating in school initiatives to involve parents/guardians in genuine ways of engagement and in the decision-making processes of the school;
- 7.3** recognises the vital role of the parish and community in partnership with parents/guardians and school in achieving each student’s growth in wholeness;
- 7.4** respects family privacy and the confidential nature of family information (within the requirements of relevant legislation);
- 7.5** respects parents’ and guardians’ rights of inquiry, consultation and information with regard to their children.

## **8.0 Collaboration with the Parish Community**

***Each staff member recognises the school and parish share in a common mission***

Therefore, the staff member undertakes to:

- 8.1** recognise, appreciate and promote the role of the Parish in the life and nature of the Catholic School and promote where appropriate, the continuing interaction between the school community and the wider Christian community;
- 8.2** recognise and support, where appropriate, the involvement of the school in the sacramental life of the local faith community;
- 8.3** understand and respect the role of the Parish Priest/Congregational Leaders as employer/canonical administrator of the school, and the priest's role as pastor and/or chaplain;
- 8.4** provide opportunities when appropriate for students to take their place in the communal and liturgical life of the Church;
- 8.5** welcome and support priests and their representatives and chaplaincy services within the school as integral to the holistic development of students, school staff and community.

## 9.0 Responsibility to the Broader Community

***In view of the Catholic school as a place of light and service, each staff member, according to her/his responsibilities seeks to develop in students the values of a community which include: respect for self and others; equality; integrity; participation; and the pursuit of truth.***

Therefore, each staff member undertakes to:

- 9.1** promote co-operation among all agencies and professionals working in the best interests of students and families;
- 9.2** provide a professional service which considers the needs of the community;
- 9.3** develop, by precept and example, a respect for our nation and its laws and policies which protect and promote the well-being of students, families and the community.
- 9.4** recognises each school as being an integral part of the whole community and therefore seeks to support and build that community

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