

Standard 3

At St Brigid's Ballan, we expect school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the school. All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with the requirements.

The following Child Safety Code of Conduct recognises the critical role that school staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect. Our Code of Conduct also protects school staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.



Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

St Brigid's Ballan

Updated: February 2019

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

We promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

We promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We promote the safety of children with a disability.

Purpose

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

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board/school council members at St Brigid'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 on the following pages.

As recommended by CEOB:

- breaches of The Code of Conduct by staff or volunteers are reported to the Principal
- breaches of The Code of Conduct by the Principal are reported to the school's governing authority or the Director of Catholic Education (who will then liaise with the school's governing authority)
- breaches of The Code of Conduct by the school's governing authority are reported to the Bishop or Vicar General (as per the Diocesan Code of Conduct). In such situations, principals may seek advice from the Diocesan Professional Standards Coordinator, Michael Myers, or the Director of Catholic Education
- criminal matters are reported directly to Victoria Police.

Acceptable Behaviours

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

- a) adhering to the school's child-safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- b) taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- c) treating everyone in the school community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment)
- d) listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- e) 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)
- f) promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- g) promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- h) ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- i) reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership or child safety officer
- j) understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- k) reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer
- l) if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.

Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board/school council members must not:

- a) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- b) develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- c) exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- d) put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- e) initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes*
- f) engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- g) use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- h) express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children*
- i) discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- j) have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership or child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching); accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate *
- k) have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with newsletters or assisting students with their school work) *
- l) use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account without a valid context
- m) exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses without a valid context
- n) photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- o) work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- p) consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children. *

* refer to appendix for specific St Brigid's Ballan context

(Adapted from Source: VRQA)

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

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Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix to the St Brigid's Ballan Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct - Unacceptable Conduct

Unacceptable Behaviours:

e. The reference to "toileting or changing clothes" does not preclude LSOs and other staff from assisting students with special needs who cannot manage for themselves

h. Personal views regarding political beliefs and preferences should not be expressed

j. Due to the rural nature of the community of St Brigid's Primary School, some staff members will have social interactions with children and/or their families. Staff members should advise the principal or CPO of these interactions.

k. Due to the rural nature of the community of St Brigid's Primary School, some staff members will have online social interactions with a child's family. Staff are to maintain a high professional standard at all times, including confidentiality in dialogue and actions.

p. At after hours school events, where the students are being supervised by their parents and established practices have permitted alcohol to be served, the responsible consumption of alcohol is acceptable.

Eg. Graduation Dinner, Welcome Barbeque, Working Bees

Staff are to maintain a high professional standard at all times, including confidentiality in dialogue and actions.

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To Be reviewed 2021