

St Anthony's Primary School

Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy



St Anthony's Primary School is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

Introduction

Catholic education is an active partnership between family and school, where families are recognised as the first and ongoing educators of their children. Schools and families partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for children and young people's faith formation, learning, safety and wellbeing.

At St Anthony's, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our 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 (CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety).

At St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, we aspire to provide an enriched learning environment shaped by our Catholic values. We aim to produce witnesses of Christ and global citizens who take active role in influencing their own futures in a world of continual change.

We acknowledge that education is a learning partnership between families, students and staff, reflecting our school community attitudes of compassionate concern, integrity, openness, responsibility and excellence in all we do.

Knowing our students across religious, physical, intellectual, emotional and social domains ensures the full flourishing of every student within our care, respecting diversity and skills.

We aspire to develop and nurture reflective, independent, self-regulated learners who are equipped for a future, which involves flexibility, resilience, creativity, initiative, embracing challenge and life-long learning.

At the core of all our learning and living are the Gospel values taught by Jesus Christ. Building relationships, modelling hope and optimism, encouraging perseverance, caring for others and celebrating successes are the foundations for education at St Anthony's School.

Enhancing the Catholic identity of the Catholic school "encourages us to encounter, in the presence of others, with difference and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit human and religious growth in a manner which is reflective and inclusive". Where students, staff and families, through the school and local Church, are invited and encouraged to discover God's presence in their lives, liberating and empowering them to be responsible for their own lives and to contribute to making a difference to the world.

As Catholic educators, we have a moral, mission-driven and legal responsibility to uphold and actively promote the wellbeing and safety of every student entrusted in our care.

Students' voices, their feelings of safety, and the freedom to express themselves and their concerns are central to the success of child safe initiatives throughout our schools.

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We recognise that a child safe culture must be evident and easily recognisable to people within the school community – but, just as importantly, it must be understood and identifiable by those in the broader community through publicly available policies and meaningful action.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St Anthony's to ensure that families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school.

This Policy takes into account the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Scope

This Policy applies to school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with related school policies and procedures, including:

1. Child Safety Framework
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Principles

At St Anthony's, the following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Families and carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach.
- All members of the school community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers and other members of the school community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers and other members of the school community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Policy

St Anthony's Primary School is committed to ensuring that all members of our school community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at St Anthony's.

We implement the following strategies and actions to ensure that we are able to meet this commitment.

Strategies / actions used by school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Anthony's recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

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- utilising the St Anthony’s Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies and practices
- supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their communication and engagement skills and to understand the value and importance of effective communication and engagement
- identifying opportunities for parents and carers to participate in decisions that affect their child's safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available so that they are easily accessible to families, carers and other members of the school community
- engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- creating opportunities to ensure that members of the school community are adequately informed about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing

Strategies / actions used by school staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy

School staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St Anthony’s also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- creating and maintaining open lines of communication with families, carers and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- liaising with parents and carers in relation to any concerns and/or decisions that affect their child and giving them the opportunity to contribute to any discussions, where appropriate
- ensuring that parents, carers and others in the school community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring they act in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing

External references

Related Resources – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

[eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the school’s two-year review cycle of its child safety practices.
- Update of the policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand.

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Student Wellbeing

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Approving body/individual	MACS Board
Approval date	13 April 2022
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	April 2023

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