

Emmanuel College 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

At Emmanuel College, 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](#)).

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school

([The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), n. 9).

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The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9).

Our values are underpinned by our commitment to bear witness to the following shared values as modelled by Jesus Christ and exemplified in the life of William Chaminade: Justice, Respect, Responsibility, Honouring Diversity, Honesty, Compassion, Commitment & Endeavour

The essence of the College is learning and teaching, with faith education, and the safety of our young people, as a primary focus.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Emmanuel College to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the school.

This Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#).

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

1. PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Reportable Conduct Policy.

Principles

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard, and they are safe and feel safe ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at Emmanuel College:

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Our school works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/carers.
- All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally (including under legislated information sharing schemes being Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)) or pastorally.

Definitions

Child means a child enrolled as a student at the school.

Child abuse includes:

- (a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - (i) a sexual offence
 - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - (i) physical violence
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm
- (c) serious neglect of a child ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#)).

Child neglect includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health and physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

Child physical abuse generally consists of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity and does not always involve physical contact or force ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. It can include communication and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

Mandatory reporting: The legal requirement under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The Principal, registered teachers and early childhood teachers, school counsellors, religious clergy, medical practitioners and nurses at a school are mandatory reporters under this Act ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

Reasonable belief – mandatory reporting: When school staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a reasonable belief. A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds ([PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)).

Reasonable belief – reportable conduct scheme: When a person has a reasonable belief that a worker/volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct. A reasonable belief is more than suspicion and there must be some objective basis for the belief. It does not necessitate proof or require certainty.

NOTE: the difference between the reasonable belief definitions under mandatory reporting and the reportable conduct scheme is the category of persons who are required to, or can, form the reasonable belief which forms the basis for a report.

Reportable conduct: Five types of reportable conduct are listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) (as amended by the *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017*). These include:

1. sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of a child)
2. sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of a child)
3. physical violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm
5. significant neglect.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#)).

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority

- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- a minister of religion ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#)).

Policy commitments

All students enrolled at Emmanuel College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Our commitment to our students

- We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
- We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- We commit to listening to children and young people, and empowering them by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

Our commitment to parents, guardians and carers

- We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents, guardians and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents, guardians and carers about our child safety practice, policies and procedures.
- We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents, guardians and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

Our commitment to our school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy)

- We commit to providing all Emmanuel College staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety, and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by Emmanuel College staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- We commit to providing opportunities for Emmanuel College school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

Responsibilities and organisational arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at Emmanuel College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

- The College Leadership Team has particular responsibility for the management of Child Safety at the college
- Campus Leaders, Pastoral Coordinators, House Leaders are responsible for supporting the safety and wellbeing of young people
- The Campus Administration Team are responsible for ensuring all child safety/risk assessments/logistical organisation protocols are effectively implemented
- Leader of Learning, Curriculum Coordinators and Learning Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all curriculum areas have relevant and appropriate content in regard to child safety knowledge and skill development for the young person/people
- The Business Manager is responsible for the Child Safety dimension of Contractor Management
- All staff have individual responsibility for adherence to and implementation of the Emmanuel College Child Safety Policy

Guide to responsibilities of school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at Emmanuel College recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety. Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all staff, clergy, volunteers and contractors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to children and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)
- ensuring the school takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and in line with [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
- ensuring the school understands and reports all matters that may constitute reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in accordance with the School's reportable conduct policy
- sharing information under legislated information sharing schemes (CISS and FVISS) in accordance with the school's prescribed role as an ISE.

Guide to responsibilities of school staff

Responsibilities of school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy) include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care

- following the legislative and internal school policies, procedures and processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety, and the wellbeing of children and young people
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Organisational arrangements

The Principal has the overall lead Emmanuel College in accordance with this Policy.

Emmanuel College's Catholic ethos is expressed in a safe and secure environment based on values of dignity, respect, justice and forgiveness, which fosters the development of the learning and faith community. The climate of Emmanuel College is what we impart by our attitudes and behaviours, about the values and ethics we maintain - it is the visible expression of faith, demonstrated by our concern and care for each other, especially the young people entrusted to our community.

Organisational structures have as their objective the total climate of relationships within the school community. They have the individual as their focus, and reflect the support, encouragement and loving care shown and experienced in the ethos of Gospel-based communities. With our life-giving focus, organisational structures should enable all to grow, to be affirmed in their dignity and worth as persons, to appreciate themselves, and to develop skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing and to develop interpersonal relationship skills.

The College has vertical homerooms and operates a house structure to:

- Increase students' social repertoire by broadening the range of social contact to which they are exposed
- Foster connectedness to the whole school community
- Provide proactive measures to improve mental health, resilience, safety and wellbeing
- Increase students' sense of responsibility for others in the school community.

A multi-aged homeroom provides an alternative peer group to:

- Enable opportunities to mix and be exposed to other intellectual, physical, social and emotional levels
- Help to minimize the impact of mid-adolescence, where students developmentally are more likely to have issues with regard to self-esteem, anti-social and high-risk behaviours.
- Provide extra support and connectedness
- Expose students to caring and positive relationships.

House operation is the responsibility of House teams and classroom teachers, convened and facilitated by the House Leaders, with the support of Pastoral Coordinators. This pastoral leadership team is convened and facilitated by the Deputy Principal, Campus Leader. All levels of college operation, including the work of house teams, subject departments, and pastoral/learning leadership teams converge in the core business of the college: working with young people in teaching-learning which is always underpinned by the wellbeing and safety of young people. These two areas are inextricably linked.

House teams are supported by other wellbeing teams including:

- Student Support Team - School Counsellor/Psychologist/Youth worker
- Careers Counsellors
- Learning Support Team
- Student Services
- External Partnerships and referrals

Emmanuel College's website and newsletter will provide information to keep parents and carers informed of child safety commitments, procedures and arrangements.

Expectation of our school staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At Emmanuel College, 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, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements. We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct [EC - Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) which 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 also protects school staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Student safety and participation

At Emmanuel College, 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 and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report their concerns. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

The curriculum design integrates appropriate knowledge and skills to enhance students' understanding of being safe. Teaching and learning strategies that acknowledge and support student agency and voice are implemented.

We have developed appropriate education about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending our school
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- resilience
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

The Emmanuel College Student Handbook contains information for students to seek support both during and after school hours.

The guiding principles for all teachers is the Developmental Management Approach which assumes and expects unconditional respect for members of the community and is embedded in a culture of limits/responsibilities and relationships. Staff and students understand that all poor choices are opportunities for growth and learning, and we all have both personal and communal rights and responsibilities. This is the basis of all interactions.

Curriculum programmes are regularly reviewed to ensure that all aspects of the Child Safety requirements are addressed across all year levels.

Reporting and responding

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.), the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

Our school's PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations [EC - PROTECT - Reporting Obligations](#) sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a reasonable belief is formed under the reportable conduct scheme as well as mandatory reporting
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law, and their legal obligations relating to child abuse and grooming under criminal law
- comply with reporting obligations under the reportable conduct scheme including obligations to report and investigate allegations of reportable conduct.

Our school has also established additional internal procedures and processes to help ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our school is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) meaning that, where legislated requirements are met, it is able to share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the CISS or FVISS.

Emmanuel College has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Emmanuel College has formal avenues for complaints and disclosure processes which are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- Emmanuel College Complaints Policy and Staff Grievance and Dispute Handling Policy

In accordance with the relevant legislation, any school employee, volunteer, contractor or religious cleric employed by or affiliated with Emmanuel College who has evidence that a student has been abused MUST report the matter immediately to the relevant authority or authorities, and to the Emmanuel College Principal.

If the Principal is not available, then it should be discussed with a member of the school leadership team. Alternatively, any member of the school community may report directly to the responsible authority.

The staff member, supported by the Principal or designated Child Safety Officer will follow the step-by-step guide to making a report as outlined in the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#).

Screening and recruitment of school staff

Emmanuel College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

Each job description for staff involved in child-connected work has a clear statement that sets out the requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety for those in that role and the occupant's essential qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about any person we propose to engage:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We will also ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work.

We have procedures and processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

Emmanuel College implements the following CECV guidelines:

- *Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools*
- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools*
- *NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools.*

Child safety – education and training for school staff

Emmanuel College provides employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

At least annually, our professional learning and training addresses:

- staff's individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse
- child abuse risks in the school environment
- the reportable conduct scheme
- our school's current child safety standards.
- The Emmanuel College Leadership Team outline the Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Reporting and the Child Safety Code of Conduct on an annual basis and at the time of employment. Sessional staff will be asked to attend specific meetings to receive this training.
- Staff will sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct document indicating that they have received training in the details of the policy.
- The College Advisory Committee are inducted as they commence their term of office and are required to sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct annually.

Risk management

At Emmanuel College, we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks

to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety, and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

Child safety concerns all members of the school community. As such, the following sub-committees have responsibility for identifying and managing risks appropriately. These groups are:

- Pastoral Leadership Team
- Campus Administration Team
- WHS committee
- Buildings Grounds and Maintenance Team

The leadership team monitors overall compliance and implementation.

Relevant legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
 - *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.)
 - *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.)
 - *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
 - *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.)
 - *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
 - *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
 - *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:
1. [Failure to disclose offence](#): Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
 2. [Failure to protect offence](#): This offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
 3. [Grooming offence](#): This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

Related policies

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) guidelines

- [CECV Guidelines on the Employment of Staff in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV Guidelines on the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CECV NDIS/External Providers: Guidelines for Schools](#)
- [CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines](#)

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) policies

- Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Pastoral Care of Students Policy

School policies

- Child Safety Code of Conduct [EC Child Safe - Code of Conduct](#)
- PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting obligations [EC - Protect - Reporting Obligations](#)
- Reportable Conduct Policy [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)