



DOBCEL Safeguarding Children and Young People: Code of Conduct

Reviewed: September 2020
Ratified: January 2021
Next Review: 2022

Purpose

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) Board is committed to:

- Zero tolerance of child abuse;
- Listening to and empowering children and young people; and
- Keeping children and young people safe.

The DOBCEL Board maintains governance oversight of DOBCEL Schools. DOBCEL maintains a management arm to ensure that DOBCEL Schools are safe for children and young people. So that DOBCEL Schools are places where children and young people can flourish.

The DOBCEL Board has particular responsibilities for safeguarding of children and young people as required by the *Ministerial Order No. 870: [Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools](#)* (MO 870).

This places accountability for managing the risk of child abuse with the DOBCEL Board. Consistent with MO 870, the DOBCEL Board, requires schools governed by DOBCEL to have appropriate arrangements to regulate the conduct and decisions of school staff for the benefit of its students.

These arrangements include implementing and complying with the DOBCEL Child Safe Policies and having clear and comprehensive procedures and reporting mechanisms. The objective is for the DOBCEL Board and the wider school community to be confident in the school's capacity to make and implement appropriate decisions, with child safety front of mind.

As partners with parents/carers, in Catholic education and open to God's presence, DOBCEL Schools pursue fullness of life for all students and the school communities. The schools ensure the care, wellbeing, and protection of its students in keeping with the Catholic tradition, which celebrates the sanctity and unique dignity of each person.

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

All staff, volunteers, external providers and contractors, clergy and school advisory council members of the 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, volunteers, external providers, contractors, visitors, clergy, and school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- 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/the safety of another child
- 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)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation, and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher

Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, external providers and contractors, clergy and school council members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- 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
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race, or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity, or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership or child safety officer's (if the school has appointed someone to this role) knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching), or without a valid context. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- 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 e-newsletters or assisting students with their schoolwork) without a valid context (e.g. a familial relationship exists)
- without a valid context use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- without a valid context exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents/carers
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children
- consume alcohol at school or at school events in the presence of children, other than where the Executive Director has given explicit approval to drink moderately (example Yr 12 Graduation)

Statement of Commitment

I, *[Insert Name]*, as an *[Insert role in school as employee, volunteer or contractor, Parish Priest, School Advisory Council Member]* of a DOBCEL school acknowledge and declare that I will abide by the DOBCEL Safeguarding Children and Young People: Code of Conduct which I have read and understood.

Name: (printed)

Signature:

Date:

Sighted by:

Principal

Name: (printed)

Signature:

Date: