



Safeguarding Children and Young People

Code of Conduct Mercy College

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at Mercy College 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 members at Mercy College 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, contractors, religious, clergy and board members of Mercy College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to the Mercy College Child Safe Policy at all times and upholding the Mercy College Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment)
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal 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 left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal of Mercy College
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Mercy College Leadership Team
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers, contractors, religious, clergy and board members of Mercy College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and should 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, sexuality or religion in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, culture, race, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without Mercy College Leadership Team knowledge and/or consent (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental / other lessons or sport coaching). 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, for example by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- use any personal communication channels / device such as personal email account when in communication with students
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with students
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children
- transport students in private vehicles without explicit permission of parents and the Principal

By observing these standards all staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and Board members acknowledge their responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Principal and the Mercy College Leadership Team.

I _____ as a: (please circle as appropriate)

(please print name)

- staff member
- volunteer
- contractor
- clergy
- Board member

of Mercy College confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct.

Signature:

Date: