

St Augustine's Keilor

Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy



St Augustine'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 Augustine's, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. At St Augustines we have the responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe. 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).

St Augustine's Primary School is a Catholic school in Keilor, working to fulfill the Parish's mission to assist families in educating their children in faith. Inspired by St Augustine's words '*God loves each of us as if there were only one of us*' we celebrate the uniqueness of each person and endeavour to develop authentic, healthy and positive relations with self and others, in order to nurture a strong sense of connectedness and belonging.

As a Catholic school we set out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. '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, par. 9) Our school vision and motto 'Grow with God' is lived out throughout daily words and actions as we strive together to make a difference and strive 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.

When allegations of abuse concerning children and young people are raised, we will take prompt action to have these appropriately referred and investigated. Creating child-safe school environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by schools, families and their communities. It is marked by collaboration, vigilance and proactive approaches across policies, procedures, curriculum and practices.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St Augustine'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 Augustine'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 Augustine'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 Augustine'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 Augustine'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:

- utilising the St Augustine’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
- providing new enrolments information about child safety, complaints processes and how to raise concerns.
- conducting school open days or host community events, such as a school fete or liturgies, to welcome families and the broader community.
- creating a welcoming environment at school reception so community members and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto school grounds.

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

School staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St Augustine’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 ie Parent Teacher Conversations
- 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
- providing opportunities and avenues for parents and carers to engage with staff to discuss their children’s experiences at school ie emails, phone conversations, Seesaw, Parent Teacher Conversations
- making newsletters and communications accessible , so that families, in all their diversity, know that they are welcome and integral to the life of the school community.
- selecting meeting venues that are physically accessible, welcoming and culturally safe.
- promoting Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships education (within a catholic context), or equivalent curriculum, to families.

- displaying the [PROTECT poster](#) in shared areas, accessible to parents and the community.

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

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Related documents	
Superseded documents	
New policy	V2.0- 2022