



# St Paul's College

VMCH

## Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment (MO 1359 2022)

### Public commitment to a culturally safe environment:

*At St Paul's College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe College where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected. We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, We recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our College planning, policies, and activities.*

### All Members of the School Community

*St Paul's College takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in the new Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order No. 1359 (MO 1359), Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises. MO 1359 provided the framework for how St Paul's College has actioned the 11 new Victorian Child Safe Standards, legislated on 1st July 2022*

*Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies, and practices are inclusive of the needs of all students, particularly our students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and other students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable, students in out of home care and LGBTIQ+ students.*

*St Paul's College provides a contemporary, safe and nurturing school environment with state-of-the-art facilities where children and young people with a range of disabilities have a sense of belonging and every opportunity to achieve optimal learning outcomes*

## Scope Statement

The purpose of this Scope Statement is to ensure that those who might be affected by this policy are identified, considered, and consulted.

This St Paul's College Child Safe policy applies to:

- *All people who conduct work for the College in a paid or unpaid capacity. This includes board members, executive leadership, staff, volunteers, trainees, contractors, and consultants*
- *Taking into account of other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff*
- *Taking into account the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.*
- *All activities undertaken at the College which involve, result in, or relate to contact with children or young people including excursions, camps, and online learning*
- *Partner organisations will be made aware of this policy and the school's underlying philosophy towards the care of children.*

## Introduction

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our College community:

- **Build a strong College culture to support cultural inclusion**
  - Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item.
  - Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on College grounds.
  - Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
  - Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through College newsletters, College assemblies, parent information nights.
  - Lead on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
  - Build Collegewide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.
- **Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children**
  - Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
  - Ask for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about what the College does well, and what can be improved.
  - Implement the [Koorie Education Policy](#) to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities (Government Colleges).
  - Use [Koorie Engagement Support Officers](#) (KESOs) to provide advice to government Colleges about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.
  - Use the [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026](#) to guide the College's support for Aboriginal self-determination.
- **Actively address racism**

- Express zero tolerance of racism in your statement of commitment to child safety included in your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and other documents.
  - Address racism from students, staff, volunteers, or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the culture of the College works to prevent incidents from occurring.
  - Put College leaders at the front of anti-racist action. Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the College community.
  - Encourage non-Aboriginal College leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families, and communities.
- **Guide and train staff and volunteers**
    - Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
    - Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
    - Arrange [Community Understanding Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) or equivalent for staff.
- **Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in College planning and curriculum**
    - Find out about the Traditional Owners of the land/s where the College is situated at the [Map of Indigenous Australia](#) and learn about the importance of [acknowledging Traditional Owners](#).
    - Include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.
    - Develop a resource bank of digital, hardcopy print and other artefacts that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.
- **Partner with Aboriginal communities**
    - Support local Aboriginal businesses through College procurement.
    - Engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups, corporations or the Registered Aboriginal Party to review cultural safety in College environment, systems and processes.
    - Engage with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECCG) and/or the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

## Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths, and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

## Complaints and reporting processes

St Paul's College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the College community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct, or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our College's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found on the College website.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff, and volunteers (including College council employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures found on the College website. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, College staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the College.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant College staff have been informed, we will ensure our College follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

## Communications

St Paul's College is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the College community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure

- displaying PROTECT posters around the College
- updates in our College newsletter and the new parent portal (XUNO)
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at College leadership meetings, staff meetings and College council meetings

## Related Department of Education and Training policies

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Colleges Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Colleges](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Colleges Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Colleges Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for College Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Colleges](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Colleges](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Colleges: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian Colleges](#)