

# Safeguarding Children

A Code of Conduct for Parents and Community Members



## 1. Introduction

At Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School we aim to provide an open, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all.

Parents play a key role in the education of their children and should act in the best interest of students, their families, staff, and the School community. The School celebrates diversity and is an inclusive community that respects the rights, beliefs and practices of individuals and their families.

Our vision of learning and revelation is emerging as students, families and school staff work in partnership to support every child to achieve success. We call this learning relationship: *Learning by the Power of Three or Learning<sup>3</sup>*.

## 2. Purpose

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

All parents, volunteers, contractors, clergy and community members at Good Samaritan Catholic Primary 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.

## 3. Our School Values

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing a school environment where all children are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe.

We are called to emulate Jesus' call to love God and to love each other. We look to the values taught to us in scripture and the Christian tradition to guide us:

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| <b>Mercy</b>      | We act with kindness and with a heart full of love.  |
| <b>Compassion</b> | We seek to understand the needs of others and are willing to help them.                          |
| <b>Justice</b>    | We treat everyone fairly, recognising that each individual has both rights and responsibilities. |
| <b>Respect</b>    | We value the sacredness and dignity of each person.  |
| <b>Excellence</b> | We strive to be the very best we can possibly be.  |

The Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct regulates the conduct of school staff for Teachers. Student conduct at Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School is supported by the teachers, the pedagogy and the physical environment and is based on deep respect for self, property and others.

This *Code of Conduct* outlines the way in which our community requires all parents, family members and volunteers to conduct themselves when visiting our school, participating in school activities and communicating with members of our school community (including students, school staff, other parents and visitors to our school).

## 4. Scope

This *Code of Conduct* applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, volunteers and community members and any others while involved in activities or communication related to Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School. For convenience, the term “parents and volunteers” will be used throughout the document.

Nothing in this policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.

## 5. Protocols for Visiting the School

When visiting Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School all parents and volunteers must:

- (a) sign the visitors' register located at the school office, so that their presence in the school during school hours is recorded in the event of an emergency;
- (b) refrain from engaging in malicious gossip (either directly or online) and ensuring that anything they say about others is fair and truthful;
- (c) refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification;
- (d) behave lawfully on school grounds and observe the terms of any order, obligation or undertaking they may be subject to.
- (e) comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at our School and in the event of an emergency while they are on school grounds follow the instructions given by any member of school staff.
- (f) refrain from offensive, insulting or derogatory language or conduct. This includes wearing clothing with offensive words or insignias;
- (g) not smoke on school grounds within four metres of any entrance (Victorian Law);
- (h) not possess alcohol on school grounds, unless the event has been sanctioned by the School;
- (i) never possess illicit drugs on school grounds;
- (j) not attend school events if affected by alcohol or other intoxicants; and
- (k) show proper care and regard for School property, the property of others and occupational health and safety concerns.

When attending any kind of school assembly or public meeting parents and volunteers will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and will refrain from creating any inappropriate noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by students, staff or visitors.

Any person entering the grounds or premises of Good Samaritan Catholic Primary School, who is abusive, threatening, uses inappropriate language or otherwise presenting a risk to children, staff or other members of the school community will be asked to leave. If this does not occur immediately, the Police will be called.

## 6. Protocols for Communication

Written and spoken communication to anyone in the School community should be courteous and respectful.

When communicating, parents and volunteers must:

- (a) interact respectfully with staff, students and other parents at all times;
- (b) not use abusive language or expletives, raise their voice, insult or engage in violent behaviour to anyone on school grounds or at any school-related events;
- (c) not discipline or raise their voice or get involved in verbal altercations with another parent or child under any circumstances; and
- (d) advise the School of areas of potential conflict, such as parenting and family court orders in accordance with relevant laws.

Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of the language and expression used or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.

As the priority for school staff is the welfare and education of all children in the school, school staff may not be able to respond to emails or telephone calls immediately. The school accepts that responses within 2 working days is acceptable and responses will not be made outside of working hours or during school holidays, with the exception of an emergency.

## 7. Protocols for Communicating With Other Parents/Volunteers

Parents and community members who act as volunteers in the school are valued as they play a critical role in our community and commit a great deal of time for the benefit of all.

Apart from the general principles that always apply, parents should be particularly sensitive about the manner in which they provide feedback and ask questions of hardworking volunteers.

Under no circumstances is a parent or volunteer to disclose the personal details of a student or parent to another person without consent.

## 8. Protocols for Communication with Children

Under no circumstances is a parent or volunteer:

- (a) to approach another child to discuss or chastise them because of their actions towards their own child; or
- (b) intimidate, undermine, threaten, bully or harass a child;

## 9. Protocols for Digital and Online Communication

When using social media parents and volunteers are not permitted to create a website, blog, podcast, Facebook page, Instagram or Twitter account or any other social media in the name of the school without the written permission of the Principal.

Parents and volunteers must not:

- (a) take a photo or video recording of another student or parent without their consent; or
- (b) post a photo or video recording of another student or parent on social media without consent; or
- (c) post a photo or video recording of a child that is not their own on social media without obtaining consent from the child's parent beforehand.

When using social media, Parents and volunteers must:

- (a) not discuss or mention the School, its staff or any members of the School community in a negative or defamatory way; (b) be respectful to staff, contractors, volunteers, other parents, and/or students;
- (b) not use it as a means to voice grievances about the School;
- (c) make reasonable efforts to ensure that their children comply with the School's Technology and Social Media Policy; (e) post photographs of students in school uniform representing the School and its students if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards the School and its staff and students;
- (d) never disclose any confidential information of parents, staff, contractors, volunteers, and/or students to third parties without the individual's express consent;
- (e) not make contact with students (other than their own) using any form of social media without the express consent of the student's parents; and
- (f) never post sexually inappropriate or other material that may damage the reputation of the School.

## 10. Raising an Issue or Complaint

From time to time there will be instances where you will want to raise a concern or a complaint with us. We encourage you to contact the school to talk about your concerns, as most problems can be solved quickly.

Our school's approach to handling concerns and complaints is based on our commitment to:

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment
- building relationships between students, parents and staff
- providing a safe working environment for staff.

It is best to discuss your concerns with your child's teacher first. They know your child and are best placed to help you. Also, it's best if you let them know about your concerns as early as possible.

The first step is to make an appropriate time to meet with them or phone the school and ask for an appointment with the teacher.

If you are not happy with the result, or if you do not feel it is appropriate to talk to them, phone and make an appointment to discuss your concerns with your child's Village Learning Leader or another member of the school's leadership team. Of course the Principal is also available to talk with you.

You may bring a friend or relative to be your support. If you need an interpreter, we can arrange that, just ask beforehand.

Most issues can be resolved quickly and informally to everybody's satisfaction simply by talking to the teacher concerned.

Occasionally more serious or complex complaints require investigation. These can take a longer time to resolve. If this happens, you will be informed of the progress and the result of your complaint by phone or in writing at regular intervals until the matter is resolved.

Please be aware that it is never acceptable or appropriate to approach a child of another family to raise concerns or complaints.

## 11. Consequences of a Breach of Parent Code of Conduct

With these guidelines in place it is hoped that parents and volunteers can contribute to a harmonious School community that reflects the School's values.

Any parent, member of school staff or student may notify a Deputy Principal or the Principal of a possible breach of the Parent Code of Conduct. The Principal or Deputy Principal will investigate the complaint.

The consequences for breaches of this Parent Code of Conduct will be determined by the Principal and may include the following:

- the School may ban or restrict a Parent from entry to school grounds or from attending School-related co-curricular activities or other events.
- the School may direct that a parent may only communicate with members of staff through a nominated School representative.

In cases of extreme or prolonged breach of this Parent Code of Conduct by a parent, the School may:

- terminate the enrolment of the children of that Parent, as determined by the Principal.
- where appropriate, involve other authorities.

## 12. Review

This Policy will be revisited annually and reviewed as part of the School Improvement process or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

## 13. Related School Policies:

- Child Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy

#### 14. Related Statutory Policies and Regulations:

- The Victorian Schools Reference Guide item 4.16.2
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools](#).
- State of Victoria 2016, [Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order No. 870](#), Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2.