

COMMITMENT STATEMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in schools in the Sandhurst Catholic Schools

The Statement is intended to provide the central focus for child safety across Catholic education in the Sandhurst Catholic Schools, built around a unified understanding of the moral imperative and overarching commitments that underpin our drive for improvement and cultural change.

The Catholic school sets 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)

The care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This 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.

Sandhurst Catholic Schools are committed to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people through:

1. Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a safe and nurturing culture, CES Ltd will actively and continually develop and review all policies, processes and practices, informed by emerging thinking and evidence.

¹ As defined by the Victorian Government Special Gazette No. 2 (2016), 'children and young people' in this document refers to those children and young people enrolled as students in Catholic schools in Victoria.

2. Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns

CES Ltd, in partnership with all Sandhurst Catholic Schools and families, will ensure children and young people, are engaged and active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their safety.

This means that the views of staff (including school employees, volunteers, contractors, clergy and the CES Ltd Office), children, young people and families are taken seriously, and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Children and young people are also provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

3. Implementing rigorous risk-management and employment practices

Sandhurst Catholic School staff will systematically and continually identify and assess risks to child safety and will eliminate (where possible) or reduce all potential sources of harm. Effective risk management will be embedded in school life through effective, transparent and well-understood policies, procedures and practices.

All Sandhurst Catholic Schools and the CES Ltd Office will employ highly competent and professional staff who are formed and challenged to maintain the safety of all students. The high-quality of staff appointments will be upheld through rigorous employment and staff review processes and practices.

CES Ltd will stay abreast of current legislation and will meet their legislative duties to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Government 2016), mandatory reporting, grooming, failure to disclose, grooming and failure to protect requirements and those requirements of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

References

Congregation for Catholic education 1997, The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Vatican, Vatican City, accessed 24 February 2016

State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016, Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools Ministerial Order No. 870, Education & Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), Gazette No. S2, accessed 16 May 2016