

St Margaret'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 Margaret's Primary School, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. 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).

Our School Vision and Mission

St. Margaret's Primary School

Living our Catholic faith,

Engaging passionately in learning,

Connecting with and shaping our world

Mission Statements

● Living our Catholic Faith

- To create a welcoming Catholic community where we promote commitment, service, respect, justice and compassion for all.
- To involve and educate our community in Our Catholic Story and beliefs about the life of Jesus and St. Margaret.
- To actively reflect Jesus' values in our decisions, choices and actions.

● Engaging Passionately in Learning

- To promote a collaborative culture that creates engaging and meaningful learning opportunities.
- To provide rich, rigorous and relevant experiences that meet the needs of all students and the whole school community.
- To use contemporary tools to maximise learning and teaching success.
- To personalise learning, creating passionate, life-long learners.

● Connecting With and Shaping Our World

- To build purposeful connections between home, school and the wider community.

- To shape our local and global world through positive action.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St Margaret's Primary School 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
4. Working With Children Check Policy

Principles

At St Margaret's Primary School, 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 Margaret'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 Margaret's Primary School.

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 Margaret's Primary School 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 Margaret's Primary School 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

At St Margaret's Primary School we have developed a range of strategies and actions that support our engagement with families, carers and our community.

These include:

- Creating a welcoming environment:
 - School open days
 - Learning and Teaching Expo
 - Art and Music Shows
 - Orientation of new families to the school
- Engaging families and communities in building a child safe organisation:
 - Regularly engage with parents, carers and students, and discuss the needs of students through parent–teacher interviews and Program Support Group Meetings
 - Ask parents and carers about their children – in formal settings like parent–teacher interviews, or during chance meetings at pick-up and drop-off.
 - Provide parents and carers with information about children's rights via newsletters and parent information sessions.
- Providing regular opportunities to communicate:
 - Sharing & Promoting Community Engagement via Newsletters, School Apps and Learning Management System
 - Provide frequent opportunities for parents and carers to engage with staff to discuss their children's experiences at school
 - Remind the school community about the shared roles of parents, carers and school staff in creating a positive environment for learning through newsletters, School Apps, Learning Management System and at whole school events
 - Host community workshops on child safety and wellbeing topics - eg. Life Education
 - Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern is raised or a complaint is made.
- Reflect the diversity of the school community:
 - Make newsletters and communications inclusive, so that families, in all their diversity, know that they are welcome and integral to the life of the school community
 - Select meeting venues that are physically accessible, welcoming and culturally safe
 - Invite and encourage the take-up of volunteer positions by families from diverse backgrounds, including people with a disability, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Provide inclusive and accessible information:
 - Display the PROTECT poster in shared areas, accessible to parents and the community
 - Make sure child safety information is easy to read – consider font size, font style, colours used, formatting and visual presentation

- Provide links to the school’s child safety policies in the school’s social media posts, newsletters and staff circulars
- Check that students, school staff and members of the school community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety. Keep this information up to date and accessible, and review it regularly.
- Build family and community involvement in child safety into business as usual:
 - Make child safety a standing item at School Advisory Council meetings and at meetings of the governing authority, as appropriate
 - Acknowledge the important role that families and communities play in monitoring children’s safety and wellbeing, and helping children to disclose concerns
 - Communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern or complaint is raised.

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

School staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St Margaret’s Primary School 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
- 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.

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	New