

ST THERESA'S SCHOOL

Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy



St Theresa's 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 Theresa's, 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).

Vision

St Theresa's Albion, a school that welcomes families into an inspiring Catholic community dedicated to excellence in education and social justice.

Mission

Each person is created in the image of God and called to communion with God. Therefore, all human life is sacred and every human being has an innate dignity. This understanding of the human person and that the children in our care are central to all that we do is at the heart of the values that underpin Catholic education at St Theresa's School.

St Theresa's Catholic School's mission therefore is:

To witness Jesus Christ in a learning community dedicated to the formation of the human person enabling them to reach their full potential

To integrate Faith, Culture & Life by teaching and celebrating the Catholic faith and traditions enabling us to live the Gospel values as presented in Catholic Social Teaching.

To develop life-long learners by providing an excellent inclusive, comprehensive, contemporary and holistic education that caters for spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and physical development

To share the responsibility for all children in the school and to work in partnership with the home

To act with integrity, respect, authenticity, presence and responsibility, acknowledging the richness and diversity of each other, and to live harmoniously, equitably, justly and sustainably for the common good

To provide a safe, stimulating, happy and caring environment that protects children and promotes their health, development and wellbeing

In choosing a Catholic school, parents enter a partnership with the school in which there is shared privilege and responsibility for the child's faith formation, learning and wellbeing.

When Catholic schools and families work together for the formation of all children, the school community is strengthened, and the whole of society benefits as a sense of ownership and belonging to community grows for children and young people, and for their families (Bryk et al. 2010).

Families are honoured in a Catholic school community in three main ways:

- **Encounter through partnership** – encounter happens when the sacred dignity of each person in the partnership is honoured, with each person learning alongside the other
- **Activating engagement** – leaders, teachers, families and children each have a role to play to strengthen the relationship between school and home
- **Three-way learning relationship** – parents, teachers and children come together in a three-way learning relationship to support the full flourishing of each and every child.

MACS Horizons of [Hope Foundation Statement: Families as partners in Catholic school communities](#)

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St Theresa'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 Theresa'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 Theresa's 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 Theresa'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 Theresa'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 Theresa'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
- the school will communicate and implement policies and procedures on Care, Safety and Welfare of Students to staff, students, guardians, parents and the whole school community via its website, newsletters, School Advisory Board, staff meetings, Community Conversations and student forums. Child friendly materials are made available and Child Safety and Wellbeing are standard agenda items for Staff Meetings, Advisory Council Meetings, Leadership Team Meetings and Parish Leadership Team Meetings.

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

School staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St Theresa'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
- 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