



Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures

BACKGROUND

St Patrick's College is a Catholic School in the Edmund Rice tradition. The charism of Blessed Edmund Rice expressed through the touchstones of Liberating Education, Gospel Spirituality, Inclusive Community, Justice and Solidarity, underpins our continued commitment to a safe and inclusive environment for all.

St Patrick's College is a Catholic day and boarding college for boys in the Edmund Rice tradition, established in 1893. St Patrick's College is committed to providing a caring, supportive, and safe environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known.

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and St Patrick's College are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under our care.

The EREA Board, the College's and the Boarding School's governing authority, has approved the College's Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures, as set out in the Policy Administration section, below.

PURPOSE

St Patrick's College is committed to providing a safe and child-friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and can

actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

At St Patrick's College we have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in our students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

St Patrick's College regards its child safeguarding, wellbeing, and protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child safety, wellbeing and protection laws and regulations and maintain a child-safe culture.

Our Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures demonstrates the strong commitment of the College to child safety and wellbeing, and to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly environment. It provides an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

Our Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures outlines the key elements of our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 (which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments) and to the College as a child safe organisation. It informs the College community about everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards students and guides the policies, processes and practices for the safety, wellbeing and protection of students across all areas of our work, which are set out in the College's Child Safeguarding Program. [1]

The Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, [Ministerial Order 1359](#) and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- the implementation of the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework
- the implementation of the EREA Child Safeguarding Policy
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the College (based on [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (PROTECT Four Critical Actions for

Schools) and PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending (Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending)

- the creation of a safe and supportive College environment and a positive and robust child safe culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the College
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child protection, in Victoria.

PRINCIPLES

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

St Patrick's College endorses, implements, and complies with the EREA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

St Patrick's College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies, and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
5. The safety of children is dependent on the existence of a child-safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College Community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, external education providers, contractors, and volunteers who have direct contact with children.**
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all College Advisory Council members, staff, and volunteers.

10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College Community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who are vulnerable have the right to special care and support.
13. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

Child Safeguarding Standards

In addition to implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards, as both an EREA College and a Catholic Entity the College commitment to child safety is based on the [EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework](#) and the [National Catholic Safeguarding Standards](#), which set out overarching standards and specific requirements that guide the development and regular review of the College's work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and other harm.

Requiring compliance with these additional Child Safeguarding Standards is one of the strategies employed by the EREA Board to embed a culture of child safety at the College.

St Patrick's College's Child Safeguarding Principles and Values

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and St Patrick's College are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under our care. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

St Patrick's College and the EREA Board have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected and their voices heard, and where they are safe and feel safe.

SCOPE

The College's Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures applies to all "Representatives of the College", as well as to Visitors.

“Representatives of the College” include all Staff (including teachers, administration and education support Staff, tertiary placement students, Boarding School Staff and temporary or casual Staff), pre-service teachers, Volunteers, Contractors (including External Education Providers) and clergy.

Therefore, this Policy and its Procedures applies to all “school staff” and “school boarding premises staff” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359, as well as to Volunteers and other people who are associated with the College, such as parents and carers when they are visiting the College or the Boarding School or attending a College or Boarding School event.

This Policy and its Procedures applies in all College and Boarding School environments (together referred to as College environments), including physical, virtual and online environments, on-site and off-site College grounds (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sports and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas travel), and environments provided by External Education Providers and other Contractors.

DEFINITIONS

A complete list of definitions of particular terms used in the Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures can be found in the Child Safeguarding Program Definitions section of our Child Safeguarding Program.

Of particular importance to this Policy and its Procedures are the following key definitions:

“Child”/“Child and Young Person”

The term “child” and the phrase “child and young person” refer to a person who is aged under 18.

“Child Abuse and Other Harm”

The phrase “child abuse and other harm” is not defined in Victorian law. However, various sources of legislation provide a definition of “child abuse” (see the definition of “Child Safety Incident or Concern”, below) as well as other concepts and conduct which, together, provide guidance as to what is child abuse and other harm in Victoria.

For the purposes of this Policy and its Procedures, the phrase “child abuse and other harm” refers to incidents of or concerns about (including concerns about a risk of) physical, sexual, psychological and emotional harm, neglect, grooming and exposure to family violence, regardless of by whom or how this harm occurs.

“Child Safety Incident Or Concern”

St Patrick's College uses the phrase “child safety incident or concern,” which includes, but goes further than, the more limited concept of “child abuse”.

Child safety incidents or concerns can take many forms. These include not only “child abuse” of a child or young person by their parents/carers, but also conduct by other people that can cause harm to a child or young person.

We define “child safety incidents or concerns” as an incident of or concern about:

- “child abuse” as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (CWA Act) (and therefore as incorporated into Ministerial Order 1359). The CWA Act defines “child abuse” as:
 - a sexual offence against a child
 - the criminal offence of grooming, which includes grooming of a child or of a person with care, supervision or responsibility for the child with the intention of facilitating the child being engaged or involved in the commission of a sexual offence
 - the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or “serious” emotional or psychological harm
 - the “serious” neglect of a child [2]
- a child “in need of protection” as defined in the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act), which includes:
 - abandonment of the child by their parents and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child
 - the child’s parents are dead or incapacitated and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child

- “significant” harm as a result of physical injury, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child
- “significant” harm as a result of sexual abuse (including likely future sexual abuse as a result of grooming), from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child
- “significant” emotional or psychological harm, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child
- “significant” neglect by the child’s parents [3]
- “reportable conduct” as defined in the CWS Act, which means conduct by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors that involves:
 - a sexual offence committed against or in the presence of a child
 - sexual misconduct committed against or in the presence of a child
 - physical violence committed against or in the presence of a child
 - any behaviour that causes “significant” emotional or psychological harm to a child
 - “significant” neglect of a child
- a criminal offence against a child as set out in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as:
 - sexual penetration or sexual assault of, or sexual activity in the presence of, a child aged under 16 or of a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender
 - grooming a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender
 - grooming an adult who has a child under their care, supervision or authority
 - encouraging of a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the offender’s care, supervision or authority to be involved in sexual activity
- a practice to change or suppress a child’s sexual orientation or gender identity, which is prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices

Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)

- a breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, such as:
 - a teacher engaging in unauthorised after-hours meetings with a student
 - a Volunteer sports coach engaging in inappropriate online personal communications with a student
 - a Contractor music tutor publishing online photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.

“Child-Related Work”

“Child-related work” is work performed at or for the College or the Boarding School by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor that usually involves direct contact with a child (unless the direct contact is only occasional and incidental to the work).

Direct contact means any contact between a person and a child that involves:

- physical contact;
- face-to-face contact;
- contact by post or other written communication;
- contact by telephone or other oral communication; or
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

Under this definition, only those Volunteers and Contractors who have direct contact with students are engaged in child-related work for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

“School Environment”/“School Boarding Environment”

The “school environment” includes any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the College
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the EREA Board (or the Principal, on its behalf) for use by a child or student (including

email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)

- other locations provided by the College or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
 - camps
 - approved homestay accommodation
 - delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school
 - sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

The “school boarding environment” includes all of the above physical, online or virtual spaces that are made available or authorised by the EREA Board (or the Principal, on its behalf) for a child or student at the Boarding School to use at any time.

“School Staff”

“School staff” is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359, and is defined as “an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work
- a minister of religion, religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school”.

The engagement or employment of Staff and Contractors at the College (other than the Principal, Deputy Principal and Director) is undertaken by St Patrick's College on behalf of the EREA Board.

This means that all Staff as well as Direct Contact Contractors at the College are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359, no matter their age or the frequency of their engagement.

“School Boarding Premises Staff”

“School boarding premises staff” is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359, and is defined as “an individual working in a school boarding environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by the school boarding premises governing authority
- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school boarding premises governing authority to perform child-related work
- a minister of religion, religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school”.

The engagement or employment of all Staff and Contractors at the Boarding School is undertaken by St Patrick's College on behalf of the EREA Board.

This means that all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Contractors, at the Boarding School are “school boarding premises staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359, no matter their age or the frequency of their engagement.

“Staff” / “Staff Member”

The terms “Staff” and “staff member” include all teaching and non-teaching Staff and Boarding School Staff, including the Principal. They include all those employed by the College on a permanent, temporary or casual basis.

Although College Advisory Council members are technically Volunteers, they are considered “Staff” for the purposes of this Policy and its Procedures and the Child Safeguarding Program.

“Student”

A student is a person who is enrolled at or attends the College and a student at the Boarding School. They may be a child or young person, or they may be an adult aged 18 or over.

“Volunteers” and “Contractors”

A Volunteer is a someone who performs work for the College in a College or Boarding School environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider College or local community.

Volunteers are not “school staff” or “school boarding premises staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

A Contractor is someone engaged by the College to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the College. However, Contractors who have direct contact with children (see below) are “school staff” or “school boarding premises staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

The College categorises Volunteers and Contractors as either:

- **Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors:** Volunteers and Contractors who have direct physical or face-to-face contact with, or who directly communicate with, students (such as Volunteers and Contractors who are tutors, provide learning support, work in the Canteen, attend or provide excursions/incursions, assist in music/drama productions and coach sports teams). External Education Providers are considered Direct Contact Contractors.
- **Regular Volunteers/Contractors:** Volunteers and Contractors who assist the College in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact), and who do this more than seven times per year (such as Volunteers working in the College’s administration office, contracted consultants, regular maintenance workers or cleaners, and caterers for staff events)
- **Casual Volunteers/Contractors:** Volunteers and Contractors who assist the College in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact) or whose services are directed at the general public, and who do this seven times or less per year (such as Volunteers who work on a stall at a College fete or on a barbeque at a sporting event, and one-off emergency maintenance workers).

“Visitor”

The term “Visitor” refers to any adult who attends a College or Boarding School event or is in a College or Boarding School environment on a one-off or casual basis. Examples of Visitors include, but are not limited to:

- Casual Volunteers/Contractors
- parents, carers and other adult family members of students, when they are attending College or Boarding School events or in a College or Boarding School

environment

- people invited by the College or a staff member to attend a College or Boarding School event or to be in a College or Boarding School environment
- people who attend a College or Boarding School environment for commercial purposes, such as for deliveries or sales purposes.

“External Education Provider”

An external education provider is any organisation that St Patrick's College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College.

The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Child safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the College community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety, wellbeing and protection of students.

Specific responsibilities include:

1. Trustees of Edmund Rice Education Australia

Trustees of Edmund Rice Education Australia (TEREA) is the proprietor of the College.

2. The EREA Board

The Edmund Rice Education Australia Board (EREA Board), appointed by TERE, is the College's and the Boarding School's "governing authority" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. It has responsibility for EREA's strategic directions, operational policy and risk management frameworks.

It ensures that the College has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding child safety, approves and reviews the College's Child Safeguarding Program to ensure that it has and implements processes to comply with its child safety legal and regulatory obligations, and ensures that the College has ongoing monitoring processes to verify and evaluate

the use of the resources allocated to manage child safeguarding obligations within the College.

The EREA Board delegates its functions relating to the operational management and implementation of the College's Child Safeguarding Program to the Principal.

3. The Executive Director of EREA

The Executive Director of EREA (EREA Executive Director) implements the strategy and policies approved by the EREA Board and appoints staff to fulfil the leadership, management and operational structures of EREA.

The EREA Executive Director ensures that the College has appropriate resources to effectively implement its Child Safeguarding Program and that the College meets its obligations and legislative requirements as defined in the EREA Safeguarding Standards Framework.

The EREA Executive Director is the "head of organisation" for the College, for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

4. The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the College, and the Child Safeguarding Program.

The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and the College's Child Safeguarding Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the College.

5. The EREA Director of Safeguarding

The EREA Director of Safeguarding supports and advises the Principal in relation to relevant child protection legislation and the implementation of the College's Child Safeguarding Program and the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework.

For the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the EREA Director of Safeguarding has been authorised, by the EREA Executive Director, to undertake responsibility for reporting and investigating Reportable Allegations that involve the Principal under our Reportable Conduct Policies and Procedures.

6. The EREA Regional Director

The EREA Regional Director supports the College Principal to maintain the highest standards in relation to the safety, wellbeing and protection of children and young people. They ensure that schools promptly report abuse or potential abuse of a child, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Student Sexual Offending, to Police, the EREA Executive Director and EREA Board Chair, the EREA Director of Safeguarding and other relevant authorities.

7. The College Advisory Council

Under the EREA governance structure, the College Advisory Council is responsible for supporting and advising the Principal to ensure consistency and faithfulness to the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition.

Responsibility for the day-to-day management and implementation of the College's child safeguarding policies and procedures rests with the Principal.

The College Advisory Council advises and supports the Principal in maintaining the College's strategies for safeguarding children and young people.

8. The College's and the Boarding School's Child Safeguarding Officers

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the College's and the Boarding School's Child Safeguarding Officers. Our Child Safeguarding Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety, wellbeing and protection issues.

They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College and the Boarding School. They are also responsible for championing child safeguarding within the College and the Boarding School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

9. The Senior Child Safeguarding Officer

St Patrick's College has also appointed Deputy Principal-Richard Brodrick as the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer. St Patrick's College has appointed Deputy Principal-Richard Brodrick as the Boarding School's Boarding School Senior Child Safeguarding Officer.

They have additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal and the Leadership Team as well as the EREA Director of Safeguarding.

10. Staff Members

All Staff must comply with this Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Safeguarding Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and WWC Checks.

All Staff must be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, be observant, and raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers.

To meet these obligations, all Staff must:

- participate in child safeguarding induction and ongoing training provided by the College
- always follow the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures in the Child Safeguarding Program
- act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with our Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting Obligations) Policy and Procedures, and follow the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending
- ensure that students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students

11. Volunteers and Contractors

All Volunteers and all Contractors at the College are responsible for contributing to the safety, wellbeing and protection of students in the College environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all Volunteers and all Contractors must:
 - comply with our Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and the Child Safety Code of Conduct
 - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm
 - raise all child safety concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers
- Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors must:
 - participate in child safeguarding induction and ongoing training provided by the College
 - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
- Regular Volunteers/Contractors and Casual Volunteers/Contractors must either:
 - participate in modified child safeguarding induction training; or
 - receive and acknowledge information about the Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

For Contractors, the College may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

12. External Education Providers

All External Education Providers engaged by St Patrick's College are responsible for contributing to the safety, wellbeing and protection of children in the College environment.

All External Education Providers engaged by St Patrick's College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and the College Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures.

St Patrick's College will include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Contractor Management and Volunteers POLICY

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between Representatives of the College and students, including in physical, online and virtual environments.

We also have a Student Code of Conduct, which includes standards of behaviour for students relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

Together, we refer to these as our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct.

Our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct include clear processes to report inappropriate behaviour. We publish our Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at our College and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

Cultural Safety

At St Patrick's College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe College where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety, and we actively create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and their communities (including local Aboriginal communities relevant to the College) to have a voice and presence in our College's planning, policies, and activities.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote cultural safety in our College community are set out in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding).

Student Empowerment and Participation

St Patrick's College is a child safe and child-centred organisation, and we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our approach to child safety wellbeing.

We ensure that our physical, virtual and online environments are friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our College and the Boarding School and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We recognise the importance of friendships and encourage respectful relationships, strong friendships and support from peers.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote the participation of and empowerment of students, and to implement all of the above obligations, are set out in our [Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures](#).

Parent/Carer, Family and Community Engagement

The College recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure that they have opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities (the variety of communities that are relevant to the College, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort) know about the College's and the Boarding School's operations and policies, including the Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We build cultural safety at the College and the Boarding School through partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as with culturally and linguistically diverse communities that make up our staff and student cohort.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote the engagement of parents/carers, families, and relevant communities in child safety and wellbeing at the College, to make information about child safety and wellbeing available and accessible, and to implement all of the above obligations, are set out in our [Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#).

Diversity and Equity

Our College values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- promote and support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- promote and support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- promote the safety of all vulnerable children
- support students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- support students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensure that all Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and communities with particular experiences or needs

- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring that our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote equity and respect diversity at the College, and to implement all of the above, are set out in the following Policies and Procedures:

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#).
- [Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#).
- [Students with Disability Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#).
- [LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#).

Suitable Staff, Volunteers and Contractors/Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness (Child Safeguarding Human Resources Management)

The specific human resources management strategies that we have adopted at the College to promote child safety and wellbeing are set out in our [Child Safeguarding Recruitment and Screening Policy and Procedures](#), [Working with Children Checks Policy and Procedures](#) and [Child Safeguarding Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures](#). They include the following:

Recruitment and Screening

St Patrick's College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. Our practices include:

- requiring all Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, to maintain a valid VIT Registration or WWC (working with children) clearance and sighting, verifying and recording this information
- ensuring that all Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, undergo child safeguarding induction, and ongoing education and training

- ensuring that all Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors who engage with students, are provided with regular supervision and performance monitoring by their manager/a senior member of Staff
- ensuring that professional development programs for Staff include child safeguarding education and training programs.

Training on and Information About Child Safeguarding

As a part of St Patrick's College's induction process, all Staff and Boarding School Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors, must complete induction in our child safeguarding policies, practices and procedures. All Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors, also receive refresher and ongoing child safeguarding training at least annually.

Our child safeguarding induction and ongoing training program includes information about:

- this Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures
- the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
- recognising child abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators
- the Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting Obligations) Policy and Procedures, which includes our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns (such as mandatory reporting, reporting to police and reportable conduct obligations)
- our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns
- WWC clearances and other child safety and wellbeing human resources practices.

The College provides all Visitors to the College and the Boarding School, including Casual Volunteers and Casual Contractors, with information about the Child Safety Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities.

Supervision and Support

Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are supported and supervised by the College's Child Safeguarding Officers and Leadership Team to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child safety.

Complaints and Reporting Processes: The College's Response to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

St Patrick's College fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the College community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety and wellbeing. Our processes for raising complaints and concerns, and the procedures that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a Volunteer, a Contractor or the College, are set out in the **Procedures**, below.

The College will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when these are reported to the College, whether by Representatives of the College, students, parents/carers or anyone else.

The College's response will include:

- reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds externally to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH Child Protection) (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Child Sexual Abuse), the CCYP, and/or the Victorian Institute of Teaching (Reportable Conduct), depending on the issues raised and consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending
- reporting internally to EREA all matters that required reporting to an external agency
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability, and other

vulnerable students (such as a student who is unable to live at home or a student who identifies as lesbian gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)

- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the College's response to it
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the College (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

Child Safeguarding Risk Management

EREA and St Patrick's College recognise the importance of a risk management approach to child safeguarding and to minimising the risk of harm to children and young people in all College and Boarding School environments.

We identify, assess and manage child safety risks in all College and Boarding School environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body, through our Risk Management Program. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We record identified risks to child safety and wellbeing in our Child Safeguarding Risk Register, along with the actions in place at the College to manage these risks. The EREA Board, the Principal and the Leadership Team monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions at least annually.

Child Safeguarding Record Keeping

The College is committed to best practice record keeping.

All internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the College are recorded using [PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools](#).

All incidents and external reports of student sexual offending, as well as any other responses by the College, are recorded using [PROTECT Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: Template for all Victorian Schools](#).

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the College maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

Child Safeguarding Program and Practice Review and Improvement

St Patrick's College is committed to the continuous improvement of policies and procedures making up our entire Child Safeguarding Program and of our child safety and wellbeing practices. The Program as a whole is reviewed every two years (or earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the College or legislation changes) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with relevant child safety, wellbeing and protection related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, the College:

- actively seeks, actions, and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider College and Boarding School community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- analyses any complaints, concerns and child safety incidents that may have occurred
- communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the College community.

PROCEDURES

Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the College

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Staff

Our Child Safeguarding Program provides detailed guidance for **Staff, Volunteers and Contractors** on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally at the College. These reports can be made to a Child Safeguarding Officer or the Principal.

Where the incident or concern involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the EREA Regional Director or EREA Director of Safeguarding

via the EREA National Office (03 9426 3200 or safeguarding@erea.edu.au).

Our Child Safeguarding Program also contains detailed guidance for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors about when and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

We recognise that some individuals, particularly children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns. Our Child Safeguarding Program provides guidance on identifying additional vulnerabilities and barriers, and contains strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the School community and enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the School.

For more information, refer to St Patrick's College's [Child Safeguarding \(Responding and Reporting Obligations\) Policy and Procedures](#).

Students, Parents/Carers and Community Members

Students at the College are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College or the Boarding School. These are explained in our Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures (available [Insert Link to/Description of Where the Child-Friendly Child Safe Complaints Policy is Available](#)) and include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact:

- the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer by phoning 03 5322 4408 / 0409 214 177 or emailing rbrodrick@stpats.vic.edu.au
- the Boarding School Senior Child Safeguarding Officer by phoning **03 5322 4408 / 0409 214 177** or emailing rbrodrick@stpats.vic.edu.au
- the Principal or, if the concern relates to the Principal, the EREA Director of Safeguarding via the EREA National Office (03 9426 3200).

Students, parents/carers, family members and other community members can also raise child safety incidents or concerns through the [EREA Complaints Handling Policy](#).

Any person can also contact the Senior Child Safeguarding Officer, the Principal, or the EREA Director of Safeguarding if they have concerns regarding the College's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

The College's Response to and External Reporting of Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

St Patrick's College's [Child Safeguarding \(Responding and Reporting Obligations\) Policy and Procedures](#) sets out the procedures, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, that the College will follow when notified of any child safety incident or concern involving a student, staff member, Volunteer, Contractor, Visitor or any other person connected to the College, the Boarding School or the College or Boarding School environment.

It also provides guidance for all Representatives of the College on their obligations to respond to and report, to relevant external authorities, child safety incidents and concerns.

These include:

- mandatory reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH Child Protection) of children who are "in need of protection" due to physical and sexual abuse
- reporting all other forms of child abuse and harm to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH Child Protection)
- mandatory reporting of sexual offences against children to Police
- reporting to Police in other situations where a student has been or is being harmed
- reporting incidents of or allegations about "reportable conduct" by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, and the College's investigation outcomes, to the CCYP

- reporting teacher misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- mandatory reporting to Edmund rice Australia (EREA)
- mandatory reporting to Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education limited (DOBCEL)
- mandatory reporting to catholic education Commission of Victoria Ltd. (CECV)

Support for Students, Families and Staff Following a Child Safety Incident or Disclosure

The College will work closely with the student, parents and carers, and our wellbeing team to provide all available support services that are available. The College employs a range of measures to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern, depending on the particular circumstances of the matter and of the student and their family:

- Child Safeguarding Officers may work with the student and their family to develop a Student Support Plan.
- support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include referrals to internal or external support, such as the College counsellor, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation which specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm.
- Students in focus Team (SIFT) will oversee the wellbeing support plan
- This may include accessing the:
 - Re-engagement Centre
 - Learning support
 - regular check ins with Year Level Coordinators/Director of School

The College also offers similar support to former students who disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the College.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

involved. The College assists impacted Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to access necessary support.

Embedding a Culture of Child Safety: Our Child Safeguarding Program

Our Child Safeguarding Program is one of the strategies employed by St Patrick's College to embed a culture of child safety and wellbeing at the College.

Our Child Safeguarding Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the College and the Boarding School. It includes:

- Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
- clear information as to what is child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of child abuse and other harm
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally to one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officer or Principal, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm
- strategies to support, encourage and enable Representatives of the College, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Leadership Team, Staff, Boarding School Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- procedures for reporting, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection), Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and Reporting Child Sexual Abuse to Police
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability

- child safeguarding training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures are published on our College's public website.

They are provided to new Staff, to Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and to Direct Contact and Regular Contractors at their induction. Training about the Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and its Procedures are also included in annual refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors.

All Visitors to the College, including Casual Volunteers and Casual Contractors, are provided with information about the Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and its Procedures, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities, through Signing in at Reception via Passtab, posters on college noticeboards and directed to college website..

This Policy and its Procedures are also communicated to Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and other members of the College community through other mediums such as Complispace-PolicyConnect and Staff Learning Systems, Sam4Schools, Passtab, College Website, Contracts, Newsletters, Annual Reports, Annual briefings and the Crest..

A child-friendly version of St Patrick's College's Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is provided to all students and can be found [Child-Safety-Policy-Student-Version-2.pdf \(stpats.vic.edu.au\)](https://stpats.vic.edu.au/Child-Safety-Policy-Student-Version-2.pdf).

BREACH OF THIS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

St Patrick's College enforces the Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures and the Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct. The Policy Owner monitors compliance with this Policy and its Procedures.

In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review, in a timely and fair manner, that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

All breaches and near misses related to this Policy should be reported as a Compliance Breach in Assurance by the College's Risk Manager and monitored by the EREA Director of Risk & Compliance.

Risks identified related to the implementation of this Policy and its Procedures are reported to the Policy Owner for review, to support continuous improvement.

POLICY REVIEW

A review of this Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures is conducted every two years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation.

The EREA Board is responsible for ensuring that this Policy and its Procedures are reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy and its Procedures.

EREA AND ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE BALLARAT POLICY AND PROCEDURES LINKAGES

The Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures are to be read and understood in conjunction with the:

- [EREA Child Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [EREA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety](#)
- [EREA Complaints Handling Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding \(Responding and Reporting Obligations\) Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Record Keeping Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#)
- [Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#)
- [Students with Disability Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures \(Child Safeguarding\)](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Recruitment Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Working with Children Checks Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Risk Management Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Boarder Child Safeguarding](#)

SOURCE OF OBLIGATION AND RELATED LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS

The Child Safeguarding (Safety and Wellbeing) Policy and Procedures implement the:

- [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#), Standard 2
- [Ministerial Order 1359](#), Clause 6
- [EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework](#), Standard 1
- [National Catholic Safeguarding Standards](#), Standard 1.

RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

- Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools](#)
- Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- [PROTECT-Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victoria Schools](#)

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse](#), 2018

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Status – Draft, Current or Archived	Current
Person Responsible and Contact Details	EREA Manager Safeguarding and Standards tom.isbester@erea.edu.au

Approver(s)	EREA Board
Approval Date	20 June 2022
Version Number	2
Version History	Replaces previous policy for MO870
Review Frequency	2 years
Next Review Date	June 2024
Document Classification	V-CS01
Risk Rating	High
Location	PolicyConnect

[1] *The “Child Safeguarding Program” is the name given to the full collection of policies and procedures that assist the College to be a child safe organisation and to meet the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 and – as a Catholic entity – the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. It includes policies and procedures for:*

- *responding to and reporting child safety incidents and concerns*
- *child safe human resources management (including WWC clearances)*
- *participation and empowerment of students*
- *informing and involving families and relevant communities in child safeguarding issues*
- *equity and diversity*
- *child safeguarding risk management strategies*

- *strategies for embedding a culture of child safety at the College and*
- *regular reviews and continuous improvement of child safeguarding policies, procedures and practices.*

[2] *“Serious” harm/neglect is harm that has a lasting permanent effect.*

[3] *“Significant” harm/neglect harm is harm that is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as “serious” and need not have a lasting permanent effect.*