



## St. Thomas' Primary School

VRQA

Developed Date: April 2018  
Next Review April 2021

### Organisational Culture of Child Safety Statement

St Thomas' Primary School maintains a 'culture of child safety' through effective leadership arrangements. Protecting children from abuse is everybody's responsibility, and St Thomas' School Leadership Team takes the main role in embedding a child safety culture across all aspects of the School Community.

All members of staff, clergy, casual relief teachers (CRTs), volunteers & contractors have a responsibility to act to protect students & young people from abuse and to build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. The school maintains a 'culture of child safety' through proactive leadership which demonstrates, and insists of others, appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours to ensure the safety of all who attend the school. St Thomas' School fosters a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness, where children and adults know how to respond if they suspect or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff members, clergy, CRTs, volunteers & contract service providers must also acknowledge the importance of cultural safety for Indigenous children and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including that of children with a disability.

**St Thomas' School maintains a 'culture of child safety' by actively implementing the strategies listed below in accordance with its moral & legal obligations and Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870.**

#### **Leadership Responsibilities:**

All members of the School's Leadership Team take their responsibility to protect students very seriously. Members of the School's Leadership Team take the lead in promoting an environment where students and young people feel safe, respected, valued and are capable and confident of reaching their full potential.

St Thomas' School's Leadership Team is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety and does so by ensuring the following:

1. Identifying and assessing potential risk of abuse to students and young people via established risk management strategies.
2. Creating an environment for students and young people to be safe and to feel safe.

3. Upholding high principles and standards for all staff members, clergy, CRTs, volunteers, and contractors.
4. Promoting models of behaviour between adults, students and young people based on mutual respect and consideration.
5. Developing & communicating child safe policies & procedures outlining the School's commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.
6. Developing & communicating codes of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children.
7. Appointing a 'Child Safety Officer' to promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand, meet and exceed their Child Safety obligations.
8. Ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment & screening of all staff, clergy, CRTs, volunteers & contractors.
9. Ensuring that staff & other members of the school community have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters.
10. Promoting inclusion of all children & families from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities.
11. Empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety and then incorporate this feedback to improve your policies and practices.
12. Immediately respond to any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct or suspected abuse in accordance with its reporting requirements.
13. Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policies and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing.
14. Ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

### **Responsibilities of Staff Members Clergy, CRTs, Volunteers & Contractors:**

Staff members, clergy, CRTs, volunteers & contractors engaged by St Thomas' School have an obligation to foster a culture of safety for all students and young people by:

1. Treating students and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care.
2. Understanding and complying with legislative requirements and internal school processes in the course of their work.
3. Demonstrating a commitment to displaying appropriate behaviours in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
4. Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured.
5. Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of students and young people.

6. Immediately report any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct or suspected abuse to the school's Child Safety Officer or a member of the school Leadership Team.
7. Assist the Leadership Team in empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety.
8. Assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse.
9. Following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

### **Maintaining & Communicating the School's Commitment to Child Safety Standards**

St Thomas' School maintains a Child Safety Policy outlining key elements of its approach to creating and sustaining a Child Safe environment. The Policy has been developed by the Leadership Team in consultation with staff members and affirms the school's commitment to a 'zero tolerance' towards child abuse and its commitment to upholding the best interest of children. The Policy also demonstrates a commitment to keeping students and young people safe and how it actively works to listen to and empower students at St Thomas' School.

The school's Child Safety Policy is made publicly available to all members of the community via the School's website. This policy and the accompanying Child Safety Code of Conduct are communicated to staff members, clergy, CRTs, volunteers & contractors prior to commencing work.

St Thomas' School reviews this policy every three years or more frequently as required when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children.

### **Maintaining & Communicating the School's Code of Conduct to Ensure Child Safety**

St Thomas' School maintains a Code of Conduct for all staff members, clergy, volunteers, CRTs and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours, as well as acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

St Thomas' School believes that by defining the expectation for all staff members, CRTs, clergy, volunteers and contractors relating to 'Child Connected Work' they are more likely to act appropriately. The Code of Conduct enables the school to take immediate action when an individual act in an unacceptable manner, which may result in disciplinary action including dismissal. This process is supported by the school's complaints procedure.

The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is made publicly available to all members of the community via the School's website. The Code of Conduct is communicated to new staff member's clergy, CRTs, volunteers & contractors prior to commencing work and at least annually and they are also embedded into core documents such as the Employee Handbook.

Members of the Leadership Team vigilantly monitor professional behaviour & regularly remind staff members, CRTs, clergy, volunteers and contractors of their responsibilities at the commencement of commencement of each school year and at Staff Meetings.

St Thomas' School reviews its Child Safety Code of Conduct every three years or more frequently in the event of a complaint, or when there has been a change to the work environment or work arrangements that may impact on the protection of children.

References:

[\*Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870.\*](#)

[\*CECV Commitment to Child Safety Standards\*](#)

[\*Victorian Child Safe Standards\*](#)