Standard Two – Child Safety Policy

**Introduction**

All Saints Parish School is committed to providing a safe environment for all students and young people and takes active steps to protect them against abuse. To achieve this the school has developed and actively enforces Child Safety Strategies to ensure that any person involved in ‘child connected work’ is aware of their obligations & responsibilities for ensuring the safety of all children under their care.

In accordance with requirements of the [Victorian Government’s Ministerial Order No 870](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Documents/ChSafMINOrder8702.pdf), All Saints Parish School maintains a culture of ‘zero tolerance’ to child abuse and to support this has established minimum Child Safety Standards.

**Rationale**

The dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God, is the foundation of Catholic Social Teaching. This Catholic Anthropology leads us to afford all people, but especially children, young people and the most vulnerable, the highest respect.

Within this context, effective Catholic schools provide a safe, supportive and secure school and outside school environments that prioritise child safety in a culture of respect and pastoral care.

The mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people are essential pre-conditions for successful learning. These qualities cannot be developed for individuals in isolation from the health and wellbeing of the school community as a whole.

**Scriptural Context**

As a faith community, we nurture and watch over each and every person in keeping with the Gospel values lived by Jesus Christ.  
   
**“I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate All Saints Parish School’s commitment to ensuring Child Safety and to illustrate the measures implemented by the school to maintain a safe education environment, as well as processes for responding to suspected abuse.

**Scope**

This policy & associated procedures apply to all staff members (teaching & non-teaching), clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors engaged by the school.

**Commitment to Child Safety**

All students & young people attending All Saints Parish School have the right to feel safe. The school affirms its commitment to child safety by adopting a ‘zero tolerance’ to child abuse and by actively implementing and managing strategies to help protect children from harm.

Initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety of students and young people at All Saints Parish School include the following:

* An annual assessment of the effectiveness of its Child Safety Management Strategies to identify areas for improvement.
* A Code of Conduct defining workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.
* Processes for the recruitment, support, training & supervision of staff members, clergy, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors who participate in ‘Child Connected Work’.
* Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected Child Abuse.
* Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people in the establishment of Child Safety strategies.
* A commitment that promotes safety of Indigenous children, children with disabilities and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

All Saints Parish School maintains policies, procedures and strategies to create a child safe environment in the following areas.

**Risk Management**

All Saints Parish School recognises the importance of minimising the potential of Child Abuse or harm and uses this process to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general Occupational Health & Safety risks the school proactively manages risk via a formal assessment process.

**Code of Conduct**

All Saints Parish School enforces a Code of Conduct for all staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, and contractors that clearly defines workplace expectations including professional boundaries, ethical behaviours and acceptable & unacceptable relationships.

This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance and support to individuals so that they feel valued, respected and fairly treated. It is provided to any person engaged in ‘Child Connected Work’ and is available on the school website & in the Employee Handbook.

**Recruitment, Support, Training & Supervision**

All Saints Parish School adopts Administrative & Human Resource practices to ensure its screening, recruitment & performance management processes identify and engage the most suitable candidates for positions available at the school. Recruitment and screening processes, as well as Police and Working With Children’s Checks are minimum requirements for those engaged in ‘Child Connected Work’.

Staff Members are provided with regular development opportunities, support, supervision & training to assist with addressing child safety matters.

**Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Concerns or Abuse**

All Saints Parish School has appointed a Child Safety Officer (Sally Lowe) with specific responsibilities for responding to reports or complaints made by any member of the school community relating to child safety concerns or abuse. The school’s Child Safety Officer works closely with members of the leadership team, staff members, clergy, casual relief teachers, volunteers, contractors, students and the parent community to ensure Child Safety Standards are maintained and all child safety complaints, suspected abuse, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct are immediately addressed.

Where staff members have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a student or young person they are mandated by law to report their concerns immediately to the Principal, Child Safety Officer or a Members of the Leadership Team before contacting DHHS Child Protection. Staff members will be supported through all aspects of the reporting process.

The school’s reporting & complaints procedure is located on the school website.

**Inclusion & empowerment of all students & young people**

All Saints Parish School works with students to ensure that they are empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and encourage them to speak up when they feel uncomfortable or afraid. Staff members actively encourages students & young people to express their views on matters that directly affect them. The school educates students and young people on strategies they can adopt if they feel unsafe.

**Valuing Diversity**

All Saints Parish School values diversity and does not tolerate discriminatory practices.

To achieve this the school:

* Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous children and their families.
* Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from cultural and/or linguistically different backgrounds.
* Welcome children with disabilities and their families and actively promotes their participation.
* Seek to employ staff members from a culturally diverse background.

**Review of this Policy**

All Saints Parish School reviews its Child Safety Code of Conduct every three years 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.

Principals Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_