



## UNDER-18 SAFE ENVIRONMENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards that apply to organisations that provide services for children in order to help protect children from all forms of abuse.

St Mary's College (the **College**) is required to observe the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (MO 1359).

The definitions contained in the Under-18 Safe Environment Policy apply to this Code of Conduct.

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to:

- protect Under-18 persons from sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect
- promote the safety of Under-18 persons in the College;
- set out the appropriate standards of behaviour for adults interacting with Under-18 persons at the College.

### 2. Scope

College Staff and Volunteers and External Groups are required to comply with this Code.

This Code will apply at any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College for use by any Under-18 person, including College managed cyber and online environments, and venues or locations external to the College grounds that are used by the College for events and other functions or occasions organised by the College.

### 3. Standards of Conduct

#### 3.1 Acceptable behaviours

College Staff and Volunteers and External Groups are responsible for promoting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of Under-18 persons by:

- adhering to the Under-18 Safe Environment Policy or the Under-18 Safe Environment Policy for External Groups, and other College policies (where applicable)
- respecting the privacy of Under-18 persons
- taking all reasonable steps to protect Under-18 persons from violence, abuse, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect
- promoting and respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way
- avoiding any sexual behaviours when interacting with Under-18 persons
- maintaining appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with Under-18 persons
- refraining from using or possessing illegal drugs or being intoxicated when interacting with Under-18 persons
- being positive role models and treating all people with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of Under-18 persons, particularly where they are reporting a concern about child abuse or child safety
- immediately responding to and reporting any allegations of child abuse or complaints or concerns in relation to child safety to the Under-18 SAFE Contact Person or the Principal and acting on those allegations or concerns

- encouraging Under-18 persons to have a voice and participate in all relevant College activities to the fullest extent possible
- appropriately using technology and the internet in any online contact with Under-18 persons and their families
- adopting practices that assist Under-18 persons to feel safe and protected during social, sporting and cultural activities
- avoiding, where possible, situations where an adult may be alone with an Under-18 person such as in a bathroom, vehicle, tutorial room, office with the door closed, or bedroom

### **3.2 Unacceptable behaviours**

College Staff and Volunteers and External Groups must NOT:

- develop any 'special' relationships with Under-18 persons that could be seen as favouritism (e.g., the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific individuals)
- exhibit behaviours with Under-18 persons which may be construed as unnecessarily or inappropriately physical
- put Under-18 persons at risk of abuse
- enter an Under-18 person's bedroom without permission or entertain or invite an Under-18 person into their own bedroom or residence
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- provide alcohol to an Under-18 person or fail to report the consumption of alcohol by an Under-18 person
- discriminate against any Under-18 person, because of (but not limited to) culture, race, sex, ethnicity or disability
- initiate inappropriate contact with an Under-18 person or their family outside of the College without the Under 18 SAFE Contact Person or the Principal's knowledge and/or consent (e.g., private tutoring).

### **4. Breach of this Code**

College Staff and Volunteers who breach this Code will be liable to disciplinary action. Such disciplinary action will be dealt with on a case by case basis and will be at the discretion of the Under 18 SAFE Contact Person or the Principal.

External Groups, contractors, residential partners and volunteers of the College who breach this Code may face termination of their engagement with the College. Employees of External Groups, contractors or sub-contractors may also be refused permission to continue working in the College.

In appropriate cases, a breach of this Code may be referred to the Police and/or a regulatory body.

### **5. Implementation and Review**

The College community will be informed about this Code. It will be publicly available on the College intranet and notice boards.

This Code will be reviewed by 1 February 2024.

#### **Related College Policies**

- Under-18 Safe Environment Policy
- Processes for Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse
- Under-18 Safe Environment Policy for External Groups

**Under 18 SAFE Contact Person: Brenda Renfrew (03) 9349 5502**