

Sacred Heart College Commitment Statement to Child Safety

Sacred Heart College Yarrawonga holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic Education.

Sacred Heart College is committed to ensuring that all staff engaged in education promote the inherent dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from cultural and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

Sacred Heart College has a moral and legal mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected and their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe.

Sacred Heart College Yarrawonga commits to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in our school through:

1. Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a safe and nurturing culture, schools will actively and continually develop and review all policies, processes and practices, informed by emerging thinking and evidence.

2. Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns.

Schools, in partnership with families, will ensure children and young people, are engaged and active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their safety.

This means that the views of staff, children, young people and families are taken seriously and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Children and young people are also provided with opportunities to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

3. Implementing rigorous risk-management and employment practices.

Schools will systematically and continually identify and assess risks to child safety and will eliminate (where possible) or reduce all potential sources of harm. Effective risk management will be embedded in school life through effective, transparent and well-understood policies, procedures and practices.

Schools will employ highly competent and professional staff who are formed and challenged to maintain the safety of all students. The high-quality of staff appointments will be upheld through rigorous employment and staff review processes and practices.

Catholic education will stay abreast of current legislation and will meet their legislative duties to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Government 2016), mandatory reporting, grooming, failure to disclose and failure to protect requirements.