



Child Safety and Safeguarding Program

Child Safeguarding LGBTQIA+ Inclusion 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.

The EREA VSL Board, the College's and the Boarding School's governing authority, has approved St Patrick's College's Child Safeguarding LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures, as set out in the Policy Administration section, below.

St Patrick's College's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people have a right to feel safe and be safe.

St Patrick's College is committed to embedding a culture where the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under our care is paramount. Particular attention is

given to the needs of vulnerable children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people with disability and mental health issues, children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people who are unable to live at home, and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. We are committed to at all times acting in the best interests of children and young people.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistent with our robust safeguarding policies and procedures. St Patrick's College is committed to nurturing the wellbeing of all children and young people, respecting their dignity, ensuring their safety and protecting them from abuse and other harm. St Patrick's College and its School-Based Staff, Contractors and Volunteers have legal and moral obligations to respond swiftly, including contacting authorities where relevant when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

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.

Purpose

St Patrick's College (the College) is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment.

To be a child safe environment, the College must have and implement a variety of strategies to ensure the safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) students and to respect and value these students, their families and relevant communities.

In particular, Standard 5 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires the College to uphold equity and respect diverse needs in policy and practice.

To implement this Standard, Ministerial Order 1359 requires The EREA VSL Board to develop and endorse a policy, statement or curriculum document that details the strategies and actions that the College and the Boarding School will take to meet a number of specific requirements relating to LGBTQIA+ students, including to:

- understand the diverse circumstances of students and to provide support and respond to vulnerable students
- provide access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are accessible and easy to understand
- pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable students, including in particular LGBTQIA+ students.

St Patrick's College recognises the importance of promoting understanding and acceptance of diversity, including disability, to create and maintain a child safe environment.

This Policy and its Procedures set out how the College promotes the safety of LGBTQIA+ students as required by the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359. In particular, this includes partnering with families, carers and communities and promoting equity and respecting diversity.

Principles

EREA Victorian Schools Ltd. (EREA VSL) and St Patrick's College are committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all students. We have no tolerance for child abuse.

St Patrick's College and The EREA VSL 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.

Ministerial Order 1359 and the EREA VSL Safeguarding Framework set out the principles that guide The EREA VSL Board and St Patrick's College in the development and regular review of the Child Safeguarding LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures.

Scope

For the purposes of this Policy and its Procedures, references to the College include the Boarding School.

This Policy and its Procedures apply to all School-Based Staff, including School Boarding Premises Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

They apply in all College and Boarding School environments (together referred to as College environments) within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359, including physical, virtual and online environments used during or outside of school hours, on-site and off-site College grounds (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas travel), and environments provided by External Education Providers and other Contractors.

Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in this Policy and its Procedures can be found in the [Child Safety and Safeguarding Policy: Master Definitions List](#).

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

LGBTQIA+

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual as well as other gender identities and sexualities not otherwise mentioned.

Gender Diverse

“Gender diverse” is a broad term that can apply to many people who do not conform to, or identify with, traditional sex and gender norms. This term includes children and young people who may identify as transgender, genderqueer, gender questioning or who feel that their gender identity does not align with the sex assigned to them at birth and/or society’s expectations. The person may identify as neither male nor female.

Intersex

Under section 4 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), “intersex” means the status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:

- neither wholly female nor wholly male; or
- a combination of female and male; or
- neither female nor male.

Although intersex people are often confused with transgender and gender diverse people, being intersex is not about gender identity and most intersex people identify as women or men. Research indicates that around 1.7 per cent of people are intersex.

Queer

“Queer” is as an umbrella term for sexually and gender diverse people. It is also regarded as a proclamation of fearless difference, a self-identifying commitment to counterculture.

Transgender

A “transgender” person is someone whose gender identity does not match the gender that they were assigned at birth (e.g. a baby is assigned male at birth but grows up to identify as a woman). Research indicates that around 5 per cent of people are transgender.

Transition

The process by which a transgender or gender diverse person affirms their gender, whether through a name change, clothing, changing legal documents or medical steps. Transition is a process that is different for everyone and it may or may not involve social, legal or physical changes. There is no one step or set of steps that an individual must undergo in order to have their gender identity affirmed and respected.

Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to relevant roles and responsibilities as set out in [Child Safety and Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities Policy and Procedures](#), the following people have particular responsibilities under this Policy and its Procedures.

The College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer is Mr Jamie Bobrowski.

The Boarding School Senior Child Safeguarding Officer Deputy is Mr James Hopper.

The College's Assistant Principal-Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Kevin Robillard.

The School Principal Steven O'Connor.

St Patrick's College's Policy

1. St Patrick's College recognises the fundamental right of every child and young person to feel safe at the College and that a supportive and inclusive College environment is essential for providing quality learning opportunities for LGBTQIA+ students.

2. The College:

- fosters an educational environment that is safe, welcoming and free from stigma, harassment and discrimination for all students including LGBTQIA+ students
- ensures that all students have the opportunity to express themselves and live authentically
- develops and implements whole school initiatives within the College with a focus on helping LGBTQIA+ students feel safe and included
- implements bullying prevention strategies within the College on a continuous basis with a focus on teaching age appropriate skills and strategies to empower Staff, students and parents/carers to recognise bullying and respond appropriately
- reviews our support and inclusion initiatives for LGBTQIA+ students against best practice on an annual basis.

3. St Patrick's College is committed to fostering a culture of openness and celebration of diversity. This includes modelling exemplary behaviour, communicating the College's commitment to a safe learning environment and using LGBTQIA+ inclusive language.

Procedures

The strategies and initiatives that St Patrick's College implements to ensure and promote the safety of LGBTQIA+ students include:

- actively nurture and promote a culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity

- ensure that children and young people are not discriminated against (directly or indirectly) and where necessary, adjustments are made as required to participate in their education and school activities (e.g., schools sports, concerts, formals on the same basis as their peers
- acknowledge and respond to the diverse needs, identities, and strengths of all children and young person
- encourage empathy and fairness towards others
- challenge stereotypes that promote prejudicial and biased behaviours and practices
- contribute to positive learning, engagement, and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people
- respond to complaints and allegations appropriately and ensure that children and young people are not victimised.

Implementation

This Policy and its Procedures are made available to all School-Based Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors, via the College's PolicyConnect site. They are included in induction training and in ongoing refresher training for School-Based Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors. For more information, refer to [Child Safeguarding Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures](#).

They are made accessible to parents/carers, students and the wider School community in summary in our [Child Safeguarding Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures](#) as well as Complispace-PolicyConnect and Staff Learning Systems, SafeTripBuilder, Passtab, College Website, Contracts, Newsletters, Annual Reports, Annual briefings and the Crest..

It is also available in hard copy by request.

Breach of Child Safeguarding LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures

St Patrick's College enforces 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
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

For more information, refer to [Child Safeguarding Compliance and Breach Policy and Procedures](#).

Policy Review

A review of the Child Safeguarding LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures is conducted every two years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation or after any significant child safety incident.

The EREA VSL 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.

Source of Obligation

- [Ministerial Order 1359](#), Clause 9

EREA VSL and St Patrick's College Policy and Procedures Linkages

- [Child Safeguarding Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures](#)

Related Forms and Documents

References and Resources

EREA, [Safe and Inclusive Learning Communities](#), 2016

Policy Administration

Responsible Officer	EREA VSL Chief Executive Officer
Policy Owner	EREA VSL Director of Safeguarding
Approving Body	EREA VSL Board
Approval Date	February 2024
Risk Rating	High
Date of next review	February 2026
Policy Database Information	
Version	1.0
Related Documents	
Superseded Documents	