



# Child Safety and Safeguarding Program

## Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding 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 Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding 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 that all members of the College community understand and are involved in decisions about child safety and wellbeing at the College.

In particular, Standard 4 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards is that families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. To implement this Standard, Ministerial Order 1359 requires The EREA VSL Board to develop a policy, statement or other documentation that details the strategies and actions the College will take to ensure that:

- families participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing affecting their child
- the College engages and openly communicates with families and the College community about its child safe approach, and relevant information is accessible
- families and the College community have a say in the development and review of the College's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- families, carers and the College community are informed about the College's operations and governance related to child safety and wellbeing.

St Patrick's College recognises that families are best placed to advise the College about their children's needs and capabilities, and can provide important information about practices and environments that are safe for their children.

Similarly, we recognise that the communities that are relevant to our students (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or culturally and linguistically diverse communities from which students and their families may come) have a wealth of knowledge about the diverse needs that children from their community may have and about the additional vulnerabilities and barriers that these children and their families may face when those needs are not met.

This Policy and its Procedures set out the College's strategies, policies and procedures for enabling and empowering families and relevant communities to understand and be involved in child safeguarding at the College.

## 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 Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding 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 and to The EREA VSL Board.

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 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:

### “The College Community”

The College community includes:

- students and their families
- School-Based Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- EREA VSL
- The EREA VSL Board
- people from relevant communities (the variety of communities that are relevant to the College, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our School-Based Staff and student cohort)

- the local community in which the College operates.

St Patrick's College has identified the following as its relevant communities:

Wider Ballarat community.

## 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 Director of Human Resources, Risk and Compliance, Mr. Jamie Bobrowski and the Boarding School Senior Child Safeguarding Officer is Mr. James Hopper, Director of Boarding
- the College's Assistant Principal-Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Kevin Robillard
- the School Principal Steven O'Connor

## St Patrick's College's Policy

1. The EREA VSL Board and St Patrick's College recognise that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. The College must ensure that they participate in College decisions that affect their children, through the **Procedures** below.

2. St Patrick's College must ensure that the College community knows about our College's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing and our approach to child safety and wellbeing, and that relevant information is accessible, by:

- publishing the following policies and procedures on our public website:
  - Child Safeguarding Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures
  - Child Safeguarding Codes of Conduct
  - Child Safeguarding Reporting and Responding Obligations Policy and Procedures
  - Available on College website.
  - public-facing Child Safeguarding Complaints Management Policy and Procedures
- communicating these through additional means, set out in **Procedures** below.

3. The EREA VSL Board and the College involve families and relevant communities in:

- decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments at the College
- reviews of and improvements to the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures

through the **Procedures**, below.

## Procedures

### Family Participation in Decisions Affecting Their Child

The College uses the following mechanisms to enable parents and carers to participate in College decisions that affect their children:

- the following family involvement initiatives:

Year level and school meetings, social media, Crest, Shamrock and website

- procedures for informing parents/carers about child safety incidents or concerns that may involve their child or that involve the College or its School-Based Staff, Volunteers and Contractors (for more information, refer to [Communicating with Parents and Carers About Internal and External Reports Policy and Procedures](#), [Information Sharing \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#) and [Information Sharing About Reportable Conduct Investigations Procedures](#))
- specific strategies for involving parents/carers in reviews of and improvements to our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, including:

SIF processes, SAC Sub committees communication and media channels.

(for more information, refer to [Child Safeguarding Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures](#)).

### Community Involvement in Organisational Decisions

The College uses the following mechanisms to consult with the College community about organisational decisions and to involve them in reviews of child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures:

- the following community involvement initiatives:

Year level and school meetings, social media, Crest, Shamrock and website

- procedures for informing the College community about child safety incidents or concerns that involve the College or its School-Based Staff, Volunteers and Contractors (for more information, refer to [Information Sharing\\_\(Child Safeguarding\)\\_Policy and Procedures](#))
- specific strategies for involving the College community in reviews of and improvements to our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, including:

Year level and school meetings, social media, Crest, Shamrock and website

(for more information, refer to [Child Safeguarding Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures](#)).

For more information about how we consult with and involve particular communities relevant to our College, refer to:

- [Child Safeguarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Students with Disability Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures](#)

## Communicating the College's Child Safeguarding Approach

In addition to publishing relevant policies and procedures on our public website, and to the initiatives and strategies set out above, the College uses the following mechanisms to communicate the College's operations, governance and approach to child safeguarding:

Year level and school meetings, social media, Crest, Shamrock and website

## 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 College 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..

They are also available in hard copy by request.

## **Breach of Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure**

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 Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure 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**



St Patrick's College's Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures implements:

- [Ministerial Order 1359](#), Clause 8

## EREA VSL and St Patrick's College Policy and Procedure Linkage

The Family and Community Involvement in Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is to be read and understood in conjunction with:

- [Child Safeguarding Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Information Sharing \(Child Safeguarding\) Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Students with Disability Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Child Safeguarding \(Responding and Reporting Obligations\) Policy and Procedures](#)

## Related Forms and Documents

- Department of Education and Training, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse](#), 2018

## References and Resources

- Commission for Children and Young People, [Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation](#)

# Policy Administration

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>EREA VSL Chief Executive Officer</b>
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
<b>Policy Database Information</b>	
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Related Documents	
Superseded Documents	