



# Genazzano FCJ College

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## Child Safe Policy

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## Rationale

Protection for children and young people is based upon the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God, and that the inherent dignity of all should be recognised and protected.

Reflecting the ideals and values of FCJ education, Genazzano promotes the spiritual, moral and academic formation of its students so that they can develop into women of faith, strength, ability and knowledge in order to provide leadership in the Community. Genazzano College staff and adults working within the College community have a duty to all students, to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student, and to work for the positive wellbeing of the child.

At Genazzano we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our College. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

*The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: that is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic College (Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, n. 9).*

## Policy Statement

Students who come to Genazzano have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the students in our care will always be our first priority. Any form of child harm or abuse is illegal and unacceptable and we are committed to creating an inclusive environment where students feel safe and enjoy their educational journey at the College. There is particular attention paid to the safety of the most vulnerable children and young people, including those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, or with a disability.

*'The mission, and privilege, of the Catholic school is to build a community where authentic relationships based on love provide the means and the support for all students to flourish and grow into the fullness of life. Every child is precious and we hold dear the dignity and possibility of each one.'*

(Most Rev. Denis Hart DD in CEM 2015, p. 1).

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Genazzano to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our College. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our College environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the College. *Genazzano is committed to ensuring this policy is enacted across all aspects of College life and that is a living and dynamic document that is embedded in our practice. The policy reflects the voices of the children and young people in our care and seeks to empower them in contributing to the policy as appropriate.*

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No.870](#).

This policy applies to College staff (see definition below)



## Principles

Catholic Colleges have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

**The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at Genazzano:**

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Our College works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- In partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers, all students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety.
- All adults in our College, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, religious, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships with adults.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Staff, clergy, religious, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by College leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

## Definitions used in this Policy

**Child:** A child or a young person enrolled as a student at the College or enrolled in an endorsed school program.

**Child abuse** includes:

- a. Any act committed against a child involving:
  - sexual offence
  - an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
- b. The infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
- c. Serious neglect of a child. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

**Child neglect** includes a failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health and physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk. (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools)



**Child physical abuse:** Generally, consists of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools)

**Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

**Child sexual abuse** is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity and does not always involve physical contact or force. (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools)

**College environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College governing authority for use by a child during or outside College hours, including:

- a. A campus of the College
- b. Online College environments (including email and intranet systems)
- c. Other locations provided by the College for a child/young person's use (including, without limitation, locations used for College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events). ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

**College staff** means an individual working in a College environment who is:

- a. Directly engaged or employed by a College governing authority
- b. A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- c. A member of College Council
- d. A minister of religion or member of a religious order. ([Ministerial Order No. 870](#))

**Emotional child abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, or by witnessing family violence. (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools)

**Grooming** is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. It can include communication and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer. (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools)

**Mandatory Reporting:** The legal requirement under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The principal, teachers, medical practitioners and nurses at a school are mandatory reporters under this Act. (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools)

**Reasonable Belief:** When staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.



## Policy Commitments

All students enrolled at Genazzano have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children and young people in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly learning environment where children and young people are free to enjoy life to the full, without any concern for their safety.

### Our commitment to our students

- a. We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our College.
- b. We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- c. We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- d. We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.
- e. We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- f. We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe College environment.

### Our commitment to our parents and carers

- a. We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- b. We commit to engaging with and responding to the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practices, policies and procedures.
- c. We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers, providing it does not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- d. We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- e. We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from harm and abuse.

### Our commitment to our College Staff

- a. We commit to providing all staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- b. We commit to provide regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and the protection and wellbeing of children and young people. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, and responsibilities to report concerns.
- c. We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by staff, religious, clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- d. We commit to providing opportunities for College employees, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse or harm of a child or young person.



## Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at Genazzano has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#))

### Guide to Responsibilities of College Leadership

The principal, the College Council and College leaders at Genazzano recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety. Responsibilities include:

- Creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- Upholding high principles and standards for all staff, clergy, religious, volunteers, and contractors
- Promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- Ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- Ensuring that College personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing
- Ensuring the College meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#).
- Ensuring the school takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and in line with the PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools.

### Guide to Responsibilities of College Staff

Responsibilities of College staff (College employees, volunteers, contractors, religious and clergy) include:

- Treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- Following the legislative and internal College processes in the course of their work if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused, harmed or neglected
- Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- Assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- Following the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

### Organisational Arrangements

The College has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

Deputy Principal together with Head of Senior School, Head of Junior School, Team Leaders, Psychologists, College Nurse, Homeroom teachers and Boarding staff.



## Expectation of our College Staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At Genazzano, we expect all employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the College. All College staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements. We have developed a **Child Safety Code of Conduct** which recognises the critical role that College staff play in protecting the students in our care, and establishes clear expectations of College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect.

Our Code also protects College staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

## Student Safety and Participation

At Genazzano, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

Protective Behaviours are addressed specifically in age appropriate ways through the GenSTAR Program from ELC to Year 12. We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, their parents or carers, raise with us.

## Reporting and Responding

The College records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Genazzano complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations (Mandatory Reporting) fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

The College's Child Protection Reporting Policy, sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at the College is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed, and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

The policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- Identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- Make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- Comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

The College has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student. The Deputy Principal, Head of Junior School and the Senior Psychologist have specific responsibility to provide staff members with any information they may need to respond appropriately to concerns of child safety. Additionally, staff may access the College's reporting processes at any time through the College intranet.



Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- Healthy Relating Policy
- Workplace Bullying Policy and Procedures
- Teacher's Professional Code of Conduct
- ELC Child Safe Environment Policy and ELC Child Protection Policy

### **Grievance Policy**

See Grievances and Complaints Policy and Procedures

### **Screening and Recruitment of College Staff**

Genazzano will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- Confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- Obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- Verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- Obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of College staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

### **Child Safety – Education and Training for College Staff**

Genazzano provides College staff with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect. Specifically, College staff are required to complete a module of online learning on Mandatory Reporting and sign the College's Code of Conduct.

### **Risk Management**

At Genazzano we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across the whole College environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. Led by the Wellbeing, OHS and Risk Management Committees, risk management strategies for child safety are documented, implemented, monitored and periodically reviewed to ensure that strategies change as needed and as new risks arise. Staff attention is drawn to the risks in every circumstance where risk may be increased, such as visitors to the school, excursions, and camps.





## Relevant Legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) – Three new criminal offences have been introduced under this Act:

**Failure to disclose offence:** Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

**Failure to protect offence:** The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

**Grooming offence:** This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

## Related Policies

Catholic Education Melbourne Policies

- [Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Policy 2.19a: School Guidelines –Police and DHHS Interview Protocols](#)
- [Policy 2.20: Complaints Policy](#)
- [Policy 2.26: Pastoral Care of Students in Catholic Schools](#)
- [CEM Guidelines for Behaviour Support](#)
- [CECV Whole School Approaches to Supporting Positive Behaviour](#)

## College Policies

The following policies and procedures are available:

- Boarding House Policies and Handbooks
- Child Protection Reporting Policy
- Digital Technology and Resources Policy
- ELC Child Safe Environment Policy
- ELC Child Protection Policy FFPOS
- Human Resources Policy and Procedures
- Managing Student at Risk
- OHS Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- Resolving Grievances and Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Social Media Policy
- Sports Coaches Procedures guide
- Teacher's Professional Code of Conduct
- Workplace Bullying Policy and Procedures



### Breach of Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013* (VCEMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **Principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the Chair of the College Council. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Where any **other member of the College community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the College is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with Professional Standards Code of Conduct Policy, Mandatory Reporting of Child Physical and Sexual Abuse and/or contact Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

### Review of this Child Safety Policy

At Genazzano FCJ College we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

We will maintain a history of updates to the policy.

#### History of Updates to Policy

Date	Comment (e.g. major review, minor review)
23 August 2016	Original Policy Adopted by College Council
20 June 2017	Updated Policy Adopted by College Council
20 June 2019	Reviewed by Policy Committee



## References

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016 **2.19 Child Protection – Reporting Obligations**

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, *Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic Colleges.*

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2013, *Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013*, CECV.

Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, *The Catholic College on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Vatican.

Department of Education, 2016, PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools

Safe Colleges Hub 2014, *National Safe Colleges Framework Glossary*, Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

State of Victoria 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Colleges: Ministerial Order No. 870*, Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2.

Victorian Government Department of Justice 2016, *Betrayal of Trust Implementation*