



Mernda Hills Christian College

Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct

Document Control

Revision Number	Review Date	Implementation Date	Description of Changes	Prepared By	Approved By
Gilson College - Mernda					
	Mar 2022	Mar 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">General review	Exec Leaders	Gilson College Council
Mernda Hills Christian College					
1	June 2023	Jan 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">General reviewAdded ref. to MO 1359 & New Child Safe Standards, Respectable Behaviours Policy, zero tolerance of racism	Exec Leaders	Exec Leaders
2	Nov 2023	Jan 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Change to p.3 to include all vulnerable children identified in MO1359	Exec Leaders	Exec Leaders

Rationale

Mernda Hills Christian College provides a values-based education which focuses on the development of the whole child and where the home and the school work together harmoniously to provide this education.

In this context, there is a legislative and moral imperative that there is a zero tolerance for any forms of child abuse and where the school through its teachers provides duty of care, and further takes every precaution to avoid abuse happening.

To ensure the health, safety, and overall well being of all students, Mernda Hills Christian College complies with the new Child Safe Standards outlined in Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out the minimum requirements for compliance by Victorian schools with the new Child Safe Standards.

This *Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct* outlines the expected standards for appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children in all of our school environments.

It is particularly linked with:

1. Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance, and culture;
2. Child Safe Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice;
3. Child Safe Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training and
4. Child Safe Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The Code of Conduct is provided for all adults who are associated in any way with children in the College and its environments, to ensure behaviour with and around children is appropriate, and to protect children from all forms of abuse. It does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the School. For example, the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics provides clarity regarding professional behaviour always expected of teachers.

Scope

In accordance with the ethos of Seventh-day Adventist Schools (VIC) Ltd (ASV), and to comply with Ministerial Order 1359, this Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct is to be adhered to by members of the College community, including:

1. The Mernda Hills Christian College Council
2. The Senior Leadership team of the school
3. Teachers and all other College staff members

4. College students who are 18+ years old
5. Volunteers
6. International Student Homestay Parents/Families, including all adults in these homes (if applicable)
7. Education practicum students
8. Contractors; and
9. Other visitors to School's campuses.

Implementation

Appropriate Behaviour

All staff, volunteers, and other adults within the Mernda Hills Christian College community, including College students who are 18+ years old, are required to observe Child Safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people 17 years of age and under, as noted below.

All personnel of the School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, and wellbeing of children by:

1. always adhering to the College Child Safe Protection Policy
2. always upholding the College Child Safe Statement of Commitment to child safety
3. taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse of any type.
4. treating everyone with dignity and respect
5. listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they are reporting or disclosing that they or another child have been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
6. guarding the cultural safety, dignity, participation, and advancement of children who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, (eg. by having a zero tolerance of racism and discrimination)
7. guarding the cultural safety, dignity, participation, and advancement of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (eg. by having a zero tolerance of racism and discrimination)
8. guarding the safety, dignity, participation, and advancement of children with a disability (eg. during personal care activities)
9. guarding the safety, dignity, participation, and advancement of children who are unable to live at home or who are international students (eg. by providing additional targeted wellbeing support)
10. guarding the safety, dignity, participation, and advancement of children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) (eg. by having a zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, and discrimination)

11. ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
12. reporting any allegations of child abuse to authorities such as police and DFFH – Child Protection, Child First, and the Mernda Hills Christian College Child Protection Officers and Leadership team.
13. if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren)/young person/people is/are safe.
14. supporting children and young people to actively participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially concerning issues that are important to them.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Staff, and other adults within the Mernda Hills Christian College community, including College students who are 18+ years old, volunteers, contractors, consultants, stakeholders, and other personnel **must not:**

1. ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
2. develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
3. exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
4. put children or young people at risk of abuse of any type.
5. do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
6. engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children or young people (for example, personal social activities)
7. use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people express inappropriate personal views on cultures, race, or sexuality in the presence of children or young people.
8. discriminate against any child or young person because of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, or disability.
9. have uninvited (by parent/carer) contact with a child young person or their family outside of our organisation. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
10. have any personal online or other electronic contact with a child or young person, or their (students') family members, via social media platforms, or by phone. (Official College sponsored networking websites, platforms and phone communications excepted.)

Acknowledgement

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct to the College/ASV leadership. If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

I agree to adhere to this Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Related Policies and Processes

- Anti-bullying and harassment Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy,
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- OH&S Policy
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Document

Relevant Documentation or Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Crimes Act 1958 (VIC)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- The Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014
- Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001
- Worker Screening Act 2020