Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

Engaging Families in Child Safety Procedures

St Bernard's Parish Primary School

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) schools operate with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and are owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the strategies and actions in place to ensure that families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school.

2. Scope

These procedures apply in St Bernard's Parish Primary School.

3. Principles

The following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Parents and Carers are given the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- Our school engages and openly communicates with Parents, Carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach
- Relevant information relating to child safety and wellbeing about their child or children will be available to parents and carers
- Parents, Carers and other members of the school community can provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Parents, Carers and other members of the school community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

4. School Commitment

Our school is committed to ensuring that all members of our school community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing.

The Principal and school leaders at our school recognise their responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing.

The Principal ensures the following actions and strategies are implemented to ensure we meet this commitment.

4.1. School leadership actions and strategies

MACS and the school leadership team support participation of parents, carers and families in child safety and wellbeing. Responsibilities, strategies and actions for creating culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children, young people and their families, the availability of translation services, etc include:

1. Including planning for ways to engage families through the curriculum and learning and teaching programs

2. Providing information through the school's communication channels to update parents and carers about the school's child safety and wellbeing strategies.
3. Publishing school policies, procedures and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing so that they are easily accessible to parents and carers and other members of the school community.
4. Engaging with families to develop and review practices and strategies relating to child safety and wellbeing.
5. Providing members of the school community with adequate information about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing through regular communication in newsletters, at information sessions and forums.
6. Informing parents, carers and students know how to raise concerns and issues about child safety and wellbeing.
7. Proactively build culturally safe and respectful relationships with Aboriginal families, recognising their role in supporting the identity, cultural safety, and wellbeing of their children.

7.1. Actions and strategies for Staff

School Staff also have a responsibility to support MACS, the school's governing authority, and school leaders in communicating and engaging with Parents, Carers and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility are listed below.

1. Open lines of communication with families, carers and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters.
2. Liaison with parents and carers about concerns and/or decisions that affect their child occurs.
3. Opportunities, where appropriate, for families to contribute to discussions.
4. Informing families and school community members when practices and procedures involved in child safety and wellbeing are reviewed and updated.
5. Ensuring all staff manage child safety and wellbeing issues in accordance with all policies for child safety and wellbeing.
6. Providing information about how to make complaints or raise concerns.

7. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this document can be found in the Glossary of Terms.

Carer

Refers to those with permanent care, foster care or kinship care arrangements.

Parent

A person who has parental responsibility for the child or young person. This may include a biological parent or another person who has been granted parental responsibility by a court order.

Parental responsibility

All the duties, powers, responsibilities and authority, which by law, parents have in relation to their children.

Principal

The role of the principal in a MACS school is to lead and manage the planning, delivery, evaluation and improvement of the education of all students.

Staff

Staff or staff member refers to the MACS board, board committee and working party members, MACS executives, principals, employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers in MACS schools and offices. The term includes those involved in religious ministry.

Volunteer

A person who performs work without remuneration or reward for MACS or a MACS school.

8. Related policies and documents

Related MACS policies and documents

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedures
Protect – Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy
Reportable Conduct Policy

Policy information table

Approving authority	Director, Child Safety and Risk
Document owner	General Manager, Child Safety
Approval date	1 July 2025
Risk rating	Extreme
Review by	July 2027
Publication details	CEVN, school website
School document owner	Sr Mary Sarah - Principal
School review	1.12.25