

Child Safety – Code of Conduct



St Francis Xavier College
Berwick, Officer & Beaconsfield
Established August, 2016
Ratified by College Board
September, 2016
Reviewed July 2020

Child Safety Code of Conduct

“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6)

St Francis Xavier College is a Catholic community that is educative and supportive. We have a clear purpose: the development of a person of competence, conscience and compassion formed in the Christian tradition; one who is guided by a sense of hope and self-belief and who will be of service in the world. We recognize God’s presence in our lives by celebrating and pursuing personal excellence and by living courageously with optimism and respect for all. Central to the mission of St Francis Xavier College is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

A Child Safety Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are expected and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. For more detailed guidance refer to the College’s Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the College environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct set out below is designed to stand alone. The Code is made available to all staff, volunteers, hirers of facilities under the control of St Francis Xavier College, families and students.

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes. Where a staff member breaches the Code, St Francis Xavier College may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy and board/school council members at College are expected to actively contribute to a school culture that respects the dignity of its members and affirms the Gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS:

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy, members of the Association of Canonical Administrators , Advisory Board members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school’s child-safe policy and upholding the school’s statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment)
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child’s self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during staff meetings, PSG’s, etc.)
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the relevant Head of Campus.
- reporting any child safety concerns to the relevant Head of Campus.

- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of all young people regardless of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- Enable dialogical interactions that promote the dignity and value of all people and are centred in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Processes for staff who are required to work alone with a child

It is expected that staff to whom this relates will observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children. This may include (but is not limited to) College leadership, psychologists, counsellors, speech pathologists, learning enhancement coordinators and music teachers. Specific expectations for staff who, through the nature of their work, are required to work alone with a child include:

- ensuring that the student is comfortable to work alone with the staff member, and make explicit the student's right to terminate the session if they wish.
- where possible, placing the student closest to the exit
- ensuring that relevant school staff (e.g., subject teachers) are aware of the student's whereabouts
- where a student is at risk and after hours contact details need to be provided to a parent or student, to only provide the wellbeing mobile phone number or a suitable contact number as advised by the student's Head of Campus.
- where a student requires transportation to an external support provider (e.g. psychologist or medical clinic) that parents and Head of Campus are advised beforehand and approval given
- where a home visit is required, that a parent or guardian be present and give approval for a visit; that the Head of Campus give approval for such a visit; and that the student is only spoken with in an open, visible space

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS:

All staff, volunteers, contractors, clergy, members of the Association of Canonical Administrators , Advisory Board members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities, staff personal mental health issues)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Must not promote or condone any view or practice that leads to the unjust treatment of others.
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have any online contact with a child that is not via the College provided email service (including by social media, personal email, instant messaging etc.) or their family. Note online contact via the College provided email service may only be for school related matters
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses The College will need to provide prepaid phones for emergencies / excursions.
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children
- consume alcohol at school or at school events in the presence of children without the permission of the College Principal
- Fail to make reasonable adjustments to include student participation of all students

Disclosure of Staff/Student Interactions

It is St Francis Xavier College's policy that all staff are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours. These interactions may include instances where the staff member is:

- related to the student;
- friends with the student's parents or family; or
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours and has notified the College.

St Francis Xavier College maintains records of all declarations made by staff members related to their interactions with students, or relationships with students, that exist outside of school hours or College premises. These records are kept for a period of seven years.

Our Child Protection Program includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy that provides detailed guidance for all staff and volunteers (direct and indirect) on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at St Francis Xavier College.

Report any concerns

The Program also includes information for members of the Association of Canonical Administrators , Advisory Board members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College's nominated Child Protection Officers.

It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College's Child Protection Officers.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.