

St Brigid's Catholic Primary School is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

Introduction

Catholic education is an active partnership between family and school, where families are recognised as the first and ongoing educators of their children. Schools and families partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for children and young people's faith formation, learning, safety and wellbeing.

At St Brigid's, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our commitment is drawn from and inherent to 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).

St Brigid's Vision Statement

A Christ-centred community:
Learning from the past,
Challenging the present,
Creating the future.

St Brigid's Mission statement

Education in Faith: Living life within the Catholic Tradition

To enable students and staff to be faith filled members of a strong Catholic culture

Leadership and Management: Making schools accessible to all Catholic families and those who appreciate, value and share the educational mission and ethos of the Catholic Church.

To create a work environment characterised by shared vision, a strong sense of teamwork, and a focus on continuous improvement.

School Community: Strengthening educational communities

To build and sustain a school community in which all members work together in positive partnership.

Student Wellbeing: Strengthening educational communities

To maximize students' sense of wellbeing and engagement with school

Learning and teaching: Ensuring high achievement for all

To engage and challenge all students, and to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes.

The three major contexts in which children learn are the family, the school and the community. Families are the first educators of their children, and when the child moves beyond the earliest years, families are joined by a school on their child's learning journey. This is when a long-term partnership between home and school begins.

In choosing a Catholic school, parents enter a partnership with the school in which there is shared privilege

and responsibility for the child's faith formation, learning and wellbeing.

When Catholic schools and families work together for the formation of all children, the school community is strengthened, and the whole of society benefits as a sense of ownership and belonging to community grows for children and young people, and for their families (Bryk et al. 2010).

Families are honoured in a Catholic school community in three main ways:

- **Encounter through partnership** – encounter happens when the sacred dignity of each person in the partnership is honoured, with each person learning alongside the other
- **Activating engagement** – leaders, teachers, families and children each have a role to play to strengthen the relationship between school and home
- **Three-way learning relationship** – parents, teachers and children come together in a three-way learning relationship to support the full flourishing of each and every child.

St Brigid's under the auspices of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel. This statement is intended to reaffirm the central focus on child safety across Catholic education in Victoria, built around a unified understanding of the moral imperative and overarching commitments that underpin our drive for continual improvement, and embedding a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse in our schools and organisations. The characteristic element of the Catholic school, in addition to pursuing 'cultural goals and the human formation of youth', consists in creating 'for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity'. To this end, the Catholic school aims ... 'to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and [humanity] is illumined by faith'. In this way, the Catholic school prepares pupils to exercise their freedom responsibly, forming an attitude of openness and solidarity (Congregation for Catholic Education 2022, n. 16).

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St Brigid's 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.

This Policy takes into account the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Scope

This Policy applies to school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with related school policies and procedures, including:

1. Child Safety Framework
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Principles

At St Brigid's, the following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Families and carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach.
- All members of the school community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers and other members of the school community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, 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.

Policy

St Brigid's 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 at St Brigid's.

We implement the following strategies and actions to ensure that we are able to meet this commitment.

Strategies / actions used by school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Brigid's recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- utilising the St Brigid's Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies and practices
- supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their communication and engagement skills and to understand the value and importance of effective communication and engagement
- identifying opportunities for parents and carers to participate in decisions that affect their child's safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available so that they are easily accessible to families, carers and other members of the school community
- engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- creating opportunities to ensure that members of the school community are adequately informed about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing

Strategies / actions used by school staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy

School staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St Brigid's also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with families, carers and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- creating and maintaining open lines of communication with families, carers and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters

- liaising with parents and carers in relation to any concerns and/or decisions that affect their child and giving them the opportunity to contribute to any discussions, where appropriate
- ensuring that parents, carers and others in the school community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring they act in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing

External references

Related Resources – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

[eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the school's two-year review cycle of its child safety practices.
- Update of the policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand.

New policy

Review 2025