



St. Martin de Porres School

Avondale Heights

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS 2022

RATIONALE

The Victorian government and Melbourne Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Inc. (MACS) has announced that, from July 1 2022, all organisations that interact with children, must plan for, prepare and comply with eleven new Child Safe Standards - Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Key changes to the original seven standards include new requirements:

- ◆ to involve families and communities in organisations' efforts to keep children and young people safe
- ◆ for a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people
- ◆ to manage the risk of child abuse in online environments
- ◆ for greater clarity on the governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.

Changes have been made to support greater national consistency, reflecting the National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation developed following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The new Standards should provide greater clarity for organisations on actions required to meet minimum standards. Victoria has over five years' experience of mandatory Child Safe Standards, so many organisations will have well developed child safety frameworks.

Consequently, from July 1 2022, St. Martin de Porres School in Avondale Heights commits to plan for the implementation (articulated below in blue) of the following eleven new Child Safe Standards.

IMPLEMENTATION

Child Safe Standard 1

St. Martin's shall establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

- 1.1** A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
 - Formalising of programming in aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum from P-6, celebration of NAIDOC Week, National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week. Significant involvement of Aboriginal students and their families in enhancing the school curriculum.
 - Sourcing of rich resources (human & material) to provide advice and education to staff, students and families.
- 1.2** Strategies are embedded within the School that equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
 - First Nations acknowledgement has been initiated for the beginning of all school meetings and fortnightly School Assemblies:

"We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, our First Nations peoples, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.

We particularly honour & acknowledge the Woi wurrung, Wurrundjeri willam and Boon wurrung clans and language groups of the Kulin Nation, the custodians of the Greater Melbourne area for thousands of years before European settlement.

We also acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the on-going journey of Reconciliation."

- The above First Nations acknowledgement is to be noted on the front page of the fortnightly School Newsletter and the front page of the school web site.
- The above First Nations acknowledgement is the first of the stated 'School Commitments' in the Staff Handbook, Parent Handbooks and School Prospectus
- Aboriginal 'Our Fathers' are used regularly in staff, student and community Masses and liturgical celebrations.
- Sourcing of a broad range of Aboriginal picture story books is gathered for use in literacy and Inquiry lessons.
- Sourcing of an Indigenous elder (local or inter-state) to meet/talk with staff for professional learning to help us teach more authentically.
- Sourcing of an Indigenous elder (local or inter-state) to meet/talk with students on a regular basis to share indigenous culture.
- Recommended that each year level attend an Indigenous engagement excursion/incursion at least once every two years. (e.g. CERES, Healesville Sanctuary, Melbourne Museum, Night lights at Sovereign Hill).
- That aboriginal artifacts and the aboriginal flag be more visible around the school environment.

1.3 Measures are adopted by the School to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism is addressed with appropriate consequences.

- The school exercises zero tolerance to any behaviour which is disrespectful to any member of its community, as reflected in the Child, Parent and Staff Codes of Conduct.

1.4 The School actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

- The school actively promotes inclusion in its enrolment procedures and staffing.

1.5 All of the School's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

- The School Vision Statement sets the culture of, "welcoming partnership" and "encouraging each member (of the school community) to celebrate the diversity of background."
- First Nations acknowledgement initiated for the beginning of all school meetings, fortnightly School Assemblies and the front page of the school web site – as above.

Child Safe Standard 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the leadership of St. Martin's, its governance and culture

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

2.1 The School makes a public commitment to child safety.

- School public commitment present on school web site, in Staff Handbook, Parent Handbooks and School Prospectus.

2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled from Preparatory to Year 6.

- A child safe policy, written by the students, is displayed and reinforced throughout the school.

2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.

- The Student Wellbeing Leader, an integral member of the School Leadership Team, is also the nominated 'Child Safe Champion'. An expanded Student Wellbeing Leader role description will be included to incorporate the concept of a 'Child Safe Champion'.

2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.

- Codes of Conduct are in place for students, parents, visitors and school staff.

2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.

- See 'Risk Management' policy.

2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

- Contracts for all staff and volunteers are checked and signed off prior to employment.

Child Safe Standard 3

Children and young people are empowered to understand their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

- 3.1** Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- Facilitation of classroom workshops to review student rights, responsibilities, school rules, classroom rules, playground rules in the first month of each school year.
- 3.2** The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- Students are given the opportunity to participate in social skills group.
 - Prep students are allocated a Year 5/6 'buddy' to assist with transition to school from Kinder.
 - The school offers many different areas for students to get together at lunch time to encourage different types of play.
 - Students participate in wellbeing lessons explicitly teaching social awareness.
- 3.3** Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.
- If deemed appropriate, such a program will be initiated via an out-sourced, specialist provider.
- 3.4** Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- School staff are trained to observe signs of abuse. Fortnightly 'circle time' pastoral sessions in each classroom and current trialling of the daily monitoring 'Wellbe' program is facilitated.
- 3.5** St. Martin's school has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- Two students are nominated to the Student Representative Council (SRC) from each year level from Prep - 4, and there are also Year 5/6 School Leaders. These meet on a regular basis to encourage participation in school and community events. SRC meetings are safe spaces for students to discuss any matters that may be brought up through their peers.
- 3.6** St. Martin's provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.
- St. Martin's Teaching & Learning Cycle Step 4 stipulates that 'student voice' is required in, 'Forming Learning Intentions & Involve Students in How to Formulate Them'.

Child Safe Standard 4

Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

- 4.1** Families participate in decisions affecting their child.
- Parent participation is via the School Advisory Council (SAC) and Parent & Friends (P & F) Association.
- 4.2** The School engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- Child Safe and Pastoral Care policies, developed in consultation with the SAC, are placed on school web site. Changes are notified via the fortnightly Newsletter.
 - A trained psychologist/counsellor is available on site for parents, staff and students to support their well being.
 - Child Safety resources will be included as inserts to the fortnightly Newsletter and placed within the Parent Communications Portal.
 - Information sharing parent/teacher meetings (called 'Meet & Greet' sessions) occur each February for school staff and families to share information about each student.

4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of St. Martin's policies and practices.

➤ Development and review of policy is via the SAC and Parish Pastoral Committee (PPC).

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about St. Martin's operations and governance.

➤ The SAC Agenda and Reports are provided to all families on a monthly basis and P & F Agenda and Reports are also distributed monthly to families, including the minutes of meetings. Summaries of the business of both meetings is also provided via the fortnightly School Newsletter.

Child Safe Standard 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

5.1 The School, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

➤ Families are given the opportunity to discuss any matters in regards to student's wellbeing with their teachers via "Meet & Greet" sessions in February, via email or via seesaw. Teachers also seek support through discussions with the leadership team.

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

➤ 'Circle Time' occurs in each classroom each Friday afternoon (fortnightly) to allow students to provide feedback to school staff and other students about how they are being treated inside and outside the classroom.

5.3 The School pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

➤ The National Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) program is an ongoing process that involves open communication between families and staff members to provide the necessary adjustments for students with identified disabilities, so that all children can access the curriculum.

5.4 The School pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

➤ Formalising of annual programming in Aboriginal Perspectives across the curriculum from P-6, celebration of NAIDOC Week, National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week. Significant involvement of Aboriginal students and their families in enhancing the school curriculum.

➤ Establishment of an annual Mass to recognise the importance of and celebrate NAIDOC Week - collaboratively planned with local Indigenous peoples or parishioners.

Child Safe Standard 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.

➤ Clear recruitment processes are in place to reflect child safety and wellbeing values.

➤ Mask wearing is highly recommended whilst staff, volunteers and contractors are inside school buildings and at least triple vaccination is also highly recommended.

6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.

➤ All staff and volunteers must have a Working With Children Check (WWCC) or National Criminal Record Check (NCRC).

➤ A 'Staff Probity Register' is maintained and revisions performed on an annual basis.

6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.

➤ New staff receive induction via their allocated teaching team and via School Leaders on a regular basis. Training occurs at the beginning of each year for parent volunteers and school staff. School staff are trained via a bi-annual Staff Conference and also via regular Professional Learning Team meetings.

6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

➤ Regular and annual training and education occurs for all school staff, including annual Mandatory Reporting units, Anaphylaxis training modules and Epilepsy training modules. All staff also receive First Aid Level 1 biannually and targeted staff receive training bi-annually for Level 2 First Aid.

Child Safe Standard 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

7.1 The School has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.

➤ A 'Complaints Handling' policy, procedures and clear role descriptions of school staff exist to deal with breaches. It is easily accessible on the school web site and within the Parent Communications Portal.

7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.

➤ The process has been initiated for parents, staff and volunteers.

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

➤ Complaints are responded to within 24 hours or by the next business day after a weekend or holiday period. If required, additional meetings are also organised.

7.4 The School has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

➤ Guidelines are clear via the 'Protect' procedures.

7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

➤ Relevant policies exist and are audited by the Victorian Regulations & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) every four years.

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

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the School's child safety and wellbeing policy. Child Safety guidelines has been included within the Parent Helper Course.

➤ Regular and annual training and education occurs for all staff and parent volunteers.

8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.

➤ Regular and annual training and education occurs for all staff and parent volunteers.

8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.

➤ Regular and annual training and education occurs for all staff and parent volunteers.

8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build a culturally safe environment for children and young people.

- Regular and annual training and education occurs for all staff and parent volunteers.

Child Safe Standard 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

- Bi-annual education programs are facilitated for parents and school staff in relation to cyber security. School internet facilities are monitored and kept secure by our technology support provider (Source Central). Clear mobile phone guidelines exist for students whilst at school.

9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the School's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.

- This is closely monitored. Please note the school codes of conduct and 'Internet Usage' policy is signed off by each child and parent at enrolment. Parents and students are also constantly reminded that it is illegal for students under the age of thirteen to access on-line social networks.

9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment of St. Martin's.

- Closely monitored.

9.4 That where contract facilities and services from third parties exist, there are procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

- School internet facilities are monitored and kept secure by our technology support provider (Source Central).

Child Safe Standard 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

- Reviewed at least annually.

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

- Reviewed at least annually.

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

- Reviewed at least annually via SAC and reported annually via 'Report to School Community'.

Child Safe Standard 11

Policies and procedures document how St. Martin's is safe for children and young people

At a minimum, St. Martin's school will ensure:

11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.

- Policies and procedures are recapped at the beginning of each school year.

11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.

- Policies and procedures are recapped at the beginning of each school year and easily accessible to all staff members on W Drive and Google Drive.

11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.

- Regular SAC/Staff/Leadership meetings to discuss policies and procedures.

11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

- Leaders refer to the policies and procedure guidelines when giving advice.


11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

- All families are provided with access to all relevant policies and procedures when their child begins school at St. Martin's. They also sign off on major policy as a legal Agreement.
- Families are informed immediately of any revisions to policies and procedures which may occur via SAC revisions or via MACS up-dates.

EVALUATION

On at least an annual basis.

The Commission for Children & Young People (CCYP) can be contacted by:

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