



# DOBCEL Child Safe School Policy

Reviewed: September 2020

Ratified: January 2021

Next Review: 2022

## Rationale

The DOBCEL Board is committed to:

- zero tolerance of child abuse;
- listening to and empowering children and young people; and
- keeping children and young people safe.

The DOBCEL Board has particular responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and young people as required by Ministerial Order No. 870: Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools (MO 870). This places accountability for managing the risk of child abuse in schools with the DOBCEL Board. Consistent with MO 870, the DOBCEL Board requires the schools it governs to have appropriate arrangements to regulate the conduct and decisions of school staff to develop and embed a culture of child safety for all students.

These arrangements include implementing and complying with the DOBCEL Child Safe Policies and having clear and comprehensive procedures and reporting mechanisms. The objective is for the DOBCEL Board and the wider school community to be confident in the school's capacity to make and implement appropriate decisions, with child safety as a guiding principle.

DOBCEL is committed to supporting schools to take a proactive role in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.

The DOBCEL Board maintains governance oversight of DOBCEL Schools. Catholic Education Ballarat, under the direction of the Executive Director, support, and monitor DOBCEL Schools to be safe for children and young people and are places where children and young people can flourish.

This document must be read in conjunction with other all other policies and procedures in the DOBCEL Child Safe Policy Suite.

## Principles

Gospel values and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching are reflected in DOBCEL policies for the care, safety, and welfare of students. These values influence both DOBCEL actions and response in promoting environments that are child safe:

**Participation** of all members of the Church – the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Participation recognises that all members of DOBCEL school community have a role in the protection of children. All have a responsibility to be inclusive in schools, workplaces, the church, the neighbourhood and in decision-making processes.

Effective participation will ensure that the talents, skills and gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon ... [all] ... are utilised in the service of God and the mission of the Church. The consequence of such participation is likely to be more faithful stewardship of the mission and resources of the Church<sup>6</sup>

**Human dignity** - Our common humanity requires respect for and support of the sanctity and worth of every human life.

**Common good** - The common good is reached when all work together to improve the wellbeing of society and the wider world. The rights of the individual to personal possessions and community resources must be balanced with the needs of the disadvantaged and dispossessed.<sup>7</sup>

## Policy

The DOBCEL Board is committed to, and responsible for, ensuring that all DOBCEL Schools embed a culture of child safety.

The DOBCEL Board communicates its expectations to Principals of DOBCEL Schools to develop and implement child safety strategies which comply with MO 870. This includes the responsibility for ensuring that all staff in the school understand their duty of care to students encompasses their obligations under MO 870.

The DOBCEL Board requires Principals and all staff in schools to make reasonable efforts for inclusion and to have regard for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

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<sup>6</sup> Implementation Advisory Group and the Governance Review Project Team, *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*, A Report and Recommendations on the Governance and Management of Dioceses and Parishes in the Catholic Church in Australia, 6.1 p.56, 2020, <https://www.catholicreligious.org.au/light-from-the-southern-cross>, Accessed 02/09/2020.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.caritas.org.au/learn/cst/the-common-good>. See also *The Light from the Southern Cross*, op.cit., p.162.

In developing a culture of child safety, the DOBCEL Board requires schools to provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and young people. The DOBCEL Board will inform school communities about the strategies, allocated roles, and responsibilities in place to support schools to embed a culture of child safety.

The DOBCEL Board will periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies developed for implementation in schools and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies.

All DOBCEL Schools are to have a child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety that details:

- The values and principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment
- The actions the school proposes to take to:
  - Demonstrate its commitment to child safety and monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy or statement of commitment
  - Support, encourage and enable school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
  - Support, or assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse

The child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety, code of conduct, and child safety resources, must be publicly available and accessible, easily understood by all children and members of the school community.

## Related DOBCEL policies

- DOBCEL: Child Safety Policy for DOBCEL Schools – Template for Schools
- DOBCEL Safeguarding Children and Young People: Code of Conduct
- DOBCEL PROTECT: Reporting and Responding Obligations Policy
- DOBCEL PROTECT: Safeguarding Reporting Obligations Procedures -Template for Schools
- DOBCEL Student Empowerment and Participation Procedures
- DOBCEL Complaints Policy and Procedures

