



st Columba's
College

ENGAGING FAMILIES IN CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Introduction

St Columba's College is a Mary Aikenhead Ministries College in the tradition of the Sisters of Charity. We are called to develop in each member of our community a contemporary understanding and application of the charism of Venerable Mary Aikenhead and the spirituality of the Sisters of Charity, and the Mary Aikenhead Ministries' mission, vision and values of justice, love, compassion and hope.

Purpose and Objectives

St Columba's College is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where young people are safe and feel safe to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. The care, safety and wellbeing of young people is a central and fundamental responsibility of our College.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that the College will take to ensure that parents/carers and other members of the College community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters. This will enable their involvement in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing of young people at the College.

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 College employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with related College policies and procedures, including:

- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Staff and Student Professional Boundaries
- Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns at/or Involving the St Columba's or its Staff, Volunteers or Contractors
- Procedures for Responding To and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns.

Policy

St Columba's College is committed to ensuring that all members of our College community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters, and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing.

Principles

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

- Parents/carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child

- Our College engages and openly communicates with parents/carers and other members of the College community about our child safe approach
- All members of the College community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Parents/carers and other members of the College community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the College's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Parents/carers and other members of the College community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the College in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

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

Strategies/Actions Used by College Leadership

The Principal, the St Columba's College Board (College governing authority) and College leaders at St Columba's College recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with parents/carers and other members of the College community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- Utilising the College's Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies and practices
- Supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to understand the value and importance of strengthening their communication and engagement skills
- Identifying opportunities for parents/carers to participate in decisions that affect their child's safety and wellbeing
- Providing information relating to child safety and wellbeing through our Parent Education Program
- Having parent/carer representation on the College's Child Safe Committee
- Ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available so that they are easily accessible to parents/carers and other members of the College community
- Engaging with parents/carers and other members of the College community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Creating opportunities to ensure that members of the College community are adequately informed about the College's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies/Actions Used by College Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Clergy

College staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St Columba's College also have a responsibility to support the St Columba's College Board and College leaders in communicating and engaging with parents/carers and other members of the College community regarding child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- Creating and maintaining open lines of communication with parents/carers and other members of the College community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- Liaising with parents/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 College 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.

Policy and Program Review

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the College's two-year review cycle of its child safety practices
- Updates of this policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand. Parents/carers will be notified of these updates via Iona and updated policies will be placed in the Policies folder in SEQTA Engage.

POLICY HISTORY AND SCHEDULE

Date of Approval:	April 2024
Approval Authority:	College Leadership Team
Delegated Contact Person:	College Deputy Principal
Next Review Date:	April 2026