St Columba's College

PARENT/CARER CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

St Columba's College (the 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. These are further informed by the College's own Vision, Mission and Values statements.

Purpose and Objectives

A fundamental belief for Catholic schools is that in Jesus, we see God's image and likeness in its human expression. Jesus' values and teachings show all people *'the way, the truth and the life'* (John 14:6). In accordance with this belief, values to be promoted include love, respect, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, repentance, reconciliation and justice.

Pastoral care for members of the College community refers to the actions that are taken by all members to enhance the personal, social, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing of each person. Key elements of wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience.

At St Columba's College, we are committed to nurturing respectful relationships and positive partnerships with families. We believe that students' learning journeys are enriched through active and reciprocal home/College partnerships. Approaches to wellbeing are understood through the lens of the Restorative Practices Framework. All relationships should be positive, life giving and focus on building productive partnerships between student, school and family.

We recognise parents/carers as their child's primary educator and most influential role models. We expect the support of families in promoting and upholding the values of the College community and its culture of respectful relationships. Parents/carers and other adults within the College community are expected to model positive behaviours.

This Code of Conduct is intended to guide families in their interaction and communication with staff, other parents/carers, students and the wider College community. It articulates the College's key expectations regarding respectful relationships and behaviours. It also articulates the College's position regarding unacceptable behaviours that breach stated norms and values.

Code of Conduct - Commitment

St Columba's College commits itself to the promotion of wellbeing, through building resilience, positive self-regard, respect for others, responsible behaviours and positive right relationships in a safe and inclusive learning community. Interactions with families should focus on achieving the best outcome for the student, while balancing the needs of the student, family and the College. These interactions should be respectful, constructive and productive.

Our Culture of Respectful Relationships

Among students, staff and families we strive to develop the following:

- A respect for the innate dignity and worth of every person.
- An ability to understand and empathise with the situation of others.
- Open, positive and honest communication.
- The ability to work cooperatively and respectfully with other people.
- Trusting relationships.
- Responsible actions.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that parents/carers will:

- support in words and actions the philosophy of Catholic education and the vision, mission and values of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and St Columba's College.
- support the College to maintain a positive learning and teaching environment.
- understand the importance of healthy parent/carer/teacher/child relationships and strive to build positive relationships.
- abide by and support the College's policies.
- treat staff and other parents/carers with respect and courtesy.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that staff will:

- communicate with you regularly regarding your child's learning, development and wellbeing.
- provide opportunities for involvement in your child's learning.
- maintain confidentiality and privacy as per our Privacy Policy.
- relate with, and respond to, you in a respectful and professional manner.
- ensure a timely response to any concerns raised by you.

Raising Concerns and Resolving Conflict

In raising concerns on behalf of your child, or making a complaint about the College's practices or treatment of your child.

We expect that you will:

- listen to your child, but remember that there will be different versions of events that the College must consider in its discernment.
- draw on the College's values to inform the resolution of issues.
- reference "Guidelines for Family Communication about College Related Matters" to ensure parents/carers are speaking with the most appropriate staff member/s.
- observe the College's stated procedures for raising and resolving a grievance/complaint (refer to the College's Complaints Policy on the College website).
- follow specified protocol for communication with staff members, including making appointments at a mutually convenient time and communicating your concern/s in a constructive manner.
- support our use of the Restorative Practices Framework as a means of resolving issues between students.
- attend meetings arranged by the College in an effort to reach a mutual resolution of issues.
- refer matters involving your child and other children/parents/carers directly to your child's House Teacher or House Leader for follow-up and investigation by the College.
- not approach another child, or their parent/carer, to discuss or chastise them because of actions towards their child.

In responding to your concerns or a complaint, we expect that staff will:

- observe confidentiality and show respect for sensitive issues.

- ensure your views and opinions are heard and understood.
- communicate and respond in ways that are constructive, fair and respectful.
- ensure a timely response to your concerns/complaint.
- strive for resolutions and outcomes that are satisfactory to all parties, understanding that, at times, this may not be achievable.

Staff Safety and Wellbeing

The College places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our staff. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable insofar as they compromise the safety and wellbeing of our staff.

These behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone.
- physical or verbal intimidation of children and adult members of the community.
- bullying and harassment of any nature.
- aggressive hand gestures.
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media).
- spreading malicious gossip about the College or members of the College community verbally and/or in writing and/or via social media platforms.
- using school content/images within AI and other digital platforms/tools.
- racist, sexist or homophobic comments.
- theft, fraud, misuse of school resources, intoxication on school premises, smoking on school premises.
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

When a parent/carer behaves in an unacceptable way, the Principal or a Leadership Team member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation.

Where behaviour is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to others, we may exercise our legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban on the parent/carer entering the College premises and making contact with staff members.

Should it become necessary, we will draw on the 'School Community Safety Orders' scheme (https://www.vic.gov.au/school-community-safety-orders) to manage harmful, threatening or abusive behaviour from parents, carers, legal guardians and other adults.

Acts of violence that cause harm to a staff member and/or his/her property will be reported to the police for investigation and may also affect your child's ongoing enrolment at the College.

Implications

At St Columba's College, we will:

- build relationships with families that are honest, respectful and are based on open communication.
- develop strong links between the family, College and community as we develop in each individual self-respect, self-discipline, responsibility and respect for others.
- identify any reason for frustration and anger so that this can be addressed and the conversation can move forward.
- endeavour to contact families on the day an issue with their child occurs, especially in relation to bullying and harassment, personal safety or injury. This communication will be ongoing, as necessary, until the issue at hand has been adequately managed.

- respond to family contact with staff, by phone or email, within 48 hours of the contact.
- have conversations, either by phone, video-conference or face-to-face, that are respectful, robust, co-operative, constructive and dynamic. These conversations should conclude on a positive note and with a set of actions for moving forward. When conversations become inappropriate the staff member has the capacity to end the conversation and reconvene the discussion at a later time when it will be reasonable, respectful and constructive for all parties involved.
- act in accordance with our Child Safe Policies and Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

Related Policies & Guidelines

- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Guidelines for Family Communication about College Related Matters

POLICY HISTORY AND SCHEDULE	
Date of Approval:	October 2026
Approval Authority:	College Leadership Team
Delegated Contact Person:	Principal
Next Review Date:	October 2028