



CECV Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

A safe, nurturing and empowering culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools.

This statement has been updated in light of the revised Child Safe Standards coming into effect from 1 July 2022 and the supporting Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Every person, created in the image and likeness of God, is unique and has an intrinsic and inalienable dignity (Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization 2020, n. 379).

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).

The CECV has a universal expectation for the protection of children. It is resolutely committed to ensuring that all those engaged in Catholic education in Victoria promote the inherent dignity of children and young people, and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment.

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments, where all children and young people are respected and have agency, their voices are heard, and they are safe and feel safe. The CECV recognises that some children and young people are more vulnerable than others, and commits to providing the care and services required to support them and their families, and to ensure their safety within all Catholic schools.

Catholic schools will take prompt action to have any allegations of abuse concerning children and young people appropriately referred and investigated when raised. While the context and reality at each Catholic school will differ, the fundamental issues of understanding effective practices in child safety, and identifying and responding to child harm remain the same. All schools must strive for continual improvement that is responsive to emerging thinking, evidence and practice, so as to eliminate the potential for abuse to occur.

Creating child-safe school environments is a dynamic process that involves active participation and responsibility by school governing authorities, schools, families and their communities. It is marked by collaboration, vigilance and proactive approaches across policies, procedures, curriculum and practices.

Every person involved in Catholic education has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

