



## PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS CODE OF CONDUCT

### INTRODUCTION

At St Mary's we are committed to nurturing respectful relationships and active partnerships with you as parents. We believe that our students' learning journeys are enriched through positive and reciprocal home and school relationships.

As parents, you act as one of the most influential role models in your child's life. We therefore seek your support in promoting and upholding the core values of the school community and its culture of respectful relationships.

This Code of Conduct is intended to guide you in your dealings with staff, other parents, students and the wider school community. It articulates the school's key expectations of both staff and parents with regard to respectful relationships and behaviours. It also specifies the school's position with regard to unacceptable behaviours that breach our culture of respect. This policy applies to all activities the school is engaged in including 'high risk activities' such as camps, one to one contact with children, first aid, bus travel and supporting children with learning needs.

This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with the school's:

- \*Complaints Policy
- \*Social Media Policy
- \*Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines, Catholic Education Melbourne, 2015.

### OUR CULTURE OF RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

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

- a respect for the innate dignity and worth of every person
- an ability to understand the situation of others
- a cooperative attitude in working with others
- open, positive and honest communication
- the ability to work respectfully with other people
- trusting relationships
- responsible actions

### IN PROMOTING AND UPHOLDING THIS CULTURE, WE EXPECT THAT PARENTS, STAFF AND CHILDREN WILL:

- support the school's Catholic ethos, traditions and practices
- support the school in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment
- understand the importance of healthy parent/teacher/child relationships and strive to build the relationships
- adhere to the school's policies, as outlined on the school website
- treat staff, children and other parents with respect and courtesy.

*This Policy was ratified by the School PRINCIPAL 20/02/2019*

*Key resource: Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines Catholic Education office Melbourne.*



## St Mary's Catholic School Alexandria

### UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS – STUDENTS AND PARENTS

In the context of these Guidelines, the range of student or parent behaviours directed at staff that are considered serious and unacceptable include the following:

- shouting at a staff member, either in person or on the telephone
- physically or verbally intimidating a staff member
- using aggressive hand gestures, such as shaking or holding a fist towards a staff member
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media)
- swearing at a staff member

### IN PROMOTING AND UPHOLDING OUR SCHOOL 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 over sensitive issues
- relate with and respond to you in a respectful and professional manner
- ensure that we will respond to your concern that day or within 24 hours.

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

- observe confidentiality and a 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.

\*The staff be aware of physical contact with students/touching is understood to be inappropriate

\*The the relationship between staff and students remains within acceptable limits as defined by the VIT

\*Use of Social Media meets the expectations and professional behaviours as listed in our School Social Media policy.

\*That contact with students is limited to school operational hours or occurs with parent consent or within the use of the School "safe" intranet facilities.

\*That discipline procedures are implemented according to the Schools Discipline policies and that under no circumstances is there to be and physical punishment. All discipline issues that require follow up must be communicated with the Principal.

\*Staff are to ensure privacy for all students when they may need to change their clothing of access toilets. No staff member is to access children's toilets without clear warning for the occupant, verbally, and awareness made to another adult/staff member.

\*Staff are to ensure processes, actions and behaviours maintain respect for diversity of culture, race, languages and beliefs.

### STAFF SAFETY AND WELLBEING

The school 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 professional 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

*This Policy was ratified by the School PRINCIPAL 20/02/2019*

*Key resource: Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines Catholic Education office Melbourne.*



## St Mary's Catholic School Alexandra

- aggressive hand gestures
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media)
- racist or sexist comments
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

When a parent behaves in such unacceptable ways, the principal or a senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation.

Where a parent's behaviour is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to the staff member and others, we may exercise our legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban from the parent entering the school premises. In an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to the staff member and his/her property, the matter may be reported to the police for investigation.

### SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media is defined as any form of online or web-based publication, for Instagram, blogs, forums, discussion boards, chat rooms, Wikis, Twitter and YouTube. Increasingly, social media interactions are a cause for concern and can have harmful impacts. It is important that our school be proactive in this matter and we include in our suite of policies one that addresses responsible use of social media.

This policy aims to clarify the school's expectations with regard to respecting the dignity of each person. It specifies unacceptable behaviours, such as posting online comments that cause reputational damage to the school and individuals and psychological harm to individuals through offensive, bullying, harassing and/or discriminatory material. The school expects that all social media use should not breach the privacy of others and disclose confidential information.

### RAISING CONCERNS AND RESOLVING CONFLICT

(Refer also to our Complaints Policy)

Ensure you make contact with the Principal either personally, by phone or email.

In raising concerns on behalf of your child, or making a complaint about the school's practices or treatment of your child, **we expect that you will:**

- listen to your child, but remember that a different 'reality' may exist elsewhere;
- observe the school's stated procedures for raising and resolving a grievance/complaint;
- follow specified protocol for communication with staff members, including making appointments at a mutually convenient time and communicating your concerns in a constructive manner;
- refrain from approaching another child while in the care of the school to discuss or chastise them because of actions towards your child. Refer the matter directly to your child's teacher for follow-up and investigation by the school.

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*Key resource: Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines Catholic Education office Melbourne.*