



Mannix College

# Mannix College

## Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Mannix College has a mission-driven moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing environments where children and young people are respected, where their voices are heard, and where they feel safe and are safe.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all College employees, title holders, Council members, contractors and volunteers (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Responsible College Persons")
- 1.3. All activities at Mannix College are covered by relevant Commonwealth and State laws, and the College's own policies and procedures.

## **2. Duty of care**

- 2.1. Mannix College holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a fundamental responsibility.

## **3. Right to safety and participation**

- 3.1. A culture of safety within Mannix College ensures that children and young people (defined as a person under 18 years of age) can actively and fully participate in the life of the College.
- 3.2. Mannix College has a zero-tolerance for all forms of child abuse and maltreatment and is committed to protecting children and young people from harm.

## **4. Child abuse**

- 4.1. Child abuse or maltreatment is defined as an act (or series of acts) that endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development and/or a failure to provide conditions to the extent that the health and development of the child or young person is significantly impaired or placed at risk. Categories of abuse and maltreatment include:
  - a) physical abuse
  - b) sexual abuse including grooming
  - c) emotional abuse including spiritual abuse
  - d) family violence
  - e) Neglect
  - f) Discrimination
  - g) bullying
- 4.2. Signs and indicators of child abuse or maltreatment are not always obvious. Physical abuse may be more visible than other forms of abuse (e.g. bruising). Neglect is harder to identify as it consists of a failure to provide adequate care and attention. Likewise, you may not witness discrimination or bullying in relation to disability, mental illness, family violence, skin colour or race, gender identity or sexual orientation. However, it may result in signs or

indicators in the child's behaviour, for example social withdrawal and depression.

- 4.3. All children and young people are vulnerable but there are some children and young people who have an even higher risk of abuse than the general population. They are children who have experienced abuse before or who have a disability, are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those experiencing poverty or homelessness or out of home care. Similarly, the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are more acute due to a history of racism, marginalisation and dispossession.
- 4.4. **Dignity of children and young people.** Mannix College values the contribution and dignity of all children and young people and creates opportunities to involve children and young people in decision-making about programs, activities and events that affect them. Mannix College recognises the need for empowerment of all children and young people, especially those at greater risk of abuse. Their involvement in decision-making can be a significant protective factor in preventing abuse.
- 4.5. **Informing and involving parents (and guardians) in promoting child safety.** Mannix College acknowledges that effective child safety within parishes, agencies and entities cannot be undertaken without the involvement of parents (and guardians) and seeks to engage parents as critical partners in promoting the safety of children and young people. The involvement of parents and guardians of children and young people who are more vulnerable to experiencing abuse is particularly important.

## 5. Safeguarding children and young people within Mannix College

- 5.1. Mannix College acknowledges that preventing child abuse requires proactive approaches across policies, procedures and practices consistent with the requirements of the:
  - a) Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Commission for Children and Young People, Victoria)
  - b) National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission)
  - c) National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Catholic Professional Standards Limited)
- 5.2. In fulfilling this responsibility, Mannix College has developed a comprehensive framework to guide the implementation of child safety policies, procedures and practices with the aim of preventing child abuse, empowering children and young people, and responding to concerns, disclosures or allegations of child abuse or child-related misconduct.
- 5.3. This policy provides a broad overview of the framework and should be read in conjunction with supporting resources.

- 5.4. The application of this policy extends to Responsible College Persons within the context of their role within the College: within the physical boundaries of Mannix College; beyond the physical boundaries including pastoral support, visitation or outreach on non-Mannix College property, online or via digital environments and while travelling locally, interstate or overseas.

## 6. Safeguarding responsibilities

- 6.1. Through the Professional Standards Unit, the Archbishop of Melbourne supports Mannix College to:
- a) implement safeguarding practices and processes outlined in this policy
  - b) coordinate the response to allegations and reports of child safety-related misconduct and child abuse in relation to clergy, employees and volunteers across the Archdiocese
  - c) monitor and continually improve safeguarding practices and processes.
- 6.2. Mannix College leadership is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and relevant procedures and practices to protect children and young people. The PSU will require the leadership of Mannix College with its Safeguarding Committee to summarise its compliance with the requirements of this policy on an annual basis.
- 6.3. The Safeguarding Committee established within Mannix College plays a central role in assisting the Principal with the implementation of the requirements of this policy.
- 6.4. Further, as safeguarding children and young people is a collective responsibility; all Responsible College Persons in at Mannix College acknowledge their individual responsibility to comply with clear behavioural expectations to act in a manner that is caring, respectful and safe toward children and young people.
- 6.5. All Responsible College Persons have a moral, legal and ethical responsibility to care for, and promote the wellbeing of children and young people, and protect them from harm or abuse.

## 7. Safe personnel

- 7.1. **Selection, recruitment and screening.** In seeking to provide safe and enriching interactions with children and young people within the context of Mannix College sets out selection, recruitment and screening processes that consider the suitability and appropriateness of persons to work with children and young people in an employment or voluntary role to minimise the risk of child abuse occurring.

- 7.2. **Child safety code of conduct.** A specific child safety code of conduct provides guidance to Responsible College Persons in the context of their involvement with children and young people at Mannix College.
- 7.3. **Induction.** Induction processes incorporate safeguarding awareness to build a foundation of understanding and commitment to the safety of children and young people.
- 7.4. **Safeguarding Training.** In supporting Responsible College Persons to promote the safety of children and young people and discharge their responsibilities in line with this policy, CAM provides a range of training and education activities that equip Responsible College Persons with the skills and knowledge to promote the safe participation of children and young people.
- 7.5. **Supervision.** It is a requirement of this policy that those whose roles involve working with children and young people are provided with supervision and support to undertake their role in a manner which promotes the safety of children and young people and enables detection of behaviour that may be detrimental to children and young people.

## 8. Safe programs, activities and events

- 8.1. **Child safety risk management.** Mannix College safeguards children and young people by employing a risk management approach that systematically identifies and assesses risk associated with programs, activities and events involving children and young people to minimise opportunities for harm to occur.
- 8.2. **Practice and behavioural guidelines.** In addition to the risk management process, parishes, agencies and entities utilise guidance provided in practice and behavioural guidelines in relation to conducting programs, activities and events involving children and young people.

## 9. Responding to and reporting child abuse

- 9.1. The safety of children and young people is paramount. All concerns, allegations or complaints of child abuse will be taken seriously, and acted upon consistent with Mannix College's moral, ethical and legal obligations to safeguard children and vulnerable people.
- 9.2. In Victoria, the following legislation governs how adults should respond to child abuse:
  - a) The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) defines when a child is in need of protection (s 162) and the mandatory reporting obligations of certain professionals working in our community (ss 182, 184).
  - b) The *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) sets out the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

- c) The *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) creates the offences of ‘failure to protect’ (s 49O) and ‘failure to disclose’ (s 327) which place additional legal responsibilities in relation to reporting, if a reasonable belief has been formed that a child or young person is at risk of or experiencing child sexual abuse.
- 9.3. Mannix College acknowledges its moral, legal and ethical duty to effectively respond to and report concerns, allegations or complaints of child-safety related misconduct and/or child abuse to the appropriate authorities such as the Victoria Police, Child Protection (Department of Health and Human Services) and the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Commission for Children and Young People).
  - 9.4. Children and young people (and their families) within Mannix College have information and support to report a concern, allegation or make a complaint through processes that are accessible and respectful.
  - 9.5. It is a requirement of this policy that Responsible College Persons make a report if they have formed a reasonable belief that a child or young person has experienced abuse, is experiencing abuse or is at risk of harm. Not reporting child abuse or misconduct that places children and young people at risk of harm is a breach of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.
  - 9.6. **Making a child abuse report** involves notifying the **College Principal/and or Dean of Students and Wellbeing**, statutory authorities and Pathways in a timely manner (as soon as practicable after forming a reasonable belief, unless the child or young person is in imminent danger).
  - 9.7. Reporting to the College Principal who then reports to DHHS and/or SOCIT (Victoria Police) and to the Pathways/Professional Standards Unit ensures that Mannix College reports and responds appropriately to concerns, and allegations of complaints in relation to the safety of children and young people.
  - 9.8. All reports are to be documented on the **Child-safety Related Misconduct and/or Child Abuse Report Form** and emailed to the Professional Standards Unit – professional.standards@cam.org.au – as soon as practicable.
  - 9.9. In Victoria, alleged child abuse perpetrated by:
    - a) clergy, employees and volunteers is reported to the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) within Victoria Police
    - b) a family member is reported to Child Protection - Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
    - c) a child or young person is reported to Child Protection (DHHS) and/or the SOCIT (Victoria Police) (e.g. sexually harmful behaviour, aggression, violence, online exploitation).

- 9.10. **VICTORIA POLICE.** Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT): [www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=36448](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=36448)
- 9.11. **CHILD PROTECTION (DHHS)**
- a) North and West (Metro) region: 1300 664 9777
  - b) South region: 1300 655 795
  - c) East region: 1300 360 391
  - d) West (Rural) region: 1800 075 599
  - e) After-hours and weekends: 13 12 78
- 9.12. Mannix College has a legal responsibility under the Reportable Conduct Scheme to notify current and historical incidents of suspected child abuse or misconduct of clergy, employees and volunteers to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).
- 9.13. Serious misconduct and/or criminal behaviour will be reported to the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Commission for Children and Young People) and/or Victoria Police and be subject to internal investigation and disciplinary action.
- 9.14. Disciplinary action is determined by the seriousness of the misconduct.
- 9.15. Disciplinary action in the case of Responsible College Persons may consist of:
- a) counselling
  - b) training
  - c) a verbal or written warning
  - d) penalties relevant as per the Conditions of Residency or other policies
  - e) suspension (with or without pay)
  - f) eviction
  - g) dismissal.
- 9.16. Confidentiality and privacy in relation to reports of child abuse will be maintained consistent with the principles of natural justice and our duty of care to safeguard children and young people.
- 9.17. The safety and support needs of all parties involved in a report will be considered and addressed as part of this process.

## 10. General

- 10.1. Mannix College reserves the right to change this Policy at any time by publishing such changes or revised documents on the Mannix website. All changes take effect immediately, or such later date specified by Mannix College.

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