



St Francis Xavier Primary School Engaging Families and Caregivers in Child Safety Policy

St Francis Xavier Primary School operates with the consent of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and is owned, operated and governed by Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL).

Rationale

Catholic education is an active partnership between families and caregivers (carers and guardians) and school, where this relationship is recognised as the first and ongoing educators of their children and young people. Schools and families and caregivers partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for children and young people's faith formation, learning, safety and wellbeing.

St Francis Xavier Primary School, holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of the entire school community. 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 ([CECV Commitment Statement to Child Safety](#)).

Our Purpose

St Francis Xavier Primary School aims to provide an enriched education where all students are equipped with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to prosper in the global knowledge economy of the 21st century.

Our strong academic tradition is founded on fundamental values such as love, respect, forgiveness and trust. Our students strive to become, in the words of Sisters of Mercy Foundress Catherine McAuley, "shining lamps, giving light to all around us."

St Francis Xavier Primary School is consistently humbled by our students' confident ability to use their talents gifted to them by God to make a difference to their world, and positively contribute to society

Our School Vision

Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.

Our School Mission

St Francis Xavier is a Catholic primary school community, inspired by the example of Catherine McAuley where we promote for all a sense of belonging, nurture right relationships, inspire a passion for learning and live in harmony with creation.

We Value

St Francis Xavier is a Catholic primary school community, inspired by the example of Catherine McAuley where we promote for all a sense of belonging, nurture right relationships, inspire a passion for learning and live in harmony with creation.

St Francis Xavier Primary School has 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.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions to be taken at St Francis Xavier Primary School to ensure that families, caregivers and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and that they are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school.

This Policy considers the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#).

At St Francis Xavier Primary School, the following beliefs underpin the commitment to family and caregiver engagement:

- Families and caregivers should have the opportunity to input into decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- Open and accessible communication with families and caregivers and other members of the school community about the school's approach to child safety and wellbeing is a fundamental responsibility of the school
- All members of the school community should have access to current and relevant information relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Families and caregivers and other members of the school community must have the opportunity to provide input into the development and review of the school's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing
- All members of the school community have the right to be informed of the governance principles and operational structures that underpin child safety and wellbeing at the school.

Policy Statement

This Policy applies to all members of the school community. It should be read in conjunction with related DOBCEL and school policies, procedures and guidelines including:

DOBCEL Child Safety Framework

DOBCEL Child Safe Governance Policy and Procedure

DOBCEL Safeguarding Children and Young People: Code of Conduct

DOBCEL PROTECT: Reporting and Responding Obligations Procedures for Schools (including Mandatory Reporting)

DOBCEL Child Safe Risk Management Guidelines

DOBCEL SFX Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

DOBCEL SFX Student Empowerment and Participation Policy

DOBCEL SFX Bullying Prevention (including Cyberbullying) Policy

DOBCEL SFX Diversity and Equity Policy

[School] Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

St Francis Xavier Primary School is committed to ensuring that families and all members of the school community are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. St Francis Xavier Primary School implements the following strategies and actions to ensure compliance with the *Ministerial Order 1359* commitment to:

- providing opportunities for families and caregivers to participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child
- open and accessible communication with families and caregivers and other members of the school community about the school's approach to child safety and wellbeing
- enabling families and community members to contribute to the development and review of policies and practices of the school related to child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that families and caregivers and the school community are informed about the policies and practices of the school related to child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies/actions utilised by school leadership

The principal and school leaders at *St Francis Xavier Primary School* recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families and caregivers and other members of the school community in relation to issues regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- utilising this policy to inform and guide curriculum planning and practices
- supporting staff, through appropriate professional learning, to strengthen their communication and engagement skills and to understand the value and importance of effective communication and engagement
- identifying opportunities for parents and caregivers to have input into decisions that affect their child or young person's safety and wellbeing
- ensuring that existing policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing are made publicly available so that they are easily accessible to families and caregivers and other members of the school community
- engaging with families, caregivers and other members of the school community to collaboratively develop and periodically review policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing

creating opportunities to ensure that members of the school community are adequately informed about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing

Strategies/actions utilised by school staff, volunteers, contractors and those in religious ministry

School staff, volunteers, contractors and those in religious ministry at St Francis Xavier Primary School also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with families, caregivers and other members of the school community regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- creating and maintaining open lines of communication with families, caregivers and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters

- liaising with parents and caregivers 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, caregivers, and others in the school community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring school staff, volunteers, contractors and those in religious ministry act in accordance with the principles set out in this policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing.

Strategies used by parents and caregivers and members of the broader school community

Parents, caregivers and members of the broader school community at St Francis Xavier Primary School also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with the school regarding child safety and wellbeing. Strategies and actions used to carry out this responsibility include:

- engaging with and maintaining open communication with the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- liaising with the school in relation to any concerns and/or decisions that affect children or young people and working in a spirit of cooperation with the school.
- ensuring that school personnel are updated on any matters pertaining to child safety and wellbeing regarding children in their care
- ensuring parents, caregivers and members of the broader school community act in accordance with the principles set out in this *Child Safety Framework* when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing.

Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two-year review cycle of its child safety practices.