



Policy Statement

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited [DOBCEL] has zero tolerance for abuse and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of children and young people. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee or volunteer will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service. Further, DOBCEL will fully cooperate with the legal and child protection obligations throughout any investigation until the resolution of mistreatment or abuse incidents.

Context

The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) Board is committed to:

- zero tolerance of child abuse
- listening to and empowering children and young people
- keeping children and young people safe.

DOBCEL is committed to supporting its schools to take a proactive role in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people.

All DOBCEL schools must ensure that the child safety policies and procedures that they are implementing at a school level are consistent with DOBCEL's policies and procedures.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff (including employees, contractors, volunteers, clergy, labour hire workers). On engagement, all staff shall confirm that they have read and agree to comply with DOBCEL's Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and procedures, Safeguarding Children & Young People Code of Conduct, and Victorian Child Safe Standards by signing a written acknowledgement

Legislative Context

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) (including addendums: *Failure to disclose offence*, *Failure to protect offence*, *Grooming offence*).
- Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises

Staff should refer to the DOBCEL PROTECT policies for more information about these offences and the responsibilities of staff in relation to them.

Definitions specific to this policy

TERM	DEFINITION
Child	A child or young person within any DOBCEL school environment. (Legal elements of this policy may not apply to young people who turn 18 while at school, but the principle of care remains the same.)
Child abuse	Child abuse includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• any act committed against a child involving:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ a sexual offence○ an offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)• the infliction, on a child, of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ physical violence○ serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect. (Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005(Vic))
Child safety	Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.
School environment	Any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a campus of the school• online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by DOBCEL or a DOBCEL school for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)• other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).
Staff	An individual working in a school environment who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority• a contracted service provider engaged by DOBCEL (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-connected work.• a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with DOBCEL (Ministerial Order No. 1359).
Volunteer	A person who performs work without remuneration or reward in the school environment.

Supporting Policies

Related DOBCEL policies

- Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and procedures
- PROTECT: Reporting and Responding Obligations Policy [DOBCEL]
- PROTECT: Reporting and Responding Obligations Policy [SCHOOL]

Forms & Templates

- Safeguarding Children & Young People Code of Conduct

Resources

- Victorian Child Safe Standards
 - PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools

References

- Victorian Catholic School Statement of Commitment to Child Safety <https://vcea.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Victorian-Catholic-School-Statement-of-Commitment-to-Child-Safety-FINAL.pdf>
- Congregation for Catholic Education. 1997. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Vatican.
- State of Victoria. 2022. [Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises](#) Order No. 1359, Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. G6
- Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee. 2013. [Betrayal of Trust](#)
- [The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#)

DOBCEL Principles of Governance

All DOBCEL policies are founded on and reflect the Principles of Governance stated in the Document: [DOBCEL Principles of Governance](#)

Approving authority	DOBCEL Board
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