



Child Safeguarding Policy

The Red Bend Catholic College Child Safeguarding Policy implements, and is to be read and understood in conjunction with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd.

This Child Safeguarding Policy has been approved by the Marist Schools Australia Limited Leadership Team on 1/9/20. It is to be reviewed on 11/10/23.

The Child Safeguarding Policy is published on our College's public website and provided to new Staff, and to Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors at induction. It is also made available to Regular Contractors and Regular Volunteers prior to their engagement with the school. It is also communicated through other mediums such as the College website, Induction Packs, newsletters, College Advisory Council Induction, Information sheet for volunteers and contractors, staff meetings, the CompliSpace PolicyPlus Portal and email updates.

Purpose

Our Child Safeguarding Policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the College to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

It is an overarching policy that provides the key elements of our approach to the College as a child safe organisation and sets the tone for the College's entire Child Safeguarding Program.

The Child Safeguarding Policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the College;
- the creation of a safe and supportive College environment and a positive and robust child safe culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the College; and
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in NSW.

Scope

The College's Child Safeguarding Policy applies to all adults in the College community, including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and other family members. This policy applies in all College environments, both physical and online, and on-site and off-site College grounds (e.g. camps and excursions).

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people who come to Red Bend Catholic College have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.



The College regards its child safeguarding responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the College community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.











National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd., which set out the following overarching standards that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and other harm.

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) expand on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, specifically for Catholic settings. They set out 10 overarching standards that guide the development of a child safe culture for Catholic entities. Compliance with the NCSS is mandatory for all Catholic entities.

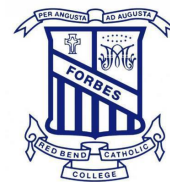
The NCSS are:

	Standard 1 Committed leadership, governance and culture	7		Standard 6 Effective complaints management	18
	Standard 2 Children are safe, informed and participate	10		Standard 7 Ongoing education and training	21
	Standard 3 Partnering with families, carers and communities	11		Standard 8 Safe physical and online environments	23
	Standard 4 Equity is promoted and diversity is respected	13		Standard 9 Continuous improvement	25
	Standard 5 Robust human resource management	14		Standard 10 Policies and procedures support child safety	26

Children and Young People's Rights to Safety, Information and Participation

Red Bend Catholic College is a child safe and child-centred organisation. Our environment is friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.



We ensure students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers. We actively seek to understand what makes

students feel safe in our organisation and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the College

The College recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure families and relevant communities know about the College's operations and policies, including its Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and classroom learning and assessment environments.

We build cultural safety at the College through partnerships with relevant communities.

Valuing Diversity in the College Community

Our College values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome students with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- welcome students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensure all Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring our facilities promote the inclusion of students of all abilities.

Our Child Safeguarding Program

Red Bend Catholic College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safeguarding Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.



Our Child Safeguarding Program relates to all aspects of child safety and protecting students from abuse or other harm, and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the College. It includes:

- Child Safe Codes of Conduct
- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and other harm and associated key indicators of abuse or other harm
- clear procedures for reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm
- strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the Executive Management Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, including Mandatory Reporting to DCJ, Reportable Conduct, and Reporting to Police
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability
- child safeguarding training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards published by Catholic Professional Standards Ltd.)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Red Bend Catholic College's induction process, all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors are required to complete induction in our child safeguarding policies, practices and procedures. Regular Contractors and Regular Volunteers receive information sheets with respect to the College's child safeguarding policies, practices and procedures prior to commencing work at the College. All Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing child safeguarding training.

Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are supported and supervised by the College's Child Safeguarding Officers and Executive Management Team to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child safety.

Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the College

Our Child Safeguarding Program provides detailed guidance for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safety incidents



or concerns internally at the College. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

Students at the College are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College. These include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact:

- the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer Stephen Dwyer, by phoning 02 6852 2000 or emailing principal@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the MSA Regional Director.

Students, parents/carers, family members and other community members can also raise child safety incidents or concerns through the College's Complaints Handling Policy.

Any person can also contact the Senior Child Safeguarding Officer, or MSA Regional Director if they have concerns regarding the College's leadership in relation to child safety.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Responsibilities for Child Safeguarding at the College

Child Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the College community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students. Specific responsibilities include:

The College's Child Safeguarding Officers

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the College's Child Safeguarding Officers. Our Child Safeguarding Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child safeguarding within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Contact details for our Child Safeguarding Officers are set out below:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address
Stephen Dwyer	Principal	02 6852 2000	principal@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
James Metzeling	Deputy Principal	02 6852 2000	deputprincipal@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Trish Martin	Director of Staff and Curriculum	02 6852 2000	dsc@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au



Deborah Wheeldon	Director of Learning, Teaching and Compliance	02 6852 2000	dltc@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Adam Currey	Director of Students	02 6852 2000	ds@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Matthew Pearce	Director of Faith Formation	02 6852 2000	dff@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Bernadette Hyde-Mewburn	Director of Boarding	02 6852 2000	db@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Kylie McKinnirey	Basil House Coordinator	02 6852 2000	basilhouse@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Stephen Schrader	Chisholm House Coordinator	02 6852 2000	chisholmhouse@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Erica Langley	Denis House Coordinator	02 6852 2000	denishouse@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Chris Douglass	Loyola House Coordinator	02 6852 2000	loyolahouse@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Esmarie Boshoff	McAuley House Coordinator	02 6852 2000	mcauleyhouse@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au
Tony O'Connell	Xavier House Coordinator	02 6852 2000	xavierhouse@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au

Red Bend Catholic College has also appointed Stephen Dwyer as the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer. The Senior Child Safeguarding Officer is contactable by phone on 02 6852 2000 by emailing principal@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au.

The Senior Child Safeguarding Officer has additional child safeguarding responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Executive Management Team and Marist Schools Australia.

Marist Schools Australia Limited

Red Bend Catholic is governed by Marist Schools Australia Limited (MSA Ltd). MSA Ltd is a public not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commission. Its purpose is to advance education and religion, specifically to make Jesus Christ known and loved and to ensure quality Catholic education in the Marist tradition through its schools. MSA Ltd is ultimately responsible for Child Safeguarding and approves the College's Child Safeguarding Program.

Marist Schools Australia National Director

The Chief Executive Officer of MSA Limited is the MSA National Director. The MSA National Director is responsible for ensuring that each MSA-governed school complies with relevant legislation, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and other requirements of the Catholic Church and the Association Council.



The Principal has delegated authority from the MSA National Director for operational management of the College, including the management and implementation of the College's child safeguarding policies and procedures.

The MSA Regional Director

The MSA Regional Director is responsible for ensuring that the College in their region complies with relevant legislation, the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and other requirements of the Catholic Church and the Association Council.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the College, and the Child Safeguarding Program. The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safeguarding Policy and the College's Child Safeguarding Program is implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the College.

The Principal of the College is accountable to the MSA Regional Director.

Staff Members

All Staff are required to comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Safeguarding Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and Working with Children Checks. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers.

Volunteers

All Volunteers at the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

All Volunteers are required to comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety concerns with one of the College's Child Safeguarding Officers.

Contractors

All Contractors engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

All Contractors engaged by the College are required to comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are required to understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm. The College may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.



Direct Contact and Regular Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and College cleaners. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.

External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College. The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in all College environments. All External Education Providers engaged by the College are required by the College to comply with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Child Safe Codes of Conduct. Red Bend Catholic College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Safe Human Resources Management

Red Bend Catholic College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers. Our recruitment procedures comply with the College's

Child Safe Human Resources Management and ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. All prospective Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

The College ensures that the College Executive Management Team, Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors undergo child safeguarding induction, and ongoing education and training as part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from harm.

Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors are subject to regular supervision and performance monitoring whilst engaging with students.

The College ensures that professional development programs for Staff include child safeguarding education and training programs.

Child Safe Risk Management

The College recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

The College has developed a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all College environments.

Record Keeping

The College has a Child Safeguarding Record Keeping policy and is committed to best practice record keeping. In accordance with our policy, and as required by our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, all internal and external reports of child safety incidents



and concerns, as well as any other responses by the College are recorded using the Responding to an Incident, Disclosure or Suspicion of Child Abuse or Other Harm Template.

In maintaining records of child safety incidents or concerns, the College maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

Policy and Program Review

Red Bend Catholic College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safeguarding Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

The College is committed to actively seeking, actioning, and incorporating into this Policy, feedback from students, families, the wider College community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, and will communicate any adjustments or amendments widely throughout the College community.

Non-Compliance with Our Child Safeguarding Policy

Red Bend Catholic College enforces this Child Safeguarding Policy and our Child Safe Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct

The Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults in the College environment towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

It is Red Bend Catholic College policy that any breach of the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct is a child safety incident and is recorded and managed as such.

The Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct is reviewed annually. The Marist Schools Australia Leadership Team has approved this Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct.

Our Child Safeguarding Program also includes a **Staff and Student Professional Boundaries** policy that provides detailed guidance for all Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and External Education Providers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at Red Bend Catholic College.



Scope

The Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct applies to:

- the Principal and the College Executive Management Team, as well as Advisory Councils and sub-committees
- all staff members, including non-teaching Staff and temporary or casual Staff
- all Volunteers
- all Contractors
- External Education Providers
- teaching students on placement at the College
- parents/carers and other adult family members of students
- visitors

Together referred to as “the College Community” for the purposes of this Code.

The Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct applies in all College environments. College environments include both physical and online environments, as well as any environment (including those outside the College’s grounds) where College-related activities are occurring.

Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct

Each member of the College Community is responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of students by adhering to the following standards of behaviour:

DO:

- Uphold Red Bend Catholic College’s Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times.
- Comply with applicable guidelines published by the College with respect to child safety, such as the **Staff and Student Professional Boundaries** policy.
- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to child safety and protection issues.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and/or culturally diverse students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Use positive and affirming language towards students.
- Encourage students to ‘have a say’ and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report any breaches of this Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the College’s Child Safeguarding Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report child abuse or other harm externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse or other harm is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.



- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.
- Always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom, bathroom or changeroom.

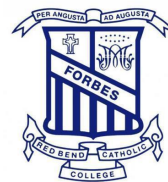
DO NOT:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Engage in prejudicial or oppressive behaviour, or use inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not your own child.
- Engage in activities with a student who is not your own child, outside of school hours and without permission from the student's parent/carer.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post identifying information about a student online unless it is necessary for the school's activities or you have consent from the student and/or their parents/guardians. Identifying information includes things such as the student's: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or other harm.

Agreement to Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct

A copy of the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct is provided to all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing work at the College. It is also communicated via refresher training at regular intervals for all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors .

All Staff, as well as Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers must sign an agreement to adhere to the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at College.



The Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between the College and any Direct Contact and Regular Contractors. Therefore, all Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct upon signing the contract or upon commencing work at the College.

A copy of the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct is provided to parents/carers, who must sign an agreement to abide by the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct on enrolment.

Consequences for Breaching the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct

Staff, including the Executive Management Team and Principal, Volunteers and Contractors who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary actions that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Where any other member of the College community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct, Red Bend Catholic College will take appropriate action.

Report Any Concerns

It is Marist policy that any breach of the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct is a child safety incident. Therefore, all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors who witness, or suspect, any breach of this Code of Conduct must report their concern internally and, if required, also externally.

Our Child Safeguarding Program includes information for the College Executive Management Team, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors about how to identify key indicators of child abuse or other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns to relevant authorities.

Students are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College, including breaches of the Marist Child Safe Adult Code of Conduct. These include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family members or other community members who witness or suspect that there has been a breach of this Code of Conduct, or have concerns that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or harm from a member of Staff, a Volunteer or a Contractor, should contact:

- the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer Stephen Dwyer, by phoning 02 6852 2000 or emailing principal@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the MSA Regional Director.

You can also raise a concern through the College's **Complaints Handling Policy**.



Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

This policy applies to all Staff, including the Principal and the College Executive Management Team, College Advisory Council Members, teaching and non-teaching Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and External Education Providers **(together, known as "Staff" for the purposes of this policy only)**.

Red Bend Catholic College Staff hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to students at the College. As such, it is their duty, at all times, to maintain professional boundaries with students.

It is also part of the requirements for teaching accreditation – see NESAs requirements

The Crimes Act 1900 (NSW) includes certain offences for persons, including teachers, whose position places them in a position of authority, with a child or young person

The following policy and guidelines are designed to raise awareness of situations where professional boundary violations may occur and some strategies to minimise the risk of boundary violations. The practice of protective behaviours at all times will also reduce the possibility of vexatious claims being brought against Staff.

Red Bend Catholic College's Policy

Red Bend Catholic College is committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment, where all of our students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner, the risk of child abuse is minimised, and a safe and supportive child safe environment is maintained.

It is our policy that:

- Staff exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with students at all times
- Staff identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student
- Staff interactions with students are professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours
- conflict of interest issues must be reported to the Principal as soon as practicable
- equal learning opportunities are given to each student without discrimination
- appropriate consequences will be applied to Staff who breach professional boundaries.

It is the College's policy that any breach of Staff and Student Professional Boundaries is a child safety incident.



What are professional boundaries?

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person (a student) entrusts their welfare and safety to another person (a staff member), in circumstances where a power imbalance exists.

The fact that College Staff are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students means that there is always an inherent power imbalance that exists between them. It also means that professional boundaries must be established, maintained and respected at all times.

In most cases this power imbalance is clear, however sometimes it may be more difficult to recognise, especially for younger staff members who may only be a few years older than their students. Another example includes staff members supporting students through pastoral type care, which involves tending to both academic and non-academic needs of students.

The following guidelines are not exhaustive, and given that sometimes 'grey areas' may occur, it is expected that all Staff (no matter their age or experience) use their own good judgment, think very carefully about the implications and potential consequences of engaging in certain behaviours with students, and always err on the side of caution.

When unsure about whether professional boundaries are being, or have been, or will be breached, ask yourself:

- Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?
- How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting?
- Am I sharing information for the student's benefit, or for my benefit?
- Am I dealing with this student differently from others in similar circumstances?

- Is my language or demeanour different from normal when dealing with this particular student?

Intimate Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be misinterpreted as having a romantic or sexual, rather than professional basis. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents/carers.

Such relationships have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of students and colleagues and may carry a serious reputational risk for the staff member and, in turn, the College.

The professional relationship of Staff and students may be breached by:

- flirtatious behaviour or dating
- development of an intimate personal relationship
- sexual relations
- the use of sexual innuendo, inappropriate language and/or material with students
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- unwarranted and inappropriate filming or photography
- deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others (e.g. pornography)
- having intimate contact without a valid context via written or electronic means (e.g. email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms);



- going out, whether alone or in company, to social events such as the movies or dinner
- exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship.

Staff should also be aware that developing or encouraging romantic or sexual relationships with recent former students (over 18 years of age) may violate professional boundaries and are strongly discouraged from doing so.

The imbalance of power and authority that exists in the Staff/student relationship does not suddenly disappear after the student finishes their schooling. Staff should not assume that they will be protected from disciplinary action by claiming that a relationship began only after the student left the College as there may be a reasonable belief that the emotional intimacy of the relationship developed while the Staff/student relationship existed.

Personal Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be perceived or misinterpreted as having a personal rather than professional element. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents or carers.

It is the student's **perception** of staff behaviour and not the intention of the staff member that is important.

An established and expected professional relationship between Staff and students may be compromised by Staff:

- attending parties or socialising with students outside of organised College events (without parental/carer permission)
- sharing personal details about their private lives with students
- meeting with students outside of school hours without permission from the College.

Staff must recognise at all times that their role is not to be a “friend” or “parent” to a student.

Fair Learning Opportunities

The main focus of teaching is effective student learning and as such, teachers are expected to support their students with their professional expertise so as to offer them the best education in their individual circumstances. The quality of teaching and learning between teachers and students characterises their relationship.

Teachers should demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect
- recognising and developing each student’s abilities, skills and talents by catering to their individual abilities and respecting their individual differences
- encouraging students to develop and reflect on their own values
- interacting with students without bias
- not engaging in preferential treatment



- not discriminating against any student on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, disability or religious or political conviction
- always making decisions in students' best interests.

Electronic Communications between Staff and Students

It is expected that all Staff at the College will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all use of technology should be for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular activities
- all email communication between Staff and students should be via the College email system and reflect a professional Staff/student relationship
- Staff should not communicate with students via text message where it is not in a professional context
- Staff should not give out their personal telephone numbers or social media contact details
- Staff are not to accept or request students as 'friends' on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate in any way that is not condoned or approved by the College
- Staff should not exchange personal pictures with a student
- teachers are not expected or encouraged to respond to concerns of parents/carers or students on holidays, weekends or in the evening
- any student personal contact numbers or other personal contact details made available to the College should only be used for College communications.

Physical Contact with Students

All Staff should be aware that situations may arise that can be perceived in a manner that was not intended. For this reason, all Staff at the College should adhere to the following guidelines for contact with students both in and outside of College grounds:

- Staff should avoid unnecessary physical contact with students
- minimal, non-lingering, non-gratuitous physical contact in the context of the situation is acceptable (e.g. congratulatory pat on the back or handshake)
- contact for sport, drama and dance instruction is acceptable in a class situation but not in a 1:1 situation. If physical contact is required for specific technical instructions, it must be brief and only with the consent of the student. Note that a student may withdraw consent for this contact either verbally or gesturally and Staff must remain vigilant whilst engaging in necessary contact situations. Once consent has been withdrawn no further contact can be or should be made.

Off-Campus Excursions and Camps

During off-campus excursions or camps, the same physical contact guidelines apply as well as the following:

- checking of sleeping arrangements, or supervising of students changing should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students' privacy and personal space
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory
- ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict Staff/student relationship is upheld and that Staff do not engage in inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student's bed.



Managing Conflicts of Interest

Where personal relationships with students such as family relationships and close friendship networks exist, questions of conflicts of interest may arise.

This may be more prevalent in close or rural communities where professional boundaries may be tested due to the nature and size of the community. In these circumstances, Staff need to be far more diligent in developing and maintaining these boundaries.

Where a staff member feels that a conflict of interest may exist, they should notify the Principal, or the Deputy Principal if the conflict involves the Principal, and arrangements should be implemented to avoid the conflict situation if possible. For example, the teaching of students by a staff member with a conflict should be avoided.

Any significant decisions relating to these students in the College (such as the appointment of classes or selection in sports teams) should be referred to another staff member and endorsed by a supervisor.

Declarations of Staff/Student Interactions

To enable the College to be aware of appropriate and inappropriate interactions between Staff and students, it is Red Bend Catholic College's policy that all Staff are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours. These interactions may include instances where the staff member is:

- related to the student
- friends with the student's parents or family
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours and the parent/carer has notified the College.

Declarations by Staff about a relationship with students and their families outside of the College context or about interactions that occur with the consent of the parent/carer must be verified by the parent/carer of the student.

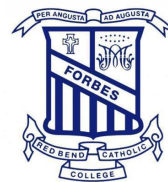
Red Bend Catholic College maintains records of all declarations made by staff members related to their interactions with students, or relationships with students, that exist outside of school hours or College premises. These records are made available to the parents/carers of a student upon request.

These records are kept in accordance with our **Child Safeguarding Record Keeping** and **Human Resources Management** policies.

Staff Responsibilities

All Staff must:

- follow the guidelines as set out in this policy
- immediately report any conflicts of interest
- remove themselves from decision making where a conflict has been identified.



Consequences for Breaching the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Red Bend Catholic College may take disciplinary action that may include (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Implementation

These guidelines are implemented through a combination of:

- staff training and development in professional conduct
- student and parent/carer education and information
- effective management of teachers engaging in inappropriate relationships with students
- effective management of conflicts of interest
- effective communication and incident notification procedures
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

Report Any Concerns

It is the College's policy that any breach of this Professional Boundaries Policy is a child safety incident. Therefore, all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors who witness, or suspect, any breach of professional boundaries must report their concern internally and, if required, also externally.

Our Child Safeguarding Program includes information for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors as to how to identify key indicators of child abuse or other harm and how to report child safety concerns internally. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns to relevant authorities.

Students are provided with information about and encouraged to use multiple pathways to raise child safety concerns about or at the College, including breaches of the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries. These include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family members or other community members who witness or suspect that there has been a breach of Professional Boundaries, or have concerns that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or harm from a member of Staff, a Volunteer or a Contractor, should contact:

- the College's Senior Child Safeguarding Officer **Stephen Dwyer** by 02 6852 2000 or emailing principal@redbendcc.nsw.edu.au or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the MSA Regional Director.



You can also raise a concern through the College's **Complaints Handling Policy**.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.