



St. Mary's School Inglewood

Learning Today, Wisdom Tomorrow

Child Protection Grooming

Identity Statement

St Mary's Catholic School, Inglewood, is a community of learners, inspiring all to be people of light, in the footsteps of the Presentation Sisters.

Vision Statements

- Model and teach the message of Jesus in our relationships with each other, our God and our world.
- Build and value collaborative partnerships with students, staff and parents, the Parish and wider community.
- Create a positive and stimulating environment in which each person can academically, spiritually, emotionally, physically and socially reach their full potential.
- To foster a love of learning in a safe and respectful environment.

RATIONALE

The dignity of each person, made in the image of God, is a fundamental tenet of the Catholic Church and therefore of Catholic education. At St. Mary's, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive and secure environment that promotes respect and care and values diversity. The mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of children and young people are essential preconditions for successful learning. St. Mary's School Inglewood is committed to the creation of a safe, just and respectful environment that supports wellness for all members of the school community.

Protecting children and young people against sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility. Everyone at St. Mary's have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure children or young people are safe in their care and to ensure that all forms of abusive behaviours towards children are prevented. A safe environment is required to protect children and young people from harm and to prevent adults from abusing their position of authority and trust.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

*St. Mary's Primary School is committed to the safety and welfare of all children, within a secure environment.
All children have a right to be treated with respect and to be protected from abuse and harm.*

DEFINITIONS

What is Grooming?

The term 'grooming' refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and influencing a child, and, in some circumstances, members of the child/young person's family, for the purpose of sexual activity with the child/young person. These actions are designed to establish an emotional connection in order to lower the child/young person's inhibitions and gain access to the intended victim. In this respect, grooming involves psychological manipulation that is usually very subtle, drawn out, calculated, controlling and premeditated' (Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry 2013). Grooming can also occur online.

Child

A child is legally defined as a person under the age of 16 years.

Person in authority

A person in authority is someone who, by reason of their position within a relevant organisation, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 years, who is under their care, supervision or authority, may become the victim of sexual abuse committed by an adult associated with the organisation. The role may be a formal, management role but may also apply to less formal roles such as a volunteer coach for a sports team.

Reasonable belief

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy applies to the whole school community in supporting a safe environment for all children and young people.

- It applies to all persons in positions of authority, care or supervision, all employees of the school, and where applicable students of 18 years or over to ensure they understand their role and responsibility in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people under the age of 16 in accordance with the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).
- It applies to any member of the school community aged 18 and over who becomes aware of grooming behaviour by a person aged 18 years or over, they should notify the police and/or the Principal immediately.
- Staff will be fully informed annually of and committed to their obligations and responsibilities to proactively protect children from abuse

- This policy and its requirements will be communicated annually to staff and the wider community annually
- This policy and its requirements will be communicated to new staff during induction
- Thorough and systematic education in personal safety including safety in relationships, provided for all children/young people
- Prompt and full responses to any allegations will be undertaken promptly, with well documented records retained securely and confidentially
- Risks associated with 'Grooming' will be included, assessed and mitigated in its ongoing risk identification and management processes.
- School leaders and staff must be fully self aware of, and comply with, their professional obligations and responsibilities.
- Under 'Failure to Protect' requirements, the Principal or others with authority or responsibility, will take action upon becoming aware of suspected grooming behaviour, regardless of the time or location of that behaviour.

RELATED DOCUMENTATION

[Child Safety Policy](#)

[Mandatory Reporting](#)

[Working with Children Checks Policy](#)

[Failure to Protect Policy](#)

[Failure to Disclose Policy](#)

[Pastoral Wellbeing Policy](#)

REFERENCES

- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, online, http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/num_act/caoca201436o2014417
- Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Sexual Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations, Final Report, *Betrayal of Trust*, November 2013.

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