



St Mary's is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

Introduction

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

At St Mary's, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Our 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).

St Mary's is a Catholic Primary School offering education to all people of faith but focusing on faith as experienced within the Catholic tradition. Our school is situated 60km South East of Melbourne in the beautiful harbour town of Hastings on the coast of Western Port Bay. Set on ample grounds, we offer a well-resourced learning environment to all our Prep to Year 6 students.

Most of our enrolments come from within our Parish, but some of our students come from a wider area. Many families appreciate that we are just around the corner from Padua College, Tyabb and they like the fact that all their children can attend schools close to each other. Others come from families who have had a close association with the school as past students themselves or they enrolled their children here and continue their enrolment even after moving out of the area because the school offers them what they seek in a primary education.

Whilst the majority of our students come from a Catholic faith background we also have children from families with other faith traditions. We welcome, respect and acknowledge that these faiths have great value whilst we affirm the fact that we are proud to be part of the Catholic Education System of Victoria.

Our Catholic church is located next door to the school so we see ourselves very much a vital part of our Western Port Parish Community. Our school was originally built in 1919 by the Josephite Sisters. With 11 pupils and began as a school with one building, the current library, which served as two classrooms. With refurbishments of buildings and growth in the area, over time we have seen our sister schools, St Josephs, Crib Point, and St. Brendan's, Somerville grow from the original small school. For ninety-eight years St Mary's has proudly served the community of Hastings and surrounding areas.

St. Mary's is committed to providing equitable access and opportunity for all. The School considers that awareness of, recognition of, and responsiveness to the needs and rights of all individuals are essential to human dignity. Inclusive practices embrace and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

Foundational to our work with students, families and the school community is the building of genuine, authentic relationships. The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. All teachers, students, families, parishes and the wider community contribute to fostering life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity of each person.

Rationale St. Mary's Hastings

Each individual is at the centre of all that we do - developing a love of learning, a strong sense of self and the skills and attitudes to be successful in a changing world. Our Catholic school is a community where positive relationships and belief in people are at the core of what we do. We believe in the promotion of positive education where wellbeing and learning connect ensuring the flourishing and growth of each individual. We believe that building an understanding of self and wellbeing is as important as academic pursuits.

At St. Mary's we strive to provide an inclusive education which values diversity and celebrates difference. Diversity is enacted through a pedagogy of inclusion and a commitment to uphold the rights of all to be welcomed, valued, acknowledged and actively engaged in education. Our learning community is committed to processes that support all students to make optimal progress and respect the rights of all students to learn in a positive and supportive environment. We seek to provide successful participation and to intervene as early as possible when students are not actively engaged in learning. Student behaviour is linked to the quality of the learning experiences. Purposeful, authentic, and relevant learning experiences that are of a sufficiently challenging yet achievable standard maximise positive behaviour.

Vision

Faith, Hope and Love

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School strives to make faith real in the world for all within our care. Parents and Staff support our students to grow to their full potential as active participating members of the faith community following Christ's example.

Our educational purpose is to meet the needs of the current generation by supporting all our students to become independent and self-motivated. We encourage them to be learners who have a deep understanding about themselves, others and the world around them. We strive to develop their capacity to build and maintain relationships and actively and positively contribute to the global community.

As teachers, we see ourselves as a community of lifelong learners committed to the provision of innovative learning opportunities for every student. We believe that focussed teaching brings about powerful learning. We take advantage of contemporary tools and learning environments to support the provision of relevant, rich and personalised learning opportunities.

Mission

St. Mary's is committed to providing educational opportunities that actively welcome, engage, inspire and challenge all students to learn in a safe and enlivening Catholic environment.

Aims

Our school is a community that exemplifies the gospel values of love, forgiveness, justice and truth. Our school community recognises that everyone has the right to be respected, to feel safe and be safe and, in turn, our school community acknowledges each member's own obligation to behave responsibly. This Policy is intended to guide our school's actions. It has been developed in consultation with the school community and seeks to prioritise respectful relationships and safety in response to the rights and needs of all members of the school community. A safe and supportive environment respects the rights of all students to learn, the rights of all teachers to teach and the rights of all members of the school community to be safe.

- *MACS Horizons of [Hope Foundation Statement: Families as partners in Catholic school communities](#)*

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the strategies and actions that we have in place at St Mary's to ensure that families, carers and other members of the school community are informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at the school.

This Policy takes into account the specific requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Scope

This Policy applies to school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy. It should be read in conjunction with related school policies and procedures, including:

1. Child Safety Framework
2. Child Safety Code of Conduct
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Principles

At St Mary's, the following principles underpin our commitment to family engagement:

- Families and carers should have the opportunity to participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families, carers and other members of the school community about our child safe approach.
- All members of the school community should have access to information relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Families, carers 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.
- Families, carers and other members of the school community have the right to be informed about the operations and governance of the school in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Policy

St Mary's is committed to ensuring that all members of our school community are kept informed about relevant child safety and wellbeing matters and are involved in the promotion of child safety and wellbeing at St Mary's.

We implement the following strategies and actions to ensure that we are able to meet this commitment.

Strategies / actions used by school leadership

The Principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at St Mary's recognise their particular responsibilities to communicate and engage with families, carers 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 the St Mary's Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy to inform and guide curriculum planning, policies 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 carers to participate in decisions that affect their child'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, carers and other members of the school community
- engaging with families, carers 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 used by school staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy

School staff, volunteers, contractors and clergy at St Mary's also have a responsibility to support the school governing authority and school leaders in communicating and engaging with families, carers 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, carers and other members of the school community, particularly with respect to child safety and wellbeing matters
- liaising with parents and carers 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, carers and others in the school community are updated and involved in child safety and wellbeing
- ensuring they act in accordance with the principles set out in this Policy when managing issues relating to child safety and wellbeing

External references

Related Resources – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

[eXcel: Wellbeing for learning in Catholic school communities](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Vision and Context](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Families as Partners](#)

[Horizons of Hope: Wellbeing](#)

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed in consultation with members of the wider community as part of the school's two-year review cycle of its child safety practices.
- Update of the policy will occur if any new requirements come to hand.

Responsible director	Director, Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Student Wellbeing
Approving body/individual	MACS Board
Approval date	13 April 2022
Risk rating	High
Date of next review	April 2023

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION

Related documents	
Superseded documents	
New policy	New