

The top of the page features a decorative header with a colorful background of overlapping geometric shapes in shades of red, orange, yellow, and green. Silhouettes of a family—a woman, a man, and three children—are shown holding hands and walking across the scene from left to right.

Catholic Schools
Child Safe Schools

Mount Lilydale Mercy College

**Child-friendly edition of
our Child Safety Policy**

Mount Lilydale Mercy College Child-friendly edition of our Child Safety Policy

What does our school value and why is child safety important in our school?

At Mount Lilydale Mercy College we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of students as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. Below are definitions of the different types of abuse that exist in society. We strive to ensure our students are safe from all forms of abuse.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is any action (or non-action) that hurts a child or puts a child in danger.

Sexual abuse

Occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a child or young person or adult in any form of unwanted or illegal sexual activity. This can involve touching or no contact at all. This may take the form of taking sexual explicit photographs or videos of children, forcing children to watch or take part in sexual acts and forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.

Physical abuse

Occurs when a child suffers significant harm from an injury. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. Some examples of physical abuse include hitting, punching, burning or shaking a child.

Emotional abuse

Affects a child's self-esteem and their psychological and emotional well-being. Emotional abuse can include being repeatedly isolated, rejected, continual coldness, excluding and distancing by a child, or putting down and calling a child demeaning names.

Neglect

The failure to provide for the child or young person's basic needs for life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, supervision or care to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, placed at risk.

Domestic violence

Exposure to domestic violence can include watching or hearing a family member assault or threaten another member of the family, direct involvement (for example, trying to intervene or calling the police), or experiencing the aftermath of family violence, such as seeing bruises or observing maternal depression.

It is important to remember that abuse is often multi-dimensional and many victims will experience more than one form of abuse. The risk of negative behaviour, physical and mental health outcomes increase with the number of adverse childhood experiences.

Abuse has serious effects on children and can result in long-term physical and psychological problems. The consequences of abuse also extend beyond the immediate victims, and affect families, communities and broader society.



Our commitment is to foster justice, compassion, hope and hospitality in the Mercy tradition and from the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel.

Purpose

Why do we have a policy?
Mount Lilydale Mercy College has a policy about Child Safety

because it is committed to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our College. The policy demonstrates our commitment and gives an outline of what Mount Lilydale Mercy College does to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our College environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the College.

This policy applies to school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy.

Principles

What are the important ideas that guide our actions?

Mount Lilydale Mercy College believes all students deserve as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

The College works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they know about decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.

All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.

All adults in our College, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.

Our policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.

Our policies and practices demonstrate compliance with

legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.

All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.

Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by staff at Mount Lilydale Mercy College.

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

Policy commitments

What pledges do we make to our school community?

We commit to the safety and well being of all students enrolled at Mount Lilydale Mercy College.

We commit to providing students with positive and nurturing experiences.

We commit to listening to students and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us and ensure procedures and strategies are implemented.

We commit to taking action to ensure that students are protected from abuse or harm.

We commit to teaching students the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

	<p>We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.</p>
<p>Expectation of our school staff</p>	<p>Why do we have a Code of Conduct for adults working in our school?</p> <p>The Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Child Safety Code of Conduct recognises the critical role College staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect.</p> <p>Adults working at Mount Lilydale Mercy College, are expected to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the school.</p> <p>Having a Code of Conduct means all College staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements.</p>
<p>Student participation</p>	<p>How are students involved in child safety discussions and planning for improvements in our school?</p> <p>At Mount Lilydale Mercy College we actively encourage all students to openly and respectfully express their views and feel comfortable to talk about the things that are important to them.</p> <p>We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and help them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.</p>

At Mount Lilydale Mercy College, we help students to understand what child abuse is, in particular the nature of grooming. *(A definition of grooming can be found in the at the end of this policy).*

We educate our students about the way they can report concerns. Participation and empowerment is taught through discussion and forums which are delivered through our Pastoral Care and Learning and Teaching Programs.

Reporting and responding

How do we report our concerns and how do teachers respond?

If you have been abused or feel unsafe you can tell a teacher or any adult at our school. All school staff members have a responsibility to protect any child under their care. They will be able to help you.

If you think someone has been abused or is unsafe you should talk to an adult you trust. Any staff member at our school will be able to help. Help your friend by encouraging them to tell a trusted adult. Even if your friend has specifically asked you not to tell an adult, you still should. It is more important to make sure that your friend is helped and feels protected.

Information will only be shared with people who can support and protect you. It will not be shared with the person who is making you feel unsafe.

In some cases the people helping you are required by law to tell the police, the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Protection services and/or your family to stop any further abuse, or risk of abuse.

Recruitment

How are staff selected to work in our school?

Mount Lilydale Mercy College has strict checking processes when we hire people or use volunteers. Our commitment to child safety and our checking requirements are included in all

	<p>advertisements and all new staff applicants are provided with copies of the school’s Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy. Staff and volunteers must sign that they understand what is expected of them.</p> <p>The College regularly checks all employees to ensure they continue to meet Child Safety requirements such as Working With Children clearances.</p>
<p>Professional learning for school staff</p>	<p>How does the school support staff to develop their knowledge about child safety?</p> <p>All school staff are provided with our Child Safe Reporting Policies that are required by law.</p> <p>Training is also provided at meetings and through online courses. Presentations are provided as part of the schools yearly training program.</p>
<p>Risk management</p>	<p>How does our school identify possible risks, who is involved and what happens next?</p> <p>At Mount Lilydale Mercy College we are committed to always looking for things that might be a risk to student safety across our whole school environment. If a new risk is found, we ensure it is fixed and is added to our documents to be sure that it is thought about in future planning.</p>
<p>Supporting documents</p>	<p>What other information do we use to help us?</p> <p>Mount Lilydale Mercy College have policies that guide our community to ensure our students are safe, Below are examples of the policies that we have.</p> <p>Policy 2.2: Guidelines Relating to the Employment of Staff</p>

	<p>(updated 2016)</p> <p>Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations</p> <p>Policy 2.19a: School Guidelines –Police and DHHS Interview Protocols</p> <p>Code of Conduct Policy</p> <p>Any member of our Mount Lilydale Community can find copies of these documents on our Parent portal or Web Page.</p>
Communication	<p>How does the school let everyone know about this policy and our plans?</p> <p>The College will keep everyone informed through a variety of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">College NewsletterStudent and Staff NoticeboardsPostersEmailsAssembliesParent Access Module (PAM)College Web Page
Review	<p>When will we update this policy?</p> <p>This policy will be reviewed each year to ensure it remains up to date with current legislative requirements.</p>

Definitions

GROOMING - Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.