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ST THOMAS AQUINAS  
COLLEGE

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## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

St Thomas Aquinas College is to provide a complete education that takes in the whole of human development, spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical in accordance with the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. For this reason Child Safety and Wellbeing are an integral part of the College's commitment. We want children to be safe, pure, happy and equipped to protect their purity and wellbeing; therefore we are committed to the safety, participation and equipping of all students, including any children in our care beyond school enrolments, so that they can feel safe, protected and formed in the love of holy purity after the example of the saints.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse. Our Lord Jesus Christ abhorred anything that would endanger the purity of children and entrusted adults with the duty of protecting them from anything that would harm their innocence. (Matt 18:6) Therefore, every person involved in the College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

St Thomas Aquinas College has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety. Therefore when allegations of abuse concerning children and young people are raised our College will take prompt action to have them appropriately referred and investigated according to the College's policies and procedures.

St Thomas Aquinas College is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, removing and reducing these risks. To this purpose the College has human resources and recruitment practices in place to ensure Child Safety and Wellbeing is at the forefront of any decisions made when recruiting staff and other volunteers. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments; and we are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on minimising child abuse risks. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

## **Summary of St Thomas Aquinas College's commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing and Wellbeing**

- Our College, places the safety and wellbeing of all children first and has zero tolerance for all forms of harm and child abuse
- Our College actively works to listen to and support children against any dangers of abuse
- Our College has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns seriously and respond to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures
- Our College is committed to promoting physical, emotional and cultural safety for all children
- Our College is committed to providing a safe environment for all children
- Our College is committed to support, encourage and enable College staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report Child Safety and Wellbeing matters;
- Our College is committed to support and assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse;

### **Key strategies to ensure a child safe environment**

In its planning, decision-making and operations St Thomas Aquinas College will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to Child Safety and Wellbeing;
2. Value and form children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures while keeping Child Safety and Wellbeing paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know whom to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.