



# AQUINAS COLLEGE

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

**All children and young people have a right to feel safe and be safe.**

Aquinas College (College) as part of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), is committed to embedding a culture where the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under our care is paramount.

Particular attention is given to the needs of vulnerable children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people who are unable to live at home, and those who identify as different genders. We are committed to at all times acting in the best interests of children and young people.

The College has zero tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistent with our robust safeguarding policies and procedures. EREA is committed to nurturing the wellbeing of all children and young people, respecting their dignity, ensuring their safety and protecting them from abuse and other harm.

The College and its staff, contractors and volunteers have legal and moral obligations to respond swiftly including contacting authorities where relevant when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

The College demonstrates commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Taking into consideration the views of children and young people about decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing;
- Empowering children and young people by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns they may have;
- Acknowledging the cultural diversity of families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on child safety;
- Taking proactive steps to prevent child abuse, and identifying risks early so that such risks may be removed or reduced;
- Involving families, carers and relevant communities in decision making processes that support the development of a child safe culture;
- Continuously reviewing and improving our systems and practices to protect children and young people from abuse;
- Providing children and young people with the knowledge and skills to understand and maintain their own personal safety;
- Ensuring the College has in place strategies to embed and enhance a culture of child safety and wellbeing through the leadership, governance and culture of the organisation;
- Applying robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff, contractors and volunteers;
- Providing regular training and education on recognising the nature and indicators of child abuse and other harm, responding to safeguarding risks and how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people;
- Implementing specific policies, procedures, training and a National Code of Conduct and a set of Child Safeguarding Standards to support the achievement of a child safe culture;
- Listening to concerns about the safety of children, and suggestions to improve the child safety processes in place;
- Responding swiftly to any child safety concerns and implementing clear procedures for managing and reporting child safety concerns; and
- Ensuring that every person involved in the College understands the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

*Statement endorsed by the EREA Board 1 June 2020*