



ST EDMUND'S COLLEGE
CANBERRA · EST 1954

COMMITMENT STATEMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

All children have a right to feel safe, and be safe.

As part of Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA), St Edmund's College is committed to creating an environment where the safety, wellbeing and participation of all children and young people is paramount. Additional focus is given to vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as children with a disability.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistent with our robust policies and procedures. We have a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We demonstrate 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 lives;
- 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;
- continuously reviewing and improving our systems and practices to protect children and young people from abuse; and
- providing children and young people with the knowledge and skills to understand and maintain their own personal safety.

St Edmund's College demonstrates respect and support for all staff, contractors, and volunteers by:

- applying robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff, contractors and volunteers;
- providing regular training and education on child abuse risks;
- implementing specific policies, procedures, training; the EREA National Code of Conduct and the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards to support the achievement of child safety;
- listening to concerns about the safety of children, and suggestions to improve the child safety processes in place; and
- ensuring that every person involved in St Edmund's College understands the important and specific role they play 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.

(Adapted from the Edmund Rice Education Australia Commitment Statement to Child Safety)

In ensuring our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, we follow closely the principles and strategies of the following three significant EREA initiatives:

(i) EREA National Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and expectations held by Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) for all persons within the EREA community in the performance of their duties.

This Code of Conduct is in accord with the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition and is underpinned by core EREA values. The Code of Conduct seeks to ensure commitment to:

- Fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of all people,
- Building positive relationships, and
- The provision of safe, supportive and enriching environments for all in the context of natural justice, procedural fairness and due process.

(ii) EREA Safe & Inclusive Learning Communities Statement

This presents Edmund Rice Education Australia's response to providing safe and inclusive learning environments for all students, in particular for same-sex attracted and gender diverse young people.

"Our schools have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that each student receives an education free from discrimination and bullying irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender. More importantly, Edmund Rice inspires us to give particular care to young people who might otherwise be excluded and rejected".

(ii) EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework

"The purpose and intent of the Standards contained in this Framework is to embed a culture of child safety and wellbeing by demonstrating values in practice; nurturing the wellbeing of all children and young people, respecting their dignity, ensuring their safety and protecting them from abuse and other harm. This we do by at all times acting in the best interests of children and young people under our care. All of us throughout EREA share this responsibility".

The Standards are designed to consciously and systemically:

- promote an environment where children and young people's safety and wellbeing are the centre of thought, values and actions
- place emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people
- create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- facilitate circumstances that increase the likelihood of identifying harm
- respond appropriately to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.