

# Child Safety Code of Conduct

<b>Date Approved:</b>	20/06/2023
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	30/06/2025
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Principal

## 1. Context & Purpose

Our College is a child safe organisation which welcomes all young people and their families. We are committed to providing an environment where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. To provide this environment we have a range of child safe policies and practices.

This purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline appropriate and expected behaviour of adults with respect to the children and young people in our College community, including the College's expectations for compliance. It seeks to promote child safety at our College, protect students and reduce the circumstances or opportunities where harm or abuse could occur.

The Code of Conduct has been approved and endorsed by the Board and will be reviewed by the Board at least every two years to ensure it is fit for purpose and operating effectively. The Code of Conduct will also be published on the College's website and be available to the College community through our student management system.

## 2. Application

All College staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, Board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of College hours and in other locations provided by the College for student use (for example, an excursion, sports event or school camp).

## 3. Acceptable Behaviours

College staff, volunteers, contractors, Board members and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of the students in our care. The College expects such people to model the following behaviours:

- upholding our commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- treat students and families in our College community with respect, both in and outside the College environment;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students;
- ensure, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult;
- report any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal, or if the matter concerns the Principal, to the College Chairperson;
- understand and comply with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) and know the PROTECT Four Critical Actions;
- if child abuse is suspected, ensure as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

#### **4. Unacceptable Behaviours**

College staff, volunteers, contractors, Board members and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm;
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts);
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context;
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student;
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or to provide professional guidance;
- treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity;
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter;
- photograph or video a child or student in a College environment except in accordance with the Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy or where required for duty of care purposes;
- consume alcohol against College policy or take illicit drugs in the College environment or at school events where students are present;

- have contact with any student outside of school hours, except when needed to deliver the curriculum or other out of hours College activities/events, or to provide professional guidance with parental knowledge.

## 5. Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Code of Conduct

College teaching staff are also required to be familiar and comply with the [Victorian Teaching Profession's Codes of Conduct](#). This is in addition to the College's policies with respect to child safety and wellbeing. The VIT Code of Conduct has been developed for and by the teaching profession to:

- reflect shared principles about practice, conduct and ethics to be applied to promote the highest standards of professional practice;
- enable registered teachers to reflect on their ethical decisions;
- establish the quality of behaviour that reflects the expectations of the profession and the community; and
- provide a clear statement to the community about these expectations.

The Code of Conduct supports all teachers to understand the expectations of the teaching profession and the community in relation to their professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence. The VIT has an overarching function of providing for child safety and wellbeing, and this underpins the principles set out in the Code of Conduct.

As part of a registered profession and a profession of high public trust and accountability, teachers must be aware of and reflect the expectations and standards expected of them – the Code of Conduct can assist teachers to guide their professional and personal conduct.

The VIT may investigate the behaviour, conduct and relationships that a teacher may have with learners inside and outside the education setting. This may include, but is not limited to:

- physical contact with a learner including pushing, hitting, dragging, slapping, and restraining learners
- sexual conduct towards a learner including any physical contact or communications with learners that are of a sexual nature
- written, electronic and online communications with learners that are beyond the professional relationship, or
- conduct that intimidates, humiliates, or embarrasses a learner.

The VIT may consider a departure from the Code of Conduct to be grounds for an allegation of misconduct or serious misconduct, which may call into question a teacher's fitness to teach. Whether it does will largely depend on the individual circumstances and the context in which the conduct occurred. Any regulatory measures should always be viewed within the context of what is considered necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of students and young people.

## 6. Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All College staff, volunteers, contractors, Board members and any other member of the College community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement. In the case of serious breaches, this may include summary dismissal.

College staff must prioritise children’s safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Staff and volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at the College
- not allowing unsupervised contact with children at the College
- removing their access to the our IT system and facilities.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with our Responding and Mandatory Reporting Policy and our Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy.

All breaches and suspected breaches of our Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal. If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, the matter must be reported to the College chairperson.

## 7. Policy History

Consultation	Date(s)	Summary of Consultation

Version	Policy Owner	Approval Date	Summary of Changes
1	Principal	20/6/23	First Adopted