

# Child Safety Code of Conduct

# PROTECT



Education  
and Training

## 1. Definitions:

- 1.1 DET – Department Education & Training
- 1.2 Child Safety - encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
- 1.3 Child abuse includes:
  - any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence or
  - an offence under section 49B (2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming)
  - the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
  - serious neglect of a child.
- 1.4 Child-connected work - work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present
- 1.5 School environment - any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:
  - a campus of the school
  - online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
  - other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).
- 1.6 School staff being an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
  - a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary), and including a chaplain or minister of religion. A school lead for child safety should have sufficient status and authority, including leadership support and the ability to direct other staff (where appropriate), to undertake the role effectively.

1.7 School governing authority means, in the case of a government school:

- the Secretary; or
- a school council, as authorised by or under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006; or
- the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school or under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

## **2. Purpose:**

- 2.1 Coatesville Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students.
- 2.2 Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of students, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.
- 2.3 This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur.
- 2.4 The Code of Conduct assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations.
- 2.5 The Code of Conduct is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

## **3. Guidelines**

- 3.1 The Principal Class, Leading Teachers and Teaching & Learning Leaders of Coatesville Primary School will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct.
- 3.2 They will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school learning environment.
- 3.3 Additionally, we will provide information and support to the school community to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.
- 3.4 All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below.
- 3.5 The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

## **4. Implementation:**

### **Acceptable Behaviours:**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- 4.1 upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the Coatesville Primary School Child Safe Policy, ratified by school council on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2016

- 4.2 treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- 4.3 displaying tolerance of all religions
- 4.4 listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- 4.5 promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- 4.6 promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 4.7 promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- 4.8 reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal, Assistant Principal or delegate
- 4.9 understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse and
- 4.10 if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

### **Unacceptable behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- 4.11 ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- 4.12 develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts
- 4.13 be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a short time
- 4.14 exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- 4.15 ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- 4.16 discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- 4.17 post photos/videos of children on social media
- 4.18 treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- 4.19 communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting) except where that communication is

reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter

- 4.20 photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes<sup>1</sup>
- 4.21 in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy<sup>2</sup> or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

## **5. Embedding the Code of Conduct**

The school will develop practices and systems to ensure all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are informed about the Code and its implications on an ongoing basis.

- 5.1 ensuring that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) are aware of the code and how it applies
- 5.2 inclusion of the Code as part of the induction for new school staff
- 5.3 inclusion of the code as part of annual training for existing leadership members, employees, contractors and volunteers

**This policy was ratified by School Council on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 for review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2018.**

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<sup>1</sup> SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

<sup>2</sup> SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff member should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet evaluation