

## CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

### 1. PURPOSE

The School's Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

The School's governing authority, the School Board, has developed and endorsed this Child Safety Code of Conduct with the objective of promoting child safety and responsible behaviours in all school environments.

### 2. SCOPE

All school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Board 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 school hours and in other locations provided by the School for student use (for example, a school camps, functions and events).

This Child Safety Code of Conduct does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or applicable professional codes of conduct that applies to workers at the School, such as, Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

### 3. PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE

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

- upholding the School's commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- listening and responding 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;
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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;
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student and 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;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal or a School Child Safety Officer;
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations, including mandatory reporting and the *Crimes Act 1957 (Vic)*, the School's Child Safety Response and Mandatory

Reporting Policy, Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and Procedures and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions; and

- if child abuse is suspected, or an allegation made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

School, staff, volunteers, contractors and member of our school community involved in child-connected work we must **not**:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm;
- put a child at risk of abuse (e.g. locking doors);
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to grooming behaviour (e.g. offering gifts or special treatment of specific children);
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context;
- exhibit behaviours with children or ignore other adults overfamiliar or inappropriate behaviours towards a student (such as inappropriate sitting on laps);
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance;
- use inappropriate language, jokes or gestures in the presence of children;
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- treat a child 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.) outside of the School's educational programs and activities or without a valid context. Staff must not breach the boundaries of their profession;
- photograph or video a child without a valid educational context;
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs; or
- have personal contact with any student outside of school hours, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance, without parental permission.

#### **4. RESPECTING AND MAINTAINING PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is expected that all members of the school community will:

- only share private or confidential information held by the School, either on-line or otherwise, with other staff or members of the school community where it is legitimately required for them to undertake their role (always check with the Principal before sharing any child safety or wellbeing information);
- collect, use, maintain and destroy information, particularly personal or sensitive information, in accordance with the School's Privacy Policy and applicable legislation; and
- never discuss/disclose any information about the School that is not already public knowledge, without the appropriate authority to do so.

## 5. COMPLIANCE WITH THIS CODE

School staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school 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. Such disciplinary action will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will be at the discretion of the Principal or their delegate.

All breaches, and suspected breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal or one of the School's Child Safety Officers.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal contact the Board Chair by emailing [chair@fintona.ivc.edu.au](mailto:chair@fintona.ivc.edu.au)

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with Child Safety Response and Mandatory Reporting Policy, Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police and Victorian Institute of Teaching.

By observing these Conduct Standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Code to the Principal or one of the School's Child Safety Officers.

## 6. POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis or more frequently, if required, following any significant incidents and to keep up-to-date with changes to laws and regulations. This policy is to be reviewed by the Deputy Principal with the Child Safety Officers and then the Principal and Leadership Team. All updates and changes will be reviewed and approved by the School Board.

## 7. RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

- SW04.00 Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- SW03.00 Child Safety Response and Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure
- SE03.00 Code of Conduct - Staff
- SW06.00 Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
- SG02.00 Privacy Policy

## 8. REFERENCE POINTS/BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Ministerial Order 1359, Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Crimes Act 1957 (Vic)*

## 9. ACCESSIBILITY

This document is available on:

- inFintona>Staff Services>Policies
- inFintona>Parent Services>Policies
- Fintona Board Portal