

Child Safety Code of Conduct

The Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. 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 children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It 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.

The Principal and school leaders of the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and school council members of our school are expected to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

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

- adhering to the child safe policy at all times / upholding the statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) children
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)

- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of International Students
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any child safety concerns to Child Safety Officer who is the Head of Student Services
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Child Safety Officer /Head of Student Services/leadership, and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is/are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

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

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational or therapeutic context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the contact of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- express personal views on religion, cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, because of age, culture, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or vulnerability
- have organised contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's/leadership's knowledge and/or consent
- have any online contact with a child or their family that is inappropriate

- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy noting that regular photography and video of a student's progress may be required for teaching and learning in Specialism classes, in dance, music, visual arts and theatre arts or where required for duty of care purposes. The school must obtain consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. Written consent is sought on enrolment from parent/carers. This applies for excursions and school activities
- misuse alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances

By observing these standards we acknowledge our responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Child Safety Officer or Principal Class Officer.

If you are reading this and believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

REVIEW CYCLE

Status: Approved by School Council

Date: Tuesday 19 July, 2016. Updated September, 2018

Review date: September, 2019

Responsibility: Principal and School Council

