

## 2021 Child Safe Code of Conduct (Standard 3)

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### Introduction

A Child Safe Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. For more detailed guidance refer to the College's Staff and Student Boundaries guidelines.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everybody is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the College environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safe Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

The Child Protection Code of Conduct applies to: all staff members, including support staff and temporary or casual staff, volunteers, students, parents and carers, third party contractors and service providers (including External Education Providers), College Council members, teaching students on placement at the College and visitors.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct set out below is designed to stand alone. It can also be incorporated in whole or part into broader codes of conduct that are developed by the College.

Certain staff members, volunteers and third-party contractors at the College may have professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate their profession or occupation. These codes of conduct must also be complied with, in the event that a staff member, volunteer or third-party contractor considers that there is a conflict between these codes of conduct and the Child Safe Code of Conduct in a particular matter, the relevant staff member, volunteer or third party contractor must seek advice from their professional or occupational regulatory body and or a Child Protection Officer and must advise the Principal of their proposed course of action.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct is made available to all staff, volunteers, families, and students via our College website.

### Code of Conduct

The Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, Emmaus College may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal. The College revises the Code annually.

### Our Expectations

Emmaus College has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students in our College community. This includes all teaching staff, support staff, Board members, volunteers (direct and indirect), third party contractors, external education providers and parents / carers.

The College Council has endorsed this Child Safe Code of Conduct

Adults in the College community are expected to:

- behave as a positive role model to students
  - promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students
  - be vigilant and proactive about student safety and child protection issues
  - provide age appropriate supervision for students
  - comply with guidelines published by the College with respect to child protection
  - treat all students with respect
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- promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of students with a disability (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students
- promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- use positive and affirming language towards students
- encourage students 'to have a say' and listen to them with respect
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child
- respect cultural, religious and political differences
- help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact and socialise
- intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way
- report any breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct
- report concerns of child safety to one of the College's Child Safety Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met
- where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe
- **call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety**
- respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know

### Do Not

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour, or inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race, or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Engage in meetings with a child that is not your own, outside of school hours and without permission from the College and the child's parent.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.

- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- consume alcohol\* or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children. (\*Alcohol consumption by school staff is permitted in moderation at school events where parents/guardian are in attendance)
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Our Child Protection Program includes Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Guidelines which provide detailed guidelines for all staff and volunteers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at Emmaus College.

### **Principles for Adult's Behaviour in Undertaking Child Connected Work**

Some simple principles should guide an adult's behaviour when undertaking child-connected work such as:

- the adult / child relationship should be always professional
- an adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child
- an adult should not be alone with a child unless there is a line of sight to other adults
- an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school

### **Agreement to Child Safe Code of Conduct**

A copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is provided to all staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing at the College. It is also communicated via refresher training at regular intervals for all staff.

All staff, as well as direct contact volunteers, must sign an agreement to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at the College.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between the College and any direct contact contractors. Therefore all direct contact contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct upon signing the contract or upon commencing work at the College.

### **Consequences for Breaching the Child Safe Code of Conduct**

Staff, including the Leadership Team and Principal, volunteers and contractors who breach the Child Safe Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary actions that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach)

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches termination of employment, contract or engagement

### **Reporting Concerns**

The Child Protection Program includes information for School Council members, staff and direct contact volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College's nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to the relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents / carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact

one of the College Child Safety Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents, or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College nominated Child Safety Officers.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

**Wherever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted on 000.**

### **Related Documents**

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Guidelines

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Codes of Conduct and Ethics

### **Relevant Legislation**

Ministerial Order 870 Child Safe Standards Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools

### **Review**

This Code of Conduct was reviewed and approved by the Education Committee in March 2021 and will be reviewed annually or as required by any legislative or regulatory changes.