



CHILD SAFETY - CODE OF CONDUCT

Milgate Primary School has a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse**.

All school staff including volunteers are required to observe child safety principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

Aims of Code of Conduct:

- To provide child safety in the school environment
- To establish a common understanding and clear expectations of the standards of behaviour expected of all school staff, volunteers and visitors in relation to children enrolled as students of the school.
- To take into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff) and the needs of all children
- To be consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures

DEFINITIONS:

Child means a child enrolled as a student at the school

Child connected work means work authorised by the governing school authority (the Principal) and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present

Child abuse includes:

- (a) Any act committed against a child involving –
 - (i) A sexual offense or
 - (ii) An offense under section 49B of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)

- (b) The infliction on a child of –
 - (i) Physical violence; or
 - (ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm
 - (iii) Serious neglect of a child

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse

The Code of Conduct applies to school staff

School staff means:

An individual working in a school environment who is:

- Employed under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ERT Act) in the government teaching service or
- Employed under a contract of service by the school council under Part 2.3 of the ERT Act or
- A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

Code of Conduct School Environments:

This Code of Conduct relates to all school environments both during and outside of school hours, including any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School Council or the Principal including:

- (a) All on site locations both indoors and outdoors
- (b) All 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 as well as bus travel)
- (c) Online school environments (including email and intranet systems)

The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that:

- (a) All school staff are aware of the expectations of conduct during the period of their engagement.
- (b) Necessary action is undertaken to address any breaches to this Code of Conduct including:
 - Incidents or allegations of child abuse are reported to appropriate agencies (including calling 000 in situations of immediate danger, or contacting Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigations Team, or DHHS – Child Protection, or Child FIRST)
 - Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.
 - People who are doing child related work have a current Working with Children Check according to the Working with Children Act 2005.
 - All teachers have current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). Note: a teacher registered with VIT does not need a Working with Children check as registration includes a National Police History Check.

Values and Expectations:

The school's values of Appreciation, Commitment, Confidence, Cooperation, Creativity, Curiosity, Empathy, Enthusiasm, Independence, Integrity, Respect and Tolerance underpin the culture of this school.

RESPECT:

- Everyone at this school must be treated with respect.
- Bullying, insulting behaviour including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening or derogatory language as well as vilifying or belittling of children is not acceptable behaviour.
- Physical abuse or intimidation towards children is not acceptable behaviour.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited in all Victorian schools.
- Discrimination or harassment on grounds including; sex, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religious conviction, physical or intellectual impairment or sexual orientation or gender identity, is not acceptable behaviour.
- The cultural safety of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally or linguistically diverse background must be promoted and respected.
- This school has a zero tolerance of discrimination.

RESPONSIBILITY:

- All **school staff** must be **aware of and comply with** the school's policies and procedures particularly those relating to Child Safety, Behaviour Management, Duty of Care, Mandatory Reporting and Student Welfare
- All **school staff** have a responsibility for presenting themselves as appropriate role models for children
- All teachers (including the Principal and Assistant Principal) have a duty of care to children enrolled at this school. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm and from foreseeable risk situations against which preventative measures can be taken.
- Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the children in their school whether at school or not. They hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised.
- The safety of children with a disability must be promoted and ensured.

- The Principal and Leadership team at this school must lead by example and must take all necessary steps to ensure that all school environments are free from all forms of abuse of children.

ACTIONS TO TAKE – When an allegation of child abuse is made or this code is breached

- You must listen and respond to the views 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.
- You must not ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- If an allegation of child abuse is made you must ensure as quickly as possible that the child/children are safe.
- **If you believe that a child is at immediate risk call 000.**
- If you believe that a child who is enrolled at this school has been abused or is at risk of abuse or harm, it is your responsibility to:
 - immediately report the behaviour to the Principal or Child Safety Officer.
 - comply with the advice in the resource Child Abuse 4 Critical Actions
- Document concerns and/or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct using Child Safety Incident Report CS1 for concerns or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct

and/or

Reporting incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse using DHHS Child Protection/Police/Child FIRST Report CS2. This form may also be used for reports to Child First.

For further guidance refer to the Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting policies.

Child Abuse 4 Critical Actions CS3

Child Safety – How to respond to Children and Parents CS4

Child Abuse definitions – a guide for school staff CS5

Code of conduct:

INTEGRITY – You must always:

- Act in the best interests of children at all times.
- Treat children fairly and impartially including (but not limited to) those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Maintain a safe and challenging learning environment.
- Model and engage in respectful and impartial language.
- Encourage children to ‘have a say’ and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially issues that are important to them.
- Promote the participation and empowerment of children with a disability.
- Respect a child’s privacy in sensitive matters such as health or family problems, with exception:
 - (a) The child has consented to the information being used in a certain way
 - (b) To prevent or lessen a serious threat to the safety and welfare of a child
 - (c) As part of an investigation into unlawful activity
 - (d) If the disclosure is mandated by law
 - (e) To prevent a crime or enforce the law
- For further guidance refer to the Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policies.

Supervision of Students –

- As far as practical you should avoid situations in which you are alone in an enclosed space with a child. Where left with the responsibility of a single child you should ensure that this is in an open space in view of others. Where this is not possible or practical it should be discussed with the Principal.
- Never drive a child in your car unless this is with specific permission from the Principal. In the event of an emergency you should exercise discretion but then report the matter to the Principal.

- Conduct a private conversation with a child only after considering the time and venue carefully. It is preferable to leave the door open. You should not locate yourself between the child and the door.
- Do not put children at risk by locking doors. Never lock a child in a room.
- When confiscating personal items (e.g. Mobile phones) ask students to hand them to you. Only take items directly from students in circumstances where there are safety concerns.

Physical Contact with Students –

- You must not impose physical punishment on a student. The school's Behaviour Management Policy outlines appropriate discipline procedures to follow.
- When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/learning experience you must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable. You should where appropriate ask for a volunteer to demonstrate a particular activity.
- Attention to the toileting needs of children including the supervision of changing rooms or of children who are changing clothes or bathing, should be done with caution. It may be appropriate to have the door open.
- For students with a disability the management of toileting and personal needs should be included in the student's individual management plan. As far as possible encourage these students to care for themselves.
- When congratulating a child, a handshake, pat on the shoulder are acceptable, as long as the student is comfortable with this action.
- Kissing of students is not acceptable.
- Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching the student. Always advise the child of what you intend doing and seek their consent.
- Sometimes in ensuring duty of care teachers **school staff** may be required to restrain a child from harming themselves or others using reasonable force. Any such strategy must be in keeping with the school's behaviour management practices or individual management plans. You should report and document any such incidents.

Relationships with Students:

- You must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual, heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers. You are reminded of:
 - (a) The law prohibiting sexual relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years) and
 - (b) The law prohibiting sexual relations between a teacher and their student under the age of 18 years
- You must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than professional interest in a child.
- If you consider that a student is being overly familiar, seeking to establish a personal relationship with you, or has developed a crush on you, report your concerns to the Principal as soon as possible.
- At all times when speaking with children use appropriate language. You must always treat children with respect and without favouritism. Sarcasm, derogatory comments, sexual innuendo or use of inappropriate language is not acceptable.
- You must not hold conversations with a child of an intimately personal nature where you disclose information about yourself (including personal views on cultures, races or sexuality), nor should you discuss such matters in the presence of children.

Without the express permission of the Principal and Parents / Caregiver you must not:

- Invite children to your home; or
- Visit children in their home; or
- Attend parties or socialise with children
- Engage in tutoring or coaching children from the school without the express permission of the Principal.

- Give gifts or special treatment to specific children.

You should be aware of, and sensitive to, children with culturally diverse or indigenous backgrounds and cultural practices.

Appropriate use of Electronic Communication and Social Networking Sites:

- You must not use social networking sites to email or contact children.
- You must not invite children into your personal social networking site or accept an invitation to theirs.
- Information and communication technologies such as email, mobile phones, text or messaging and websites must not be used to cause children harm or make them feel unsafe.
- You must not have contact with a child in organisations on social media.
- You must never use the school's network to view, upload, download or circulate material that is sexually related or pornographic, violent or hate related, messages or material that is racist or hate related, malicious, libellous or slanderous or in any way related to illegal activities.

Use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco:

- Your ability to perform your duties must not be impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs and that the use of such substances does not put at risk you or any other person's health and safety.
- You must notify the Principal or Assistant Principal if you are aware that your work performance or conduct at school could be adversely affected as a result of the effect of a prescribed drug.
- You must not supply or administer prescription or non-prescription drugs to children unless authorised to do so.
- You must not smoke or permit smoking in any of the school's environments.
- You must not provide alcohol, drugs or tobacco for any child.

Communication and Protecting Confidential Information:

- You must make sure that confidential information in any form, cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.
- The media should not be given access to children or allowed entry to the school without the express permission of the Principal. You should not make any comments to the media about the children or the school without the express permission of the Principal.
- Unless authorised to do so by legislation, you must not disclose or use any confidential information without the express permission of the Principal.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AND FAILURE TO FOLLOW THIS CODE OF CONDUCT:

The consequences for breaching this Code of Conduct will be commensurate with the severity of the breach.

The consequences may range from internal school actions to the involvement of the Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection. Loss of teacher registration from the Victorian Institute of Teaching may also be a consequence.

Complying with the terms of this Code of Conduct is a condition of employment at this school.

If you have read, understood and agree to the terms of this Child Safety Code of Conduct please sign and date the document on page 6 and hand this to the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Complying with the terms of this Child Safety Code of Conduct is a condition of employment at this school.

CHILD SAFETY - CODE OF CONDUCT

For all school staff and volunteers at this school

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I _____ have read, understood and agree to
comply with the terms of this Child Safety Code of Conduct.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AND FAILURE TO FOLLOW THIS CODE OF CONDUCT:

The consequences for breaching this Child Safety Code of Conduct will be commensurate with the severity of the breach. The consequences may range from internal school actions to the involvement of the Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection. Loss of teacher registration from the Victorian Institute of Teaching may also be a consequence.

I understand that there are consequences for breaching this Child Safety Code of Conduct and that complying with the terms of the Child Safety Code of Conduct is a condition of employment at this school.

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

Please hand this to the Principal or Assistant Principal.