Child Safety Staff Code of Conduct

The Code is a child safety code of conduct made in accordance with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 - Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*.

The Code applies in addition to any obligations imposed on staff under applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct. For teaching staff, the Code applies in addition to their obligations under the VIT Code of Conduct.

The Code forms part of the College's Child Safe Program and applies to all staff interactions with students.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct (**Code**) aims to promote child safety in Aitken College's school environment by setting and upholding high-level standards of behaviour for adults in the College environment engaging with students.

Definitions

Please refer to the *Child Safe Program Definitions* document for definitions of terms used in this document.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Aitken College Board and Board committees
- The Principal and the Executive Team
- Staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- External education providers
- Pre-service teachers
- Parents/carers and other adult family members of students
- Visitors.

Together referred to as "the College Community" sanctioned for the purposes of the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all College activities, on and off campus, including in both physical and online environments.

The College's expectations

The College Community must conduct themselves in accordance with the College's *Child Safe Policy Statement* at all times.

The College Community must comply with the following standards for behaviour towards students.

DO:

- Provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Report and intervene when students, or any member of the College Community are

engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards each other, or towards others.

- Report concerns about student safety (including actual or suspected child abuse or reportable conduct) to the Principal, the Executive Team or one of the College's Child Safety Officers, in accordance with the *Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns Policy Statement* and ensure that all other reporting obligations are met.
- Be aware of and alert to the risk factors of behaviour in breach of this Code or that otherwise pose a harm to students and promptly report such concerns to the College.
- Call the Police on 000 regarding immediate concerns for a student's safety.
- Where an allegation of child abuse or reportable conduct is made, or a student safety concern arises, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.
- Comply with any directions, guidelines, policies, procedures and rules promoted by the College with respect to student safety.
- Comply with all obligations imposed on staff under applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct, including the VIT Code of Conduct.
- Report any breaches of this Code to the College.
- Maintain professional boundaries and comply with the College's *Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy Statement*.
- Promote awareness of student safety matters and the College's student safety policies and procedures to help the College create, maintain and foster a safe environment for students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and student protection issues and take all reasonable steps to protect students from such harm (examples of which include, but are not limited to bullying, discrimination, grooming, harassment, neglect, sexual misconduct, sexual offences, physical violence, reportable conduct and victimisation).
- Ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable, that staff are not alone with students, unless (and then only to the extent that) it is necessary to fulfil that staff member's duty of care or professional duties.
- Treat all students and members of the College community with courtesy and respect (including by modelling positive, professional and respectful relationships, and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment for students).
- Use positive and affirming language towards students.
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and participate, then listen to them with respect. In particular, listen and respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another student has been abused (or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another student).
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences, and encourage others to do the same.
- Intervene when students are engaging in bullying or behaviour that humiliates or vilifies others.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- 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 students.
- Promote the care, safety and welfare of students.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

DO NOT:

- Engage in inappropriate, unlawful or unprofessional behaviour towards students (including by engaging in bullying, discrimination, grooming, harassment, neglect, sexual misconduct, sexual offences, physical violence, reportable conduct or victimisation), or expose any student to such behaviour.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or reportable conduct concerns.
- Victimise anyone because they have participated in a process contemplated by the *Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns Policy Statement*, including by raising a concern or making a mandatory report.
- Use prejudicial, oppressive or inappropriate behaviour or language with (or in the presence of) any student without a valid professional context.
- Promote personal views on culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexuality in the presence of any student or discriminate against any student based on such matters.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of any student without a valid professional context.
- Encourage or suggest that students keep secrets, or engage in any behaviour, regardless of the context, that would confuse professional boundaries, thereby exposing students to greater vulnerabilities.
- Breach professional boundaries with a student, including without limitation by:
    - Engaging in inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact.
    - Developing 'special' or unprofessional relationships that could be seen as favouritism.
    - Providing or offering gifts or special treatment.
    - Exchanging personal contact details.
    - Having any electronic, online or private contact (other than via College-authorised channels) unless necessary to assist a student with matters of an academic, administrative or pastoral nature in a way that is authorised by the College. This includes not meeting with a student outside the College, or outside of school hours, without the College's permission.
    - Engaging in any form of sexual conduct with a student, including by making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
    - Engaging in inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact or behaviours.
    - Assisting students with physical 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 inappropriate or unnecessary rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Consume alcohol in the presence of any student, unless doing so responsibly at an official College function at which alcohol consumption has been approved by the Principal.
- Attend the College whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances, or whilst affected by prescription medication to the extent that your ability to perform professional duties is impaired.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious or significant emotional or psychological harm.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental consent.
- Post online any information about a student that may identify them, such as their full name, age, email address, telephone number, residence, school, or details of a club or group they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or other harm.

Conduct in staff members' personal lives

The College recognises that many staff have students of their own, and in any case will interact with other adults who may have children outside of the College.

While this Code is not intended to interfere with a staff member's right to a private life, working at the College requires compliance with student safety. Accordingly, in all aspects staff must conduct themselves in a way consistent with this Code, including by avoiding in private situations (including on social media) which could be perceived as contrary to this Code or involving a risk to student safety.

Agreement to the Child Safe Code of Conduct

A copy of this Child Safe Code of Conduct is provided to all Staff, relevant Volunteers and relevant Contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing work at the College. It is also communicated to all Staff, as well as Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors as part of regular training.

All Staff, as well as Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers must sign an agreement to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at College.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between the College and any Direct Contact and Regular Contractors. Therefore, all Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct on signing the contract or on commencing work at the College.

A copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is provided to parents/carers, who must sign an agreement to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct on enrolment.

Report any concerns

Staff must immediately report any concerns about student safety or potential breaches of this Code to a Child Safety Officer, Principal or Executive Team.

Members of the College community (other than staff) who suspect child abuse or reportable conduct, or who otherwise have concerns about a student's welfare, should immediately raise their concerns with the College. For more information, please refer to the *Child Safety Reporting and Responding to Concerns Policy Statement*.

For other complaints, please refer to the *Complaint Handling Policy*.

Whenever there are concerns that a student is in immediate danger, contact Victoria Police on 000.

Consequences of breach

It is the College's policy that any breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is a child safety incident that must be reported internally. It is important to understand that by law ALL allegations must, and will be, investigated by the College. Child abuse will be managed according to the Four Critical Actions for Schools. For more information, refer to our procedures for Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns.

Aitken College may take disciplinary action against any staff member who breaches this Code, up to and including summary dismissal from employment or termination of engagement. Disciplinary action measures include (depending on the severity of the breach):

- Remedial education
- Counselling
- Increased supervision
- The restriction of duties
- Appointment to an alternate role
- Suspension
- In the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

As a result, staff may also be subject to legal or regulatory action for their conduct, including by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and Commission for Children and Young People.

In extreme cases, staff may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

Communication

This document is available to the College community and public on the College website.

This document is available to staff as part of the Child Safe Program. The Child Safe Program forms part of the College's induction program for incoming staff, and aspects of (and updates to) the Child Safe Program will be addressed in the College's professional development updates, bulletins and newsletters.

Approval and review

The College's Board has endorsed this Code.

The Child Safe Program will be reviewed annually.

Related documents

This document forms part of the College's Child Safe Program and should be read in conjunction with its various policies and procedures, including the following:

- Child Safe Policy Statement
- Child Safe Program Definitions
- Child Safety Responsibilities Policy Statement
- Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns Policy Statement

If you wish to discuss this policy or provide feedback please email admin@aitkencollege.edu.au.

Revision History

Version	Date	Reviewed by (name)	Position/Title	Approved by
1	17/04/2018	Kim Forward	Deputy Principal	Deputy Principal
1.1	08/05/2019	Kim Forward	Deputy Principal	Deputy Principal
2	06/02/2020	Amy Schembri	Compliance Manager	Compliance Manager
	24/02/2020	College Board	No changes	College Board
3	02/09/2020	Amy Schembri Josie Crisara	Compliance Manager Principal	Principal
4	12/11/2020	Josie Crisara Amy Schembri (together with RK Lawyers)	Principal Compliance Manager	Principal
	26/06/2021	Endorsed by College Board		College Board
5	08/04/2022	Amy Schembri	Compliance Manager	Compliance Manager
	30/05/2022	Aitken College Board		College Board
6	03/10/2022	Josie Crisara Amy Schembri College Board	Principal Compliance Manager	College Board
6.1	11/10/2023	Josie Crisara Amy Schembri College Board	Principal Compliance Manager	College Board
6.2	25/10/2024	Josie Crisara	Principal	College Board
7	10/10/2025	Josie Crisara	Principal	College Board
8	12/03/2026	Josie Crisara	Principal	College Board