

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Laburnum Primary School

Rationale:

Registered schools have an important responsibility for keeping children safe. Schools already take steps to protect children from abuse.

Standard three (clause nine of the Ministerial Order) requires that the school governing authority develop, endorse and make publicly available a code for all school staff.

Aims:

The code of conduct:

1. has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment
2. sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children
3. takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff such as registered teachers), and the needs of all children, and
4. is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

Implementation:

The code of conduct specifies behaviour unacceptable for a professional relationship between a teacher and a student. The Victorian Institute of Teaching's code also provides a useful guide to appropriate behaviour for all school staff.

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

- the adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- 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 line of sight to other adults
- an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school.

Acceptable behaviours

All staff, volunteers and board/school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community 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 or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Our school has a zero tolerance of discrimination.
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/ren are safe
- 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.

Unacceptable behaviours

Staff and volunteers must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact which children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children

- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

Implementation and review remains subject to DET, VIT and VRQA policies and guidelines.

Evaluation:

This policy to be reviewed as per the three cycle of school policies.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in:

March 2017

REFERENCES

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Child safe standards website: www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards

Government Schools

Website: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards

The Victorian Institute of Teaching

For *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics* and information about employer responsibilities to report action taken against registered teachers in response to allegations and concerns about registered teachers.

Website: www.vit.edu.au