

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

### 1. Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviours of adults with children and young people at Overnewton Anglican Community College (the **College**). This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce opportunities for the incidence of harm and abuse to children in the school environment. It should be read in conjunction with the College's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and *Community Code of Conduct*.

All students enrolled at the College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The safety and wellbeing of our students is paramount. The College has a **zero-tolerance** policy of child abuse and expects that this Code of Conduct is adhered to at all times.

All College staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, College Board members, parents/guardians, and any other adult interacting with students within the school environment (**College Personnel**) must follow this Code of Conduct.

The principles that should guide an adult's behaviour while performing work where children are present or reasonably expected to be present are:

- 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.
- these standards of behaviour extend to all school environments, defined as any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the College for use by a student during or outside school hours, including College campuses, online school environments (e.g. email and intranet systems), other locations provided by the College for a student's use (i.e. school camps, sporting events and excursions) or any other locations made available through a third party provider for student use.

### 2. Definitions

In this Policy, the following terms have the following meanings unless the context requires otherwise:

**Child** means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse** includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - an offence of grooming (as per s49M(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958*); or
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or

- serious emotional or psychological harm; or
- serious neglect of a child.

**Child safety** includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

**School environment** means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the College;
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
  - school camps.
  - approved homestay accommodation.
  - delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or
  - sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

### 3. Acceptable behaviours

College Personnel are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and upholding the College's commitment to child safety, at all times.
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- treating everyone in our College community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities;
- taking into account the needs of all children and students.
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a child within the school environment and one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight if another adult. This excludes familial relationships between an adult and child.
- being aware of physical locations where children are at risk of child abuse and avoid the use of these areas where possible when accompanied by a child.
- being familiar with and alert to the signs of child abuse and report any suspicions to the Head of Student Services.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused and/or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child or student.

reporting any child safety concerns or allegations of child abuse to the College Head of Student Services.

- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic).
- understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the reportable conduct scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the College's *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy*.
- if child abuse is suspected or an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe and protected from harm, including protecting the confidentiality of any student who reports a concern and any student believed to be at risk of child abuse.
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students. Students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students; and
- ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

#### **4. Unacceptable behaviours**

College Personnel must not:

- inappropriately interact with students, amongst other things, by:
  - putting children at risk of abuse (e.g., by locking doors);
  - ignoring or disregarding any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm.
  - ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student.
  - developing any relationships with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (e.g., by offering of gifts or special treatment of specific children)
  - exhibiting behaviour with children that may be construed as unnecessarily physical (e.g., inappropriate hugging of a student. Sitting on a teacher's lap could be appropriate sometimes, e.g., when reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area).
  - initiating unnecessary physical contact with children or doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes; and
  - having contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

exhibit inappropriate behaviour with students, amongst other things, by:

- displaying behaviours or engaging with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context.
  - engaging in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (e.g., personal social activities).
  - discussing intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver school curriculum or professional guidance.
  - using inappropriate language in the presence of children.
  - expressing personal views on cultures, race, sexuality or politics in the presence of children.
  - discriminating (including treating a differently or unfavourable) against any child because of their age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
  - photographing or videoing a child without the consent of the parent/carer or where required for duty of care purposes; and
  - consuming alcohol or taking illegal drugs against school policy in the school environment or at school events where children are present.
- inappropriately communicating or have contact with students, amongst other things, by:
    - using personal or private contact channels (including via social media, email, instant messaging, texting, etc.) or their family, except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter; and
    - exchanging personal contact details such as a phone number, social networking site or mail address with any student.

## 5. Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All College staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or their relevant enterprise bargaining agreement and other relevant College policies and procedures.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the College's *Policy for Responding to Reportable Allegations* and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal and Head of Student Services as soon as possible. If

the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, contact the relevant Deputy Principal as soon as possible, refer to Table 1. Contact Details.

Communications will be treated confidentially.

Name	Position	Email
<b>Ms. Emily FitzSimons</b>	Principal	emily.fitzsimons@overnewton.vic.edu.au
<b>Ms. Jacqui Garkel</b>	Acting Head of Student Services leader	jacqui.garkel@overnewton.vic.edu.au
<b>Mr. Rob Huntington</b>	Deputy Principal, Yirramboi Campus	robert.huntington@overnewton.vic.edu.au
<b>Ms. Anne McNaughton</b>	Deputy Principal, Canowindra Campus	anne.mcnaughton@overnewton.vic.edu.au

**Table 1. Contact Details**

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.**

## 6. Review

This Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy will be reviewed every two years in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Code of Conduct at least every two years. The review will include input from the Risk Management Committee, staff, students' parents/carers and the school community. The Governance Committee review this policy and the Board endorse this policy.

Document Details	
<b>Date Created</b>	November 2016, 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2025
<b>Responsibility of:</b>	Principal
<b>In Consultation with:</b>	Risk Management Committee and Governance Committee
<b>Endorsed by:</b>	Board 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023
<b>Legal Check:</b>	FAL Lawyers (August 2022)