

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Purpose and Scope

The Knox School's Child Safety Code of Conduct establishes acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by members of the School community. It creates professional boundaries for employees of the School, ethical behaviour and the parameters of acceptable and unacceptable relationships. The code is intended to offer guidance to inform personal, professional and ethical decision making.

The code of conduct is part of a broader culture of child safety that is woven into the fabric of The Knox School. As a community, our unified commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is paramount to our actions and decision making. As a school community, we are guided by a common commitment to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour to each other and when engaging with children.

Responsibilities

Society as a whole shares responsibility for promoting the safety and protection of children from abuse. In the School context, all members of the School community have their role to play – teachers, staff, administrators, parents / guardians, volunteers and students. That said, the School's executive team are committed to leading from the front and engaging in a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child protection issues.

Students are encouraged to take an active role in developing and maintaining a child safe environment at the School and are provided with opportunities to contribute and give feedback in the development of the School's policies and practices. Students are also made aware of the avenues available to them to report or disclose abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of others.

Child safety is the responsibility of everyone at The Knox School.

Authorities

This code is developed by the Wellbeing Committee in consultation with all stakeholders: parents, students and employees, and is endorsed by the School's Executive Committee and The Board of The Knox School.

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

Compliance

The Child Safety 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 within the School, including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the School.

The following is a Child Safety Code of Conduct that meets the requirements set out in Standard 3 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

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Definitions

Victorian Child Safe Standards: A set of standards introduced in 2016 through Ministerial Order 870 in the wake of the findings from the Victorian Betrayal of Trust Royal Commission.

Child Protection Officer: A number of senior staff members are nominated as Child Protection Officers. Child Protection Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Child Protection Program: The Knox School's Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

Child Protection and Safety Policy: This policy is an overarching document that articulates The Knox School's approach to protecting children from child abuse.

Child abuse: Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) as including:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or a grooming offence listed in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- the infliction of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- the serious neglect of a child.

A child is defined by the Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Code of Conduct: The Knox School's Child Safety Code of Conduct establishes acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by members of the School community. It creates professional boundaries for employees of the School, ethical behaviour and the parameters of acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

Staff: Includes all teaching and non-teaching staff (including casual and relief staff) as well as all volunteers who could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service (including sport coaches, contract cleaners, grounds staff and maintenance workers) ('Direct Contact Volunteers').

Policy

The Knox School provides the following list of behaviours and boundaries for all adults engaged with students within the School's community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), contractors and parents / guardians:

Do:

- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for students.
- Comply with guidelines published by the School with respect to child protection.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

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- Use positive and affirming language toward students.
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and then listen to them with respect.
- 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 about child safety to one of the School's Child Protection 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 private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- 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 / guardian consent.
- 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.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

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Procedure

This Code of Conduct forms part of a school wide culture of child protection that provides education and information for members of The Knox School Board, staff and direct contact volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to a nominated Child Protection Officer.

It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Students, parents or other community members who have concerns that the code of conduct may have been breached are asked to contact one of the School's Child Protection Officers:

- Mr Cameron Bacholer, Vice Principal
- Mrs Toni-Ann Bright, Head of Secondary School
- Ms Heather Ablett, Head of Junior School
- Mr Alex Wilson, Head of Sport

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

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be called on 000.

Associated Forms

The Child Safety Code of Conduct is a component of the Child Protection Program and its implementation is in conjunction with, and linked to, the following internal policies, documents and processes:

- Duty of Care – Crimes Act 1958 Vic Policy
- Mandatory Reporting
- Child Protection and Safety Policy
- Child Abuse Response Plan
- Staff and Student Appropriate Conduct Policy
- Human resources practices

Further Information

The Code is made available to all staff, volunteers, families and students. A PDF version of our Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the School's website: www.knox.vic.edu.au.

The code is reviewed by The Wellbeing Committee annually.

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