

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors Student Safety Code of Conduct

Preamble

This Staff, Volunteers and Contractors Student Safety Code of Conduct has been developed in the light of the Mission and Values Statement of Whitefriars College, in which we seek to live by and teach those values which the Catholic Church upholds and to celebrate our Catholic identity in the Carmelite Tradition. In line with the College vision “to educate and develop gentle men in the Catholic Carmelite tradition of contemplation, community, and service”, the College seeks staff who will be supportive of our faith community and be involved in the celebration of that community. It promotes a spirit of mutual trust and respects the gifts of others. It honours the contributions which each individual makes to the enrichment of the community. The College prioritises child safety and wellbeing, and a diverse community in which the contribution of each individual is encouraged, valued and respected. Whitefriars aims to develop and maintain a staff that is committed to the ethos of the College, professional in its approach to learning and teaching and diverse in the range and scope of the skills and experiences it provides. Whitefriars College acknowledges the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the College resides, and pays respect to Wurundjeri Elders past and present as well as future generations.

Purpose

All students enrolled at Whitefriars College have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our priority, and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on promoting child safety and wellbeing in the school environment and safeguarding children and young people at Whitefriars College against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and occupational codes and legislation.

All Board members, Board Sub-Committee members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and religious staff at Whitefriars College are expected to actively contribute to a school culture by respecting the dignity of its members, affirming the gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice. They are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. All Board members, Board Sub-Committee members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and religious staff must sign and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Acceptable behaviours

All Board members, Board Sub-Committee members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and religious staff at Whitefriars College 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;
- Taking into account the needs of all children and students;
- 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 or the safety of another child;
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification);
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance for discrimination);
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- Ensuring as far as practicable that an adult is not alone with a child;
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns to the Principal, Deputy Principal, Students, Risk & Compliance Manager or any other member of the College Leadership Team;
- 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 school's Reportable Conduct Policy
- Ensuring as quickly as possible that the child is safe if an allegation of child abuse is made;
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or specific allegations or concerns about a registered teacher;
- Ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

Unacceptable behaviours

Improper conduct is unacceptable. Improper conduct is a non-criminal breach of the staff/volunteer-student relationship. Improper conduct of a sexual nature is behaviour on the part of a staff/volunteer member which contaminates the staff/volunteer-student relationship through the introduction of elements of a sexual nature inappropriate to the context and purpose of that relationship.

All Board members, Board Sub-Committee members, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and religious staff at Whitefriars College must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;



- Harass or threaten a student/s;
- Offer particular students privileges in a way that is not merited by the student, nor open and transparent for everyone to see, such as developing special relationships with students 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);
- Engage in sexual or improper relations with a student/s;;
- Omit to report any sexual or improper advances made by a student/s
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves (for example, toileting or changing clothes);;
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
- Counsel students regarding personal matters (with exception of the qualified College Psychologists);
- Provide financial advice to students, unless within the learning and teaching content;
- Solicit unauthorised funding of fees from students, sell property to students or sublet their property to students including formal Homestay arrangements;
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- Violate the privacy of students by inappropriately divulging students personal details;
- Inappropriate behaviour that may constitute discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, victimisation or vilification of others in interactions with students and other stakeholders;;
- 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;
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;;
- Have contact or fraternise with students or their family outside school activities without the Principal's 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;
- Enter in a relationship with former students within two years of finishing school (Victoria legislation);
- Have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging) or their family unless necessary (for example, providing families with eNewsletters or assisting students with their schoolwork);
- Email students from a non-Whitefriars College account, or respond to emails from non-Whitefriars College student accounts for any purpose other than directing students to use their Whitefriars College account for correspondence;
- Use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal student or staff email account;
- Inappropriately use technology, like downloading, storing, accessing and/or sharing material that



might be of a pornographic, offensive or discriminatory nature;

- Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or personal email addresses, or have any online contact or engage with students by utilising those;
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents, guardians or carers;
- Consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of students, unless specified by the College Leadership Team;
- Consume or be under the influence of alcohol and/or illicit drugs at school or school activities;
- Invite students to visit their place of residence, or provide accommodation to students;
- Be in a room alone with a student without clear external visibility into that room through an open or glass door, etc.;
- Participate in conduct which could impact on the College's reputation;
- Staff must not, under any circumstances, use any form of discipline which involves corporal punishment or engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour which could cause physical or emotional harm to students.

The following practices are unacceptable:

- Any form of corporal punishment;
- Using an object such as a ruler, book, duster, or a whiteboard marker to gain a student's attention in a hostile or an inappropriate manner;
- Restraining a student for any purpose other than the student's actions causing imminent harm to self or others;
- Intimidating a student;
- Using sarcasm to humiliate a student;
- Belittling a student;
- Verbal abuse of a student;
- Swearing at a student;
- Criticising a student rather than the student's actions.

There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, offensive comments or any other inappropriate conduct that may result in emotional distress or psychological harm to a student.

- Whilst physical contact with students is to be minimised, it is recognised that there are times in the teaching profession when physical contact is appropriate and acceptable for the duty to be performed and is consistent with the core values of the College. Examples of this are:
 - Applying medical treatment;
 - Comforting an upset child;
 - Guiding a student in a non-threatening manner;
 - Separating students who are fighting; or
 - Using appropriate physical contact in order to protect a student from imminent danger to him/herself or to others.
- The physical contact referred to above is only acceptable if the contact was reasonably necessary for the purposes of discipline, management or care of the student. The contact must also be appropriate given the student's age, maturity, health or other characteristics.
- In the case of a student with special needs, physical contact with a student is to be consistent

with the behaviour management plan that is developed for the student.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, religious and Board members must not commit the below actions without approval from the Principal or Deputy Principal (Staff):

- Provide transport to an individual student, with own vehicle or other, unless such a circumstance is unavoidable.
- Visit a student's place of residence (with exception of the International Student Program team members who may visit Homestay residences).
- Talk or communicate to the media in any ways.

Any reasonable belief of an incident of inappropriate behaviour should be reported to the Principal or a Deputy Principal.

In an emergency, call Emergency Services (ambulance, police, fire brigade) on 000 and notify the Principal or a Deputy Principal before taking any action requiring approval listed above.

Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct published by the VIT. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities;
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect;
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language;
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm;
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters;
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference;
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

Psychologists and school counsellors

In their dealings with students, psychologists and school counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- the Australian Counselling Association
- Speech Pathology Australia.

Sports and recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language;
- coaching students to be 'good sports';
- explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity;
- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

Breaches of this code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, Whitefriars College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Enterprise Agreement 2018* (VCEMEA 2018) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact the Chair of the Board by [email](#).

Where any other member of the school community, including volunteers and contractors, is suspected of breaching this code, the school is to take appropriate action, including (if applicable) in accordance with the *PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* Policy.

In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body, such as the VIT.

Approved by: College Leadership Team / Board

Date: 22/06/2022

Last update:

Next review date: 22/06/2024

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Staff, Volunteers and Contractors Student Safety Code of Conduct and will abide by it.

Signed: _____

Date: