

Child Safety

Code of Conduct



Record Number	PRO-CSF-002-3		
Date Reviewed	22 November 2022	Date Approved	15 February 2023
Policy Owner	Principal	Policy Approver	School Council
Review frequency	<p>This Code of Conduct is reviewed at least every two years or more frequently if there is a major change to the Child Safe Framework. The review will include input from students, parents/guardians and the school community.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct is required to be approved by the Governance Risk and Compliance Committee and School Council.</p>		
Scope	This Code of Conduct applies to all Schools activities, physical and online school environment, both on and off campus and to School Council, staff, volunteers and contractors.		
Consultation	<p>Consultation on this policy is mandatory.</p> <p>Consultation process is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Council approves the Child Safety Framework for consultation • Community Consultation via the School Website • Parent Group consultation through newsletter, mConnect communication and parent evenings • Student Representative Groups 		
Scope determination	Public		
Related Policy and Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial Order 1359 • Child Safe Standards • Child Safety Policy • Child Safety Response and Reporting Procedure • Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy • Privacy Policy • Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises • Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (Vic) • Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) – Mandatory Reporting • Education and Training Reform Act 2006 		
Policy Management	This Code of Conduct is administered by the Risk and Compliance Manager.		

Revision History

Document Number	Date	Revision Description	Approval
PRO-CSF-002 (DRAFT)	28 June 2022	Draft	
PRO-CSF-002-1 (Legal)	2 November 2022	Legal review undertaken	

PRO-CSF-002-2	22 November 2022	Final Draft review by Governance Risk and Compliance Committee	
PRO-CSF-002-3	15 February 2023	School Council approval for consultation	School Council

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the Head of Senior or Head of Junior School.

Purpose

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct has the objectives of promoting child safety and wellbeing in the Mentone Girls' Grammar (MGG) school environment. It also provides guidelines on expected standards of behaviour in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members and any other adult engaged to undertake work at MGG.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical, virtual and online school environments used during or outside of School hours and in other locations provided by the School for student use (for example, a School camp).

Acceptable Behaviours

At MGG staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members and any other adult undertaking work at MGG are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children and young people at MGG by:

- Upholding our commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety Policy.
- Treating students and families in MGG community with respect.
- Lead by example and model appropriate behaviour amongst colleagues and in interactions with students.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families while adhering to the College's and legislative mandatory reporting guidelines.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, overseas students, students who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students.
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult, except when unavoidable (for example, in an emergency).
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to a Child Safety Champion or the Principal as per the Child Safety Response and Reporting Procedure.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our Child Safety Response and Reporting Procedure.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

- Report any relevant conflict of interest as and when it arises (such as an outside relationship with a student that is relevant to the work the person is undertaking).
- Empower students and families to participate in a consultation process and support them to provide feedback in areas that affect their rights and safety.
- Listen and appropriately respond to the views and concerns of students.
- Ensure that conversations in the presence of children and young people are appropriate to their chronological and developmental age.
- Call the police 000 if a student is in immediate danger.

Unacceptable Behaviours

At MGG all staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members and any other adult undertaking work at MGG must **not**:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm.
- Engage in any unlawful conduct towards or in the presence of a child or young person. Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context.
- Ignore an adult's inappropriate behaviour towards a student.
- Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language with or in the presence of the child or student, except when needed to deliver the MGG curriculum or to provide professional guidance.
- Treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or co-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
- Photograph or video a child or student in a School environment except in accordance with the Photography and Video Images policy or where required for Duty of Care purposes.
- Be under the influence of, or consume alcohol, in the School environment or at MGG events where students are present (unless consumption of alcohol is expressly permitted by MGG at specified events).
- Be under the influence of, consume or have possession of illicit drugs in the School environment or at MGG events where students are present.
- Have contact with any student outside of School hours except when needed to deliver the MGG curriculum and co-curricular activities, or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.
- Fail to disclose any relevant conflict of interest as and when it arises in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Teachers

Teachers are also required to comply with the *Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct* published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching and in particular the principles relating to relationships with students. These principles include that teachers:

- demonstrate their commitment to their learners by knowing their students and how they learn and respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- work to create an environment that promotes respect for everyone
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language and behaviour
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- must not violate or compromise their unique position of influence and trust in their relationship with students
- must not touch a student without a valid reason
- must not engage in communication with a student beyond the boundaries of a professional relationship without a valid reason, including via written, electronic or online means (including social media) both whilst at school and for two years after leaving school.
- do not show favouritism or bias towards students or their families.

School Counsellors & Psychologists

When dealing with students, school counsellors and psychologists should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in any code of ethics or guidelines to which they are bound, including:

- The Australian Psychological Society (APS) APS Code of Ethics (or any code of conduct for registered psychologists issued by the Psychology Board of Australia)
- Australian Counselling Association – ACA Code of Ethics and Practice.

Sports and recreation

Sports coaches, staff members and volunteers who are involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should also adopt practices that help make students to feel safe, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be "good sports"
- ensuring that any physical contact they have with students during a sport or other recreational activity is necessary and that they explain the reason for the contact and ask for the student's permission
- avoid 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.

Nurses

Nurses have a responsibility for maintaining their professional and personal boundaries when providing care to an individual. The care provided by nurses is likely to involve personal contact with a student, such as touching and holding.

In particular, nurses are also expected to abide by the applicable code of conduct or standards of conduct for nurses, including the *Code of Conduct for Nurses* issued by the Nursing and Midwifery Board (as updated

or replaced from time to time) which includes the following:

- practice in accordance with the standards of the nursing profession
- respect the dignity, culture, ethnicity, values and beliefs of people receiving care and treatment
- treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as private and confidential
- promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in their relationship with those in their care
- abide by the mandatory reporting legislation about child abuse and neglect
- remain alert to students who may be vulnerable and act on welfare concerns where appropriate.

Breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct

Any MGG staff, volunteer, contractor, service provider, School Council member or any other adult undertaking work at MGG who breaches this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where an allegation of reportable conduct has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Child Safety Response and Reporting Procedure and, where relevant, the Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the MGG Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, contact the School Council President on president@mentonegirls.vic.edu.au.

Review

This Code of Conduct has been endorsed by the School Council and will be reviewed for effectiveness:

- as part of MGG's policy review schedule (every 2 years);
- as required, with changes to current legislation, research, policy and best practice;
- following issues raised through the Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy;
- after any significant child safety incident; and
- upon receipt of staff and parent/guardian feedback.