



Child Safe- Code of Conduct (acceptable & unacceptable behaviour)

Introduction

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.

The standard has four specific requirements. They are that 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.

Please note that the Ministerial Order defines some terms broadly. A full list of definitions is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the Moonee Ponds PS Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment. This Code of Conduct does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the school. For example, the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics* provides clarity regarding professional behaviour expected of teachers at all times. This Code of Conduct specifies behaviour unacceptable for a professional relationship between a teacher and a student. The VIT code provides a useful guide to appropriate behaviour for all school staff.

Principles for adult's behaviour in undertaking child-connected work at Moonee Ponds PS:

- 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 wherever practical
- an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school

All staff, volunteers and School Council members of Moonee Ponds Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of Moonee Ponds Primary School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

Acceptable behaviours

- 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, children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to a Principal Class Officer and 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 (or child safety officer if the school has appointed someone to this role)
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them
- 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
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- put children at risk of abuse
- initiate unnecessary physical contact which children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as, but not limited to, toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- 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, due to age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's Principal Class Officers' knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, but not limited to, 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 drugs or excessive amounts of alcohol at school or at school events in the presence of children**

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Moonee Ponds Primary School Principal or Assistant Principal.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

* SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

**SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. Alcohol may be consumed by school staff, in moderation, and in line with the School Policy Advice Guide, at afterhours school events however staff are to be mindful of their duty of care obligations and are to remain professional at all times.

Further information

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Child safe standards website (all schools): www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards

Government Schools

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

Email: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au

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

Acknowledgements

- State Government of Victoria, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Version 2, 2015 [A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation](#)
- Moores and ourcommunity.com.au, Institute of Community Directors Australia 2016, [Child Protection Toolkit: What Every Not-for-Profit Organisation Must Do Now](#)
- Child Wise, [12 Steps to Building Child Safe Organisations](#)
- State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, 2015 [Code of Conduct: Toolkit Resource Three](#)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching, [Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics](#)

This code of conduct was last ratified by School Council in....	2019	
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I agree to adhere to the MPPS Child Safety Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date: