

Child Safe Standard 3

St Albans Primary School Staff/Contractors/Volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work Code of Conduct

Rationale

St Albans Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of St Albans Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of St Albans Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other members of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Staff Code of Conduct

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- adhering to **St Albans Primary School Child Safe Policy** at all times taking all reasonable steps to protect children from all forms of abuse or harm
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children
- working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
- respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people on a need to know basis
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults (applies to any other member of the school community involved in child-related work), are not left alone with a child

- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is/are safe, if an allegation of child abuse or child safety is made
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns to the St Albans Primary School **Principal** and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- 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
- respect a child's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate. That is:
 - if the child has consented to the information being used in a certain way
 - to prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare of a person (including the child)
 - as part of an investigation into unlawful activity
 - if the disclosure is required or mandated by law
 - to prevent a crime or enforce the law
- welcoming all children, their families and being inclusive
- treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally respectful sensitive manner
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting children from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm
- enhance child autonomy and sense of self-worth and encourage children to develop and reflect on their own values
- refrain from discussing children's personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially

Unacceptable Behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, suspected or disclosed child abuse
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention

- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone
- exhibit or discrimination or favoritism on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes¹
- in the school environment or at other school events where children are present consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances

Relationships with Colleagues

Staff demonstrate collegiality by:

- developing a positive working environment where respect for each other and open communication is fostered
- adhering to meeting protocols when meeting/planning
- using courteous and respectful language when communicating with colleagues
- caring for and supporting each other
- ensuring that all staff are treated equally
- dealing with issues in a professional manner at all times
- following a shared vision aligned to school priorities
- accepting each other's differences and celebrating each other's strengths
- taking responsibility for all the students within our school within our school community
- sharing expertise and resources when participating in forums related to teaching and learning
- offering feedback in a timely and appropriate manner

Staff Relationships with Parents/Carers and Communities

Staff maintain a professional relationship with parents/carers by:

- being transparent and communicating openly
- treating all parents/carers as equals
- communicating and consulting with parents in a timely, appropriate and sensitive manner
- not passing judgement and keeping matters confidential on a needs basis
- creating an environment where parents/carers feel welcome to make a meeting time to see staff
- directing parents to appropriate personnel
- listening and working together with the child's best interest in mind
- making themselves available (at mutually agreed times) to provide feedback regarding their child
- taking into account the parents' perspective when making decisions regarding the wellbeing of students
- having open and transparent relationship with all stakeholders
- being respectful of parents' and students' opinions and concerns, when taking appropriate actions regarding the wellbeing of the child
- respecting family beliefs and cultural background
- maintaining conversations and interactions to a professional standard
- maintaining the home-school partnership as a priority

³ 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 child. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

Resources and References

- [*A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST*](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation 2.0*
- Department of Health and Human Services (2015) *Code of conduct: Child safe standards toolkit: resource three*
- Department of Training and Education – School Policy Advice Guide: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. accessed: 11 July 2016
- Department of Training and Education – School Policy Advice Guide: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> accessed: 11 July 2016
- Our Community (2016) *Child Protection Tool Kit, What every not-for-profit organisation must do now*
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)
- [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations](#) - elearning module (log-in required)
- State of Victoria (2010) *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children’s Services and Victorian Schools*
- Victorian Institute of Teaching (2013) *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics*
- Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*, Ministerial Order No. 870.
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) *Information Sheet. Child Safety Standard 3: Child safety code of conduct.*
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) *Information Sheet. Child Safety Standard 3: Child safety code of conduct - acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.*

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

This Code of Conduct was ratified by the St Albans Primary School Council on the 16th August, 2019