



MELBOURNE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL
AN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

Code of Conduct

Child Safe

Purpose

It is the policy of Melbourne Grammar School that the learning and working environment is safe for all children in the School's care. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline the School's commitment to child safety, and the staff of the School's responsibilities, whenever children are in the School's care.

This Code of Conduct has been framed in response to Ministerial Order No.870.

In accordance with Melbourne Grammar School's governance structure, the School's governing body assigns the responsibility for the discharge of this Code of Conduct to the Headmaster.

Definitions

A **Child** means any student enrolled at MGS.

Child connected work means work authorised by the MGS governing body and performed by an adult in the School environment where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child Abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- A sexual offence
- A grooming offence
- The infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect.

Child Abuse includes, but is not limited to, Child Sexual Abuse.

Child Safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School's governing body for use by a child during or outside school hours including:

- a campus of the School
- online School environments (including email and intranet systems), and
- other locations provided by the School for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other School events).

School staff means an individual member of staff working for MGS who is:

- directly engaged or employed by the School's governing body
- a volunteer
- contracted service provider (whether or not they are employed through a body corporate or any other person as an intermediary)
- a minister of religion.



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Principles for staff underpinning Child Safety Code of Conduct and child connected work

The following principles will guide staff behaviour when undertaking work connected with children:

- the staff/student relationship should be professional at all times regardless of context, such as excursions, camps, trips, music and drama rehearsals
- the 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
- as far as practicable, staff should not be alone with a child unless there is line of sight to other adults
- staff should not initiate or seek physical contact
- staff should not initiate or seek social contact with children outside school, unless there is a valid professional or personal context, such as a relationship with their own child.

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All staff 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
- 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 and participation of Indigenous children (for example, by never questioning an Indigenous child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety and participation of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety and participation of children with a disability (for example, through a willingness to show flexibility to allow the fullest participation in the life of the school)
- adhere at all times to the School's Social Media Policy
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that they are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse, including concerns regarding to the School's leadership
- 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, including concerns regarding the suitability of existing staff for child related work, to the school's leadership
- 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.

Staff at the School hold a unique position of influence and trust that must not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with children. The following examples outline some of those limits.



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A professional relationship **will** be violated if a member of staff:

- has a sexual relationship with a child
- uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with children
- touches a child without a valid reason
- holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a child via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid professional context
- accept gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from children or their parents.

A professional relationship **will** be compromised if a member of staff:

- attends parties or socialises with children
- invites a child or children back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present.

Staff must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any student, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- exchange personal contact details such as mobile or home phone numbers or email addresses, without a valid professional or personal context
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst adversely affected under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Examples of Child Abuse Risks

The following provides examples of where students are potentially at risk of child abuse:

- Physical and emotional abuse from staff, students or the public
- Grooming tactics are used to select students and engage in sexual abuse
- Inappropriate behavior or physical contact during class, sports training, competition, in change rooms, during drama or physical education lessons
- Use of mobile phones in change rooms to take photographs, videos and so on
- Students travelling alone with staff in vehicles (private cars, taxis and so on)
- Staff and students in one-on-one meetings or in detention classes
- Inappropriate online communication between staff and students
- Using blocked off or out of sight areas to meet with students
- Inappropriate accommodation combining staff and students on camps, trips, and tours
- Staff and students being alone in a remote location such as hikes, bike rides, canoeing and so on
- Inappropriate photographs, videos and so on being sent between staff and students.

Applicable Legislation

The legislation relevant to the concepts discussed in this policy includes:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Crimes Act Amendment (Protection of Children) 2014
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005



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Related Polices and Documents

"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" (May 2010) www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Breaches of this Conduct

The School expects that any School staff member who becomes aware of a breach of these instructions and code of conduct by another School staff member will advise the relevant Head of School, Deputy Headmaster/Head of Senior School or the Headmaster without delay. The School will consider each breach of these procedures in the context in which it has occurred and will determine if the matter is a minor breach or a serious breach. In the case of School employees, a serious breach may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In relation to volunteers and contracted service providers, a breach may result in the termination of the person's engagement with MGS and the withdrawal of permission for them to be on the School premises.

Further Information

Further information concerning any aspect of this policy may be directed to the Headmaster or the Deputy Headmaster.

Policy Sign Off & Acceptance

Reviewed by: Director of Human Resources

Approved/Signed Off By: Headmaster, School Executive