



WOODLEIGHschool

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

POLICY CATEGORY: CHILD SAFETY

PUBLIC POLICY
STATUS: APPROVED

CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW	3
2. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY	3
3. RESPONSIBILITY	3
4. RATIONALE	3
5. PURPOSE	4
6. SCOPE	4
7. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES	5
8. DEFINITIONS	5
9. ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS	8
10. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS	8
11. REPORTING	9
12. POLICY BREACH	9
13. CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING REVIEW	9
14. RELEVANT POLICY AND REFERENCES	10
15. PROCEDURE APPROVAL STATUS	10

1. OVERVIEW

Woodleigh School is committed to providing a caring, supportive and safe environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known. Woodleigh School is committed to providing safe and supportive environments where all children and young people entrusted to our care are affirmed in their dignity and worth as a person. This Child Safety Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct) sets out the expected behaviour of all adults with children and young people in our school.

If you are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Code of Conduct, please contact your Head of Campus.

The Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. We take into account the needs of all children and students and ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults at Woodleigh School. The Code of Conduct promotes child safety and wellbeing in our school environment and provides guidelines on expected standards of behaviour in relation to child safety and wellbeing consistent with our strategies, policies and procedures.

This Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

This Code of Conduct is publicly available. Additionally, before work commencement, a copy is provided to all school Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, Service Providers, Board Members and any other adult involved in child-connected work who must follow the Code of Conduct.

2. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Woodleigh School is committed to providing a safe and child-friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and can actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. At Woodleigh School, we have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child-safe culture.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

The protection of children and young people is the responsibility of everyone at Woodleigh School. We are all responsible for promoting the wellbeing and safety of all students and must behave appropriately when they are in our physical or online presence.

The Board: The Board is Woodleigh School governing authority. The Board is responsible for endorsing this policy and ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated as needed.

The Principal: The Principal is responsible for reviewing the School's compliance with this policy and child safety obligations.

4. RATIONALE

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately towards others and with children. When everyone is educated about the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the School environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, this Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

5. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Safety Code of Conduct is to:

- Protect students from harm.
- Reduce opportunities for abuse (including sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect) or harm to occur.
- Promote child safety in the School environment.
- Complement the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and the School Child Safety Program (as revised from time to time).
- Set standards about how individuals working in the Woodleigh School environment are expected to behave and conduct themselves when interacting with students.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to:

All individuals who are working at, or visiting, the School environment are required to comply with the code at all times. This includes:

- All Staff members (academic, non-teaching, education support, temporary, casual, sports coaches, co-curricular Staff and assistants).
- School Board Directors.
- Students.
- Parents and Carers.
- External education providers.
- Contractors.
- Teaching students on placement and visiting gap or overseas students.
- Returning students working or volunteering at our school.
- Volunteers.
- Visitors.

The code is intended to complement the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and all Board and School policies and procedures, child protection legislation, Child Safety Standards and Victorian Government policies and professional standards.

Where a Staff member breaches the code, the School and/or Board may take disciplinary action including, in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

The “School environment” is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Woodleigh School for use by a student during or outside school hours. This includes Woodleigh School registered campuses, online School environments, including email and intranet systems, and other locations provided by the School for student use, including locations used for camps, tours, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

6. SCOPE

All school Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, Service Providers, Board Members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by Woodleigh School for student use (for example, a school camp). It pays particular attention to balancing the need to identify and mitigate risks in both physical and online school environments with ensuring that student rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities are not compromised.

This policy applies to all School activities during and outside of school hours. This includes School activities that are occurring on school campus, offsite, online, extracurricular, sport activities and programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel.

7. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

An adult’s response to a student’s behaviour or circumstances should be commensurate with the student’s age and vulnerability and the adult’s responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the student.

- An adult should not be alone with a student unless there is line of sight to other adults.
- An adult must not initiate or seek contact with students outside the School environment.

8. DEFINITIONS

The following terms in the Code of Conduct have specific definitions (and are consistent with Victorian law where indicated):

Child	Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years. Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic)
Child Safety Incident or Concern	Means an incident of or a concern about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “child abuse” as defined in Ministerial Order 1359 and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (CWS Act). These define “child abuse” as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. any act committed against a child involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. a sexual offence against a child ii. the criminal offence of grooming (which includes grooming of a child or of a person with care, supervision or responsibility for the child with the intention of facilitating the child being engaged or involved in the commission of a sexual offence) b. the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or “serious” emotional or psychological harm* c. the “serious” neglect of a child, including exposure to family violence and its effects* 2. a child being “in need of protection” as defined in the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act). This includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. abandonment of the child by their parents and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child b. the child’s parents are dead or incapacitated and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child c. “significant” harm as a result of physical injury, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child* d. “significant” harm as a result of sexual abuse (including likely future sexual abuse as a result of grooming), from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child* e. “significant” emotional or psychological harm, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child* f. “significant” neglect by the child’s parents* 3. “reportable conduct” as defined in the CWS Act. Reportable conduct is conduct by an employee (whether in the course of their employment or not) involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a sexual offence committed against or in the presence of a child b. sexual misconduct committed against or in the presence of a child c. physical violence committed against or in the presence of a child d. any behaviour that causes “significant” emotional or psychological harm to a child* e. “significant” neglect of a child* 4. a criminal offence against a child, or a student aged 18 or over, as set out in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). These include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. sexual penetration or sexual assault of, or sexual activity in the presence of, a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender b. grooming a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender c. grooming an adult who has a child under their care, supervision or authority

	<p>d. encouraging a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the offender’s care, supervision or authority to be involved in sexual activity</p> <p>e. image-based sexual offences</p> <p>5. a practice to change or suppress a child’s sexual orientation or gender identity, which is prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)</p> <p>6. a breach of our Child Safety Code of Conduct, such as:</p> <p>a. a teacher engaging in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not their own child</p> <p>b. a Volunteer sports coach engaging in inappropriate online personal communications with a student</p> <p>c. a Contractor music tutor publishing online photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.</p> <p>“Serious” emotional or psychological harm and “serious” neglect involve harm that has a lasting permanent effect. “Significant” emotional or psychological harm and “significant” neglect involve harm that is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as “serious” and need not have a lasting permanent effect.</p>
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse includes:</p> <p>a) any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a sexual offence 2. grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> <p>b) the infliction, on a child, of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. physical violence 2. serious emotional or psychological harm <p>c) the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects.</p> <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p>
Child-connected work	<p>Child-connected work means:</p> <p>a) work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present; or</p> <p>b) for the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding premises in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.</p> <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Child-related work	<p>Child-related work means:</p> <p>a) work at or for a service, body or place, or that involves a specified activity; and</p> <p>b) that usually involves direct contact with a child.</p> <p>Educational institutions are specified for the purpose of a).</p> <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
Child safety	<p>Child safety includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.</p> <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Direct contact	<p>Direct contact in relation to child-related work, means any contact between a person and a child that involves-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical contact; or • face to face contact; or • contact by post or other written communication; or • contact by telephone or other oral communication; or • contact by email or other electronic communication. <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>

Grooming	<p>Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.</p> <p>Source: Child Safe Standards Definitions (https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions)</p>
School environment	<p>School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A campus of the school b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services) c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. camps 2. approved homestay accommodation; 3. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or 4. sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School governing authority	<p>School governing authority means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to at for or on behalf of the proprietor; b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i>; or c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i>. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School Staff	<p>School Staff means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in a non-Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority 2. a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work 3. a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Student	<p>Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school or a student at the school boarding premises.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Volunteer	<p>Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>

9. ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As Woodleigh School, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding our commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- 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, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (**LGBTQIA+**) 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
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Chair of the Child Safety Committee or a Child Safety Officer
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) is/are safe and protected from harm.

The Principal or Principal's delegate will:

- Report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions concerning a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

10. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As Woodleigh School, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and members of our school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts)
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or 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 extra-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 Woodleigh Privacy Policy and the Use of Technology and Social Media Policy and Guidelines or where required for duty of care purposes
- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except where that contact is reasonable in all the circumstances (ie family friends, membership of same sporting club), related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.

The above behaviours are not exhaustive. For example, some behaviours may depend upon the students' age, developmental stage or special needs.

11. REPORTING

Our Child Safety Program includes policies that provide detailed guidance for all Staff and Volunteers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at the School. It also contains information on how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of the School's nominated Child Safety Officers (CSO). It also contains procedures for the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

External education providers, Contractors, Volunteers, students, partners or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School's Child Safety Officers.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a need-to-know basis.

12. POLICY BREACH

All Woodleigh School Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and any other member of the school community who breach this 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.

This includes (but is not limited to) the following actions depending on the nature of the relationship and the breach:

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of the employment, contract or engagement.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct may also result in a report being made to an external body as required by relevant laws and regulations.

In instances where a 'reportable allegation' has been made in accordance with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), the matter will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

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

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, contact the Chair of the Board.

13. CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING REVIEW

Woodleigh School is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety Program. We have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety related laws, regulations and standards:

- the Chair of the Child Safety Committee is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Code of Conduct at least every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident, including seeking input from Students, Parents and Carers and the School community
- we record and analyse all complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement
- we act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school Staff and our School community.

14. RELEVANT POLICY AND REFERENCES

This policy provides the overarching foundation for our Child Protection Program.

Key relevant policies to support our program include:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Responding and Reporting Obligations – including Mandatory Reporting – Policy and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Key definitions and legislation landscape for our Child Safety Program

Related legislative instruments

The following legislation, standards and regulations apply and this policy aligns with these mandated requirements:

- Ministerial Order 1359;
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic); and
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic).

15. PROCEDURE APPROVAL STATUS

REVIEW CYCLE	POLICY CODE	OWNER	APPROVED BY
Annual	CS-11	Principal	BOARD
VERSION	LOCATION	DATE APPROVED	NEXT REVIEW DATE
V4-6	WS Policy and Procedure TEAM > Policies > Child Safety	22 May 2024	Term 1 2025