



# CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

This document was reviewed and updated by Board in June 2023  
To be reviewed June 2024

## **Introduction**

This Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults in the College environment towards students. It serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

**It is the College's policy that any breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is a child safety incident that must be reported internally. Any breach that meets the threshold for external reporting must also be reported to the relevant external authority.**

The College reviews the Child Safe Code of Conduct annually. The Board has approved the Child Safe Code of Conduct and it is published on our public website.

Our Child Protection Program also includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy that provides detailed guidance for all staff, volunteers, contractors and external education providers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at the College.

## **Scope**

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all adults in the College community, including:

- the Board
- the Executive Principal and the Senior Leadership Team
- all staff members, including operational, teaching staff and temporary or casual staff
- all volunteers
- all contractors (including external education providers)
- teaching students on placement at the College
- parents/carers and other adult family members of students
- visitors.

Together referred to as "the College Community" for the purposes of the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies in all College environments. College environments include both the following physical, virtual and online places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the College

- online or virtual College environments made available or authorised by the Board (or the Principal on its behalf) for use by a student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the College or through a third-party provider for a student to use, including but not limited to:
  - o camps
  - o approved homestay accommodation
  - o delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers, another school
  - o sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

Certain staff members, volunteers and contractors at the College may have other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate their profession or occupation. These codes of conduct must be complied with. In the event that the staff member, volunteer or contractor considers that there is a conflict between their professional or occupational code of conduct and the Child Safe Code of Conduct in a particular matter, the relevant staff member, volunteer or contractor must seek advice from their professional or occupational regulatory body and/or a Child Protection Officer, and must advise the Principal of their proposed course of action.

### **Our Child Safe Code of Conduct**

Each member of the College Community is responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of students by adhering to the following standards of behaviour:

#### **DO:**

- Uphold and act in accordance with the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all times.
- Comply with applicable guidelines published by the College with respect to child safety, such as the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy.
- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and wellbeing, including child protection issues.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.
- Treat all students with respect, acknowledging that they are all image bearers of God irrespective of their cultural, religious, political differences or their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and/or culturally diverse students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Use positive and affirming language towards students.
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and participate, and then listen to them with respect.
- Provide students with a voice.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.

- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the College's Child Protection Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report child abuse or other harm externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

## **DO NOT:**

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students.
- Discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriate, or rough physical play.
- Use physical means (other than expressly outlined in our Behaviour Management Policy) or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Engage in meetings with a child that is not your own, outside of school hours and without permission from the College and the child's parent.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post identifying information about a student online unless it is necessary for the College's activities or you have consent from the student and/or their parents/carers. Identifying

information includes things such as the student's: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Our Child Protection Program includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy that provides detailed guidance for all staff and volunteers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at the College.

### **Agreement to Child Safe Code of Conduct**

A copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is provided to all staff, volunteers and contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing work at the College and is also communicated via refresher training at regular intervals.

All staff, as well as volunteers, must sign an agreement to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at the College.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between the College and any direct contact and regular contractors. Therefore, all direct contact and regular contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct upon signing the contract or upon commencing work at the College.

A copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is provided to parents/carers, who must sign an agreement to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct on enrolment.

### **Consequences for Breaching the Child Safe Code of Conduct**

Staff, including the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Principal, volunteers and contractors who breach the Child Safe Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary actions that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

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

Where any other member of the College community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within the Child Safe Code of Conduct, the College will take appropriate action.

An employee or volunteer will be automatically suspended from work or other duties within the College if they are under investigation (either internally or by the police).

### **Report Any Concerns**

#### **Staff**

It is the College's policy that any breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is a child safety incident. Therefore, all staff, direct contact and regular volunteers, and direct contact and regular contractors who witness, or suspect, any breach of this Code of Conduct must report their concern internally and, if required, also externally.

Staff who, in good faith, make an internal report alleging a breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct will be protected from victimisation or other adverse consequences.

Our Child Protection Program includes information for staff, volunteers and contractors about how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse or other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally. It contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities. For more information, refer to our procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns.

### **Students**

The College provides students with information about and encourages them to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College, including breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct. These include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations. For more information, refer to Child Protection Complaints Management.

### **Parents/Carers, Family Members or Other Community Members**

Parents/carers, family members or other community members who witness or suspect that there has been a breach of this Code of Conduct, or have concerns that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or harm from a member of Staff, a Volunteer or a Contractor, should contact one of the College's Child Safety Officers by phoning 03 9844 2471:

- Jon Price, Business Manager jon.price@donvale.vic.edu.au
- Steve Venour, Head of Secondary steve.venour@donvale.vic.edu.au
- Tanya Vaughan, Head of Primary Tanya.Vaughan@donvale.vic.edu.au
- Michael Halliday, Deputy Head of Secondary michael.halliday@donvale.vic.edu.au
- Catherine Fernihough, Deputy Head of Primary, catherine.fernihough@donvale.vic.edu.au

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

**Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.**

### Related policies

- Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns.