



Child Safe Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers & Contractors

Statement of Commitment

Mount Clear College is committed to child safety.

- We want students to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all students, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all students.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a student's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Mount Clear College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Mount Clear College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Mount Clear College is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for students with a disability and vulnerable cohorts.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Context

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. A code of conduct can help you enforce appropriate behaviour with children in your organisation to help protect children from abuse.

This Child Safe Code of Conduct is to be adhered to in conjunction with:

- the Victorian Institute of Teaching Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.
- relevant Ministerial Orders under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Information forthcoming).

Aim

This code of conduct outlines expected standards for appropriate behaviour by Mount Clear College staff members, community members including volunteers, with and in the company of student/s, including online communication and conduct.

Implementation

All staff, volunteers and board members of Mount Clear College are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of student/s, as noted below.

All personnel of Mount Clear College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of students by:

- adhering to the Mount Clear College Child Safe Policy at all times and upholding the College statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse;
- treating everyone with respect;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another student has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal student's self-identification);
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students from vulnerable cohorts;
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a student/s;
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the College Leadership Team, the SHAAC or any Principal Class member and ensuring any allegation is reported to the police or child protection;
- reporting any child safety concerns to the College Leadership Team, the SHAAC or any Principal Class member and ensuring any allegation is reported to the police or child protection;
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student/s are safe;
- encouraging students to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students);
- exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical interaction (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area);
- put students at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or blocking doorways or failing to report allegations of abuse);
- do things of a personal nature that a student can do independently, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (for example, personal social activities);
- use inappropriate language in the presence of students;
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students;
- discriminate against any student, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability;
- have contact with a student or their family outside of our organisation without the Principal Class knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting, attending birthday parties). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate as is pre-existing family friendships/relationships;
- have any online contact with a student or their family including social media unless necessary for example providing families with e-newsletters, learning progress or access to the curriculum. (Contact online with families where long term family friendships/relationships are established is appropriate);
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Further to the above expectations all teaching staff must also abide by the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct including Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits.

A professional relationship will be violated if a teacher:

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

A professional relationship may be compromised if a teacher:

- attends parties or socialises with students;
- invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if non-one else is present.

By observing these standards and expectations you acknowledge your responsibility to abide by this Code of Conduct and immediately report any breach of this Code of Conduct to Mount Clear College Leadership Team or member of the Principal Class.

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

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

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|--------------------------------|--|
| Full Name: | |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | |
| Principal Nominee Name: | |
| Signature: | |
| Date: | |

This policy was developed using resources authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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Resources available at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation. Throughout this paper we refer to 'Aboriginal peoples' rather than 'Aboriginal people' to reflect the plurality and diversity of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three year review cycle or prior as a result of any updated DET requirements.

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| Approved By | School Council |
| Approval Authority | Approved at School Council Meeting 23.8.16 |
| Date Reviewed | August 2016 |
| Responsible for Review | Student Services Coordinator |
| Next Review Date | June 2019 |
| References | This policy was developed using resources authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne. © State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, December 2015. Resources available at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards |