



# Child Safety Code of Conduct 2022-2024



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact (03) 8376 5200 or [alamanda.k9@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:alamanda.k9@education.vic.gov.au)

## Our Vision

Alamanda College aspires to create a challenging learning environment that develops young people with active minds and ethical spirits who will be able to contribute wisdom, compassion, empathy, integrity, and leadership in the global society of which they will all be members.

## Our Mission

Alamanda College has high expectations of all students, and we encourage them to strive to achieve their greatest potential to make a positive contribution to a diverse and ever changing local and global society. We will aspire to be a school renowned as a vibrant community that lives the school's motto of 'Dare to be wise', in all our thoughts and actions.

In embracing the College motto, we will develop creativity and innovation and encourage students to test the limits of their intellectual and physical capabilities whilst displaying their moral convictions through their actions.

We seek to provide a challenging education in a safe, supportive environment. We will strive to build positive relationships within a learning, caring and inclusive school community to achieve the best possible educational experience for each student.

Students and staff are expected to engage in the total life of the College and to actively pursue a range of learning opportunities. The ultimate aim is to develop personal qualities and attitudes that will enable students to face the challenges of the future with confidence.

## Statement of Commitment

Alamanda K-9 College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Alamanda K-9 College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.



In its planning, decision-making and operations Alamanda K-9 College will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

### **Code of Conduct**

Alamanda K-9 College 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.

### **Purpose**

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 Alamanda K-9 College will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Alamanda K-9 College will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively. This code of conduct will be used during induction of new staff and of current staff annually.

### **Staff, Volunteers and Visitors**

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.



### 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:

- always upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety Policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the 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 has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- 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 unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+ students)
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not left alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in the line of sight of another adult
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership.
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our child safety responding and reporting policy and procedures and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#)
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

### 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, or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child 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 in a school environment except in accordance with [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy](#) or where required for duty of care purposes
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy<sup>1</sup> or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought

## Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Alamanda College staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety 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.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Alamanda College Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal Lynette Jobson on 8376-5200

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact the South Western Victoria Regional office on 1300 333 232 or [swvr@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:swvr@education.vic.gov.au)

## Child Safety Standards Implementation

### Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility and accountability. Our organisational culture aims for all staff, volunteers and visitors (in addition to parents/guardians/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing support to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability. New employees, volunteers and visitors will be inducted regularly to ensure they understand Alamanda College's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from child abuse, as well as checking that their conduct towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the Alamanda College Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## Our staff, volunteers and visitors

This policy guides our staff, volunteers and visitors on how to conduct themselves with children in our organisation. All of our staff, volunteers and visitors must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the child safety standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff, volunteers and visitors, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

## Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Alamanda College understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability. All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers and visitors are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](#) website for

further information. We carry out reference, Victorian Institute of Teaching and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the most suitable people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affects our decision-making process.

## Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. We record all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of child abuse or a child safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation undertake.

## Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, visitors, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

## Legislative responsibilities

Alamanda College takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose, and the understanding that reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.



## Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimize child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff, volunteer or visitor is to have contact with a child on social media).

## Allegations, concerns and complaints

Alamanda College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff, volunteers and visitors know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of child abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above in legislative responsibilities).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

## Excursions, Incursions, Camps and Sporting Events

All staff and volunteers will ensure the safety of all children during these activities.

HOW:

- plan to provide a safe, secure learning experience for all students.
- to review Risk Assessment documents prior to camp with all staff.

## APPROVAL AND REVIEW

<b>Created date</b>	May 2022
<b>Consultation</b>	School council consultation- September 2022 Updated on the website – May 2023 Delivered for consultation to staff – October 9 <sup>th</sup> 2022
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Lyn Jobson - Alamanda College Principal and Alamanda School Council September 2022
<b>Endorsed on</b>	September 2022
<b>Next review date</b>	Jan 2024

This statement of commitment will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstance. Please see review schedule for date of next review.