SOMERSET COLLEGE

POLICY STATEMENT: VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

1. STATEMENT

Somerset College (The College) upholds the principle that the protection of children, young people, and adults is a shared and sacred responsibility. The College will ensure all persons who engage with children, young people, and adults within the Somerset community are suitable and supported to provide a safe environment that promotes physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

2. PURPOSE

The Somerset Volunteer Code of Conduct (Code) sets out the responsibilities and standards of behaviour required of all volunteers engaged with Somerset College and:

- defines a volunteer as any person over the age of 18 who provides services for Somerset College without payment under the approval and direction of the College under an established agreement. Is not an employee, contractor, or visitor.
- establishes clear expectations for volunteers to undertake any required screening checks, training and induction, as required by legislation.
- sets out the behaviours required of volunteers.
- ensure volunteers understand their obligations to promptly respond to and report any concerns or complaints.

3. PRINCIPLES

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Safeguarding means promoting the wellbeing of children and young people, and creating safe environments that protect them from abuse, harm, and exploitation. Somerset College is dedicated to safeguarding children and young people in its care, placing their interests and well-being at the core of all our actions. Volunteers are expected to adhere to this Code of Conduct and Somerset's Volunteer Policy, Child Protection Policy, and other relevant policies and procedures provided to them for their role.

Screening: Blue Card and Self-Reporting

If you will be engaging in activities that involve unsupervised contact with children, you will be requested to obtain a Blue Card or Exemption Card and you:

- cannot start or continue child-related work or volunteering until your Blue Card application has been approved
- must report changes in your police information to Blue Card services and the WHS & Compliance Manager
- must renew your Blue Card prior to the expiry date.

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Training and Induction

To ensure you understand your responsibilities as a volunteer, you agree to:

- complete all training required and undertake a site induction prior to commencement of the approved role
- only work in an approved and assigned role unless otherwise advised by the Headmaster or WHS & Compliance Manager.

Standards of Behaviour

To protect the wellbeing of those within the care of the Somerset community, you agree to:

- maintain appropriate physical, emotional, and behavioural boundaries in your interactions with all people
- only make physical contact with children and young people if the physical contact is appropriate and reasonable for an approved educational purpose, support, care, or management of the person and approved as part of your role
- respect and respond to the physical needs of children and young people
- respect emotional boundaries, including not using unprofessional criticism, shaming, embarrassing or humiliating children, young people, or adults, or making overly familiar or personal commentary
- not develop a relationship with students that is or can be seen to be overly personal. All children and young people must be treated consistently without inappropriate familiarity or in ways that favour individuals
- minimise spending time alone with children and young people and take steps to ensure you are always visible to others, even during one-on-one support
- never drive children or young people or visit them without appropriate authority from the parents/carers and the Headmaster
- report concerns suspicion of harm, if this has happened or is likely to happen (either at College or outside of College). Your concern must be reported to the Headmaster or the Deputy Head of College - Pastoral immediately.
- not use force to manage or direct behaviour
- contact the police directly and without delay, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

Cultural Safety

To ensure that everyone feels respected, valued, and free from discrimination you agree to:

- show equal respect and care for everyone, regardless of their background, ability, culture, gender, or sexuality
- acknowledge and embrace cultural customs, languages, and values, particularly those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- avoid language that discriminates or excludes individuals based on their race, culture, gender, sexuality, or abilities
- adapt communication and interactions to align with the cultural needs of individuals
- approach children in out-of-home care or those experiencing homelessness with empathy, provide a safe environment, respect their privacy, and be sensitive to their unique needs and challenges within the College community.

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Ethical Behaviour

To uphold Somerset expectations of integrity, trust, fairness, and accountability, you agree to:

- act honestly and with integrity
- conduct yourself in a moral manner, consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the College
- not enter into a financial relationship or transaction with a student
- declare any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest to the Headmaster
- not accept gifts that would be considered outside of being a reasonable token of appreciation
- promptly report to your manager or Headmaster any illegal activities or concerning behaviour of others, including College staff, volunteers or third parties.

Privacy and Confidentiality, Social Media and Public Comment

To protect privacy and maintain trust, you agree to:

- not disclose or use the private, personal, or confidential information of students, employees, parents/carers, or other volunteers (unless approved by the Headmaster or required by law)
- not use any social media, email, or phone communication for social or personal communication with Somerset children and young people (other than your own children)
- adhere to the approved College-based process for communication as part of a communication plan
- not use your camera, mobile phone or video recorder to photograph, record or post images of children, young people, employees, and others in the Somerset community
- refrain from making public comments or sharing information on social media that could unduly compromise the Somerset community, its values, privacy, or reputation.

Workplace Communication

To ensure everyone is informed and to support volunteer management you agree to:

- advise your manager or Headmaster as soon as possible if you are unable to undertake volunteering commitments
- contact your manager or Headmaster if you feel you are in a situation you cannot manage or is beyond your role and responsibility
- comply with the lawful and reasonable directions of authorised staff members
- use Somerset resources with due care and return all property and resources to Somerset when you cease volunteering.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

To ensure a safe & healthy workplace, you agree to:

- act in a manner that does not adversely affect the health, safety and wellbeing of yourself or other persons
- comply with Somerset processes and all relevant Work Health and Safety Legislation
- participate in discussions and consultation on safety and wellbeing matters that may affect you
- only operate equipment you have been trained and approved to use
- seek advice from your supervisor if unsure about work procedures
- support others to comply with established safe work procedures

- report all incidents, including near misses and injuries, to your supervisor as soon as reasonably practical after an incident. Complete the Incident report form when able
- avoid behaviour which might be offensive or obscene or which may amount to bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination, or abuse
- dress appropriately for the activities in which you are involved including required PPE.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

To ensure the Somerset community is not exposed to risks associated with drugs, alcohol and tobacco including all legal requirements, you agree to:

- never smoke at the College, or within a 5metre boundary of the College
- never use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on College property or engaging in a College activity
- never condone the use of, or provide smoking products, drugs, or alcohol to children or young people.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct

Any allegations of breaches of this Code are treated seriously. The Headmaster or manager may discuss any alleged breaches of the code with you. In some instances, the Headmaster may determine that the services of the volunteer may be discontinued. If necessary, other action may be taken, including notifying the appropriate authorities.

Support and Questions

If you have any questions or need to access support, you are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Headmaster or the Deputy Head of College - Pastoral on 0411 690 474.