



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

POLICY CATEGORY: CHILD PROTECTION

PUBLIC POLICY
STATUS: APPROVED

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.

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 protection 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.

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.

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.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Safety Code of Conduct (the code) 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 Code of Conduct of Woodleigh School's governing body, Woodleigh School (Board), the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and procedures, and the School Child Protection 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 Protection 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Woodleigh School staff, visitors, volunteers, contractors and School Board Directors.

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.

OUR CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

The code is made available to all staff, coaches, co-curricular providers, contractors, volunteers, visitors, families and students via the School public website and staff policy hub portal. It is provided to all new staff before commencement, to all visitors on sign-in at the School, and annually to all existing staff and volunteers.

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 should not initiate or seek contact with students outside the School environment.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

All persons working in the School environment will:

- Uphold the School’s Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times and adhere to the School’s Child Protection and Safety Policy.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse, violence, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect.
- Respect the language, customs and religion of a student’s family.
- Treat everyone in the school community with respect both within and outside the School environment.

- Maintain a duty of care towards students.
- Avoid covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with students.
- Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in their interactions with students.
- Behave as positive role models.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are communicating that they or another student has been abused or they are worried about their safety or the safety of another student.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, regardless of age, gender, religion, vulnerability, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, culture or language background (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students).
- Ensure that they are not alone with a student unless there is a line of sight to other adults.
- Report immediately to the Principal or the School Child Safety Officer if they have a reasonable belief or suspicion that a student has been or is being abused or neglected, or of any other child safety concern.
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child/children is/ are safe.
- Call the police on 000 if you have any immediate concerns for a student's safety.
- Understand and comply with all reporting or disclosure obligations and procedures related to protecting students from harm or abuse (including Mandatory Reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958).
- Alert the Principal or another member of the School Leadership Team if a breach of the code is observed.

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.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

All persons working in the School environment will not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Behave in a sexual or other inappropriate, or discriminatory way towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a student that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including because of the student's or another person's race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or disability.
- Exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical, including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves.
- Engage in prejudicial, oppressive or threatening behaviour towards a student.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature, or express personal views on culture, race or sexuality or use offensive, profane, sexual, discriminatory or abusive language, towards or in the presence of a student.
- Communicate privately with students outside the context of their professional or volunteer relationship.
- Work with students while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs at the School or School events in the presence of students.
- Develop any "special" relationships with a student that could be seen as offering favouritism.
- Exchange personal contact details or have any online contact with a student (including by social media, email, instant messaging, etc.) or their family unless necessary for a legitimate School purpose, e.g. providing families with School information or assisting students with their school work via School-approved avenues.
- Take, publish or share photos, video or other images of students, that are not for authorised School purposes, or without the authorisation of the student's parent/guardian.
- Post online any information or images about a student that may identify them such as their: full name, age, email address, telephone, residences, school, or details of a club or group they may attend.

REPORTING

Our Child Protection Program includes staff 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 Schools nominated Child Safety Officers. 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.

POLICY BREACH

A breach of this policy or procedure may lead to disciplinary action which is outlined further in our: Consequence and Breach policy

All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to the Principal or a member of the SLT.

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal and SLT and this may include independent audits and reviews.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Board The Board is Woodleigh School governing authority. The Board is responsible for endorsing this policy, ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated as needed and reviewing the School's compliance with this policy and child safety obligations, and is responsible for confirming this policy is consistent with Board guidelines.

The Principal The Principal is responsible for the School's compliance with this policy.

RELEVANT POLICY AND REFERENCES

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

Key relevant policies to support our program include:

- Woodleigh School Child Protection and Safety Policy
- Woodleigh School Mandatory Reporting Policy & Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Key definitions and legislation landscape for our Child Protection Program

Related legislative instruments

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

- Ministerial Order 870;
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic); and
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic).

REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed, approved and endorsed annually. Next review date is 20th February 2022.