

CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT (STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT)



STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Richmond West Primary School is committed to respecting every person's rights and protecting the safety and welfare of all people associated with the school, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable. All staff, parents, carers, community members and students have a right to be treated with courtesy and dignity and to participate in a school that is safe, secure, supportive and free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism and intimidation.

Richmond West Primary School 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.

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. This Code of Conduct outlines the responsibilities of our staff members, parents, carers, community members, and students. The Code is designed to promote appropriate and positive conduct and to prevent poor or anti-social behaviours.

The Principal and school leaders of Richmond West Primary School will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Richmond West Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

We will not tolerate anti-social behaviour at our school or towards our staff or students. It is an offence to behave in a disorderly, violent or offensive way on Department premises or fail to leave the premises if directed to do so by the principal, or their nominee.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member 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. All registered schools are required to develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school. At Richmond West Primary School we will:

- embed a culture of child safety at the school;
- allocate roles and responsibilities to ensure child safe practices are adhered to;
- inform the school community about the strategies being employed at the school.

To successfully embed a culture of child safety, Richmond West Primary School has a commitment to **zero tolerance of child abuse** led by the school council. This commitment is open and transparent, and shared by all members of the school community, including staff (including school employees, contractors and volunteers), parents and families, visitors and students.

Note: Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used under any circumstances.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff, visitors, volunteers, parents and council members of Richmond West Primary School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

Acceptable behaviours

As staff, visitors, 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:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's *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 are telling you 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;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability;
- 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) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse;
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, visitors, 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 school policy or where required for duty of care purposesⁱ;

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- consume alcohol in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, contrary to school policyⁱⁱ or take illicit drugs under any circumstances;
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps.
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities);
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability;
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate);
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Richmond West Primary School's principal and/or Student Wellbeing Officer.

NB: These procedures are not intended to:

- prohibit or discourage any school staff or community member from reporting an allegation of **child abuse** to a person external to the school;

In the case of an allegation of **child abuse** - See *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy* for more information.

School Council and the Principal have the obligation to:

- Model exemplary conduct by demonstrating behaviours, values and principles consistent with this Code of Conduct;
- Communicate high expectations for the way in which staff, parents, carers, community members and students conduct themselves;
- Advise parents, carers and other members of the community of the appropriate mechanisms for dealing with complaints;
- Request any person acting in an offensive, aggressive or uncooperative manner to leave the school buildings or grounds, and if necessary, as the authorised person, direct them to do so;
- Call the police if a person fails to follow a direction to leave the premises;
- Provide a safe learning community to all people who enter our school and provide education services to our children;
- Communicate to the school community about Richmond Primary School's zero tolerance of child abuse;
- Create, pass, implement and review policies and procedures that promote the Child Safe Standards;
- Follow DET and VRQA policies in regard to the Child Safe Standards;
- Ensure the school communicates the Child Safe Standards each year to the school community.

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Teachers and staff have the obligation to:

- Model exemplary conduct by demonstrating behaviours, values and principles consistent with the Victorian Institute of Teaching's 'Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct' at all times;
- Work in partnership with the principal, parents and carers to enhance the learning outcomes and support the well-being and conduct of all students;
- Communicate high expectations for the conduct of all students, including high expectations about learning;
- Ensure consistency and fairness in interactions with all members of the community;
- Take seriously and respond appropriately to concerns from students, parents or colleagues about incidents of bullying, harassment, racism, violence or anti-social behaviour;
- Report all incidents of bullying, racism, harassment or violent conduct to the principal as appropriate;
- Immediately terminate discussions or meetings with parents or community members who have resorted to bullying, harassment, threats, or racism and report the matter to the principal.

Parents, caregivers and community members have the obligation to:

- Work in partnership with the school to support the learning outcomes, well-being and conduct of their child;
- Support staff in maintaining a safe, secure and respectful school environment for all;
- Contribute positively to behaviour, academic and other support plans that relate to their child;
- Raise concerns in a calm and adult manner and work with the school to resolve issues positively;
- Respect and comply with requests or directions of the principal or other members of staff;
- Be aware that loud, aggressive or threatening behaviour or any form of harassment of staff or students is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and will result in the termination of any discussion or meeting;
- Be aware that persons acting in an offensive, aggressive or uncooperative manner will be instructed by the principal or their nominee to leave the school buildings or grounds. Failure to do so can result in legal action.

Students are expected to:

- Work hard at their schoolwork and engage positively with others in their classroom and the school yard;
- Take responsibility for their conduct and learning;
- Adhere to the school values and lead by example;
- Demonstrate respect for themselves, other members of the school and their learning environment;

COMMUNICATION

This code of conduct will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website communications platform (COMPASS)
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Discussed at student forums
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related School Policies:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

Related DET Resources

- For more information about these offences and reporting obligations see: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).
- [Child Safe Standards Action List](#)
- [PROTECT website](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Ministerial Order 870](#)

This Code of Conduct and Statement of Commitment must be read in conjunction with:

- [The law of the Commonwealth](#) or of the relevant state or territory;
- [The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct](#);
- [Complaints Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures](#).

EVALUATION AND APPROVAL

This Code of Conduct and Statement of Commitment will be reviewed and approved by Richmond West Primary School Council as part of the school's review cycle, or if DET regulations change. Following any reportable incident, a review shall be conducted by the school to assess whether Richmond West Primary School's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under their care.

Policy last reviewed	February 2022
Approved by	Principal and School Council (March 2022)
Consultation	School leadership/School Council March 2022
Next scheduled review date	February 2024

ⁱ PAL: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/photographing-students/policy> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

ⁱⁱ PAL: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/alcohol-school-events/policy>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet