

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

1.1 Introduction

Staff, directors, volunteers and contractors at the College are required to abide by this Code.

The purpose of this Code is to promote child safety within all College Environments.

The following list of behaviours includes examples of what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour.

1.2 Acceptable Behaviours

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of, or in connection with, the College must:

- a) contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone '000');
- b) adhere to the Child Safety Policy and Procedure and uphold the College's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- c) take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- d) conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a staff member, director, volunteer or contractor of the College and as a positive role model to children and young people;
- e) work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the organisation;
- f) be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
- g) maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
- h) establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- i) be fair, considerate and honest with others;
- j) treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas, opinions and backgrounds;
- k) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child's self-identification);
- l) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
- m) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;
- n) listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
- o) ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child;

- p) comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic);
- q) raise concerns about suspected abuse with the Head of Welfare, Chaplain, Deputy Principal or Principal as soon as possible;
- r) record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
- s) if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- t) be professional in their actions;
- u) maintain strict impartiality;
- v) comply with the College's guidelines on contact with children, including via social electronic media;
- w) respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the Child Safety Policy and Procedure and your reporting obligations;
- x) maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people; and
- y) operate within the policies and guidelines of the College.

1.3 Unacceptable Behaviour

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of the College must not:

- a) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- b) put a child at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);
- c) speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
 - i. swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;
 - ii. yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where the child's safety may be in danger;
 - iii. use of hurtful sarcasm.
- d) discuss sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to discuss these matters, or the child is a member of your family;
- e) have contact with a student outside of the College without the consent of their parent or carer and, if the contact involves after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching of a student (other than a member of your family), with the prior consent of the College. Accidental/incidental contact, such as:
 - i. attending a friend's BBQ in which students are attending;
 - ii. attending church and/or church activities in which students are attending; and
 - iii. any other incidental contact that is outside of your professional relationship with the child and that is not for an improper purpose,

is appropriate;

- f) have any online contact with a child or their family outside of necessary contact, e.g. by providing e-newsletters, assisting students with their school work, on Schoology or by email;
- g) use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account to communicate with a child (unless the child is a member of your family);
- h) exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child (unless the child is a member of your family);
- i) use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child (unless the child is a member of your family or your contact with the child is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your professional obligations);
- j) use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
- k) provide or allow a child to consume alcohol or illegal drugs
- l) initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves
- m) engage in rough physical games;
- n) hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way
- o) engage in any sexual contact with a child. For the purposes of this Code, sexual contact is defined as vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral intercourse or the touching of an erogenous zone of another (including but not limited to the thighs, genitals, buttocks, pubic region or chest) for the purpose of sexually arousing or gratifying either person;
- p) take a child to their home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless the child is a member of your family or written parental permission has been provided);
- q) be naked in the presence of a child (unless the child is a member of your family);
- r) possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of children;
- s) sleep in the same beds, sleeping bags, rooms or tents with a child (unless the child is a member of your family);
- t) discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;
- u) engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- v) be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time
- w) develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child for their own needs
- x) show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention

- y) photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- z) do anything in contravention of the College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

1.4 Physical Contact / Touching

All teachers are also required to follow the Victorian Institute of Teaching's ("VIT") Code of Conduct. Example:

- a) *Principle 1.2: Teachers treat their students with courtesy and dignity:*
 - i. work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect;
 - ii. model and engage in respectful and impartial language;
 - iii. protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm.

Staff members, directors, volunteers, and contractors are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of children. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by children.

Physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove children quickly from danger or threat of danger.

Appropriate contact between staff members, directors, volunteers, contractors, and children is part of normal human relationships. Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

- a) consider the child's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a child to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed child;
- b) work in an open environment; for example, in confidential interviews or a one-to-one meeting, the door should be open with visual access. Exceptions apply for professions with strict confidentiality requirements;
- c) be alert to cues from children about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space;
- d) be sensitive when interacting with children who may misinterpret your actions, such as those who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex;
- e) be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour;
- f) be cautious about physical contact in games or practical instruction. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do, maintain a safe and appropriate distance;
- g) physical contact should be made in a way that makes children feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back or rub on the side of their arm for reassurance. Massaging a child or allowing a child to massage you is inappropriate physical contact (unless the child is a member of your family and you comply with all relevant legislation).

Physical contact with a child should be avoided where possible.

1.5 Transportation and off-site events

Other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen, it is not acceptable to transport children without written permission of their parent, carer or guardian.

It is prohibited to have unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with children while in vehicles.

Children should be transported directly to their destination. No stops should be made other than those that are reasonably scheduled for meals or comfort stops. This obligation does not apply to children that are a member of your family.

It is prohibited to have children spend the night at the residence of a staff member, director, volunteer or contractor without parental/guardian prior approval.

Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults must be separate from facilities or arrangements for children (unless the child is a member of your family).

1.6 Pastoral Care

Subject to the above restraints, pastoral care of students at the College takes place within the context of relationships. The College values each person, without discrimination, and seeks to provide an environment of acceptance, encouragement, challenge, safety and care.

Teachers seek to develop strong relationships with students and their families, in order to provide emotional support and spiritual care. This is enabled in the classroom, in homeroom groups and during extra-curricular activities, such as whole school activities, camps, excursions, sporting events and information/parent evenings.

Teachers, acting in support of parents, seek to discipline students towards genuine Christ-like behaviour, modelling and encouraging mutual respect, integrity and accountability.

Students are given clear guidelines regarding behaviour and are expected to contribute towards a positive learning and social community. Guidance, correction and restoration are a part of pastoral care, and contribute to the development of community and good citizenship. In the terminology of Christian community, students are encouraged to become followers of Christ in His life and teaching.

Secondary Students

Secondary students are grouped in year levels. On Monday and Friday mornings, Assembly and Chapel are held in the Middle School Building. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings homegroup is held, where teachers and students share devotions, reflective of the College's Biblical Christian Worldview and core values, inclusive of life stories, anecdotes and strategies, in order to encourage further development of students' sense of value, reiterating the importance of being a part of the community. Home Group teachers mark rolls and check for uniform compliance.

Primary Students

Primary students meet with their classroom teachers during the first session of the day to mark rolls, for devotions and for both personal and group connections.

They also participate in specific skill and strategy development for social and emotional learning through the "You Can Do It! Program".

All homeroom and classroom teachers may refer students to the College's Head of Welfare, the Chaplain or the Director of Primary Learning for additional pastoral care. Weekly e-newsletters are sent home by either the class teacher to keep families in touch with coming events and where outstanding achievements can be noted and celebrated.

In both the Primary and Secondary schools, classroom teachers are available for communication with parents in order to support the student and to build strong connections between home and the College. At times where students or parents are not happy with the pastoral support pathways for student complaint or grievances are outlined in the Grievance and Complaint Management Policy.

1.7 Confidentiality

Disclosing information to staff, directors, volunteers and contractors

When children are having a written or verbal interaction with staff, directors, volunteers and/or contractors of the College, that interaction is confidential to the organisation not to the individual. This means that a staff member, director, volunteer or contractor is able to talk to the Principal in a way that identifies the child. The guiding principle is, that where possible, the privacy of the child should be respected at all times. When considering breaching their privacy who and how many people are told should be based on what is believed to be in the best interests of the child.

Disclosing information to people external to the organisation

Staff, directors, volunteers and contractors should not discuss confidential matters about children with people outside the organisation in a way that identifies that child except when they have the express permission of the child or it complies with the College's Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure. In circumstances where staff, directors, volunteers and/or contractors believe that there is not enough knowledge within the organisation to provide the best possible assistance to a child, they are able to seek expertise external to the College. When communicating with people outside the College the child's identity should be protected.

Informing children

It is the responsibility of the College to communicate the limits of confidentiality in the College to children who are likely to have an ongoing relationship with the College. These guidelines should be published in an accessible place for children.

1.8 Related legislation

- a) *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic);
- b) *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- c) *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic); and
- d) *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001* (Vic).
- e) *Working with Children Check Act 2005* (Vic)

Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection – North Division Intake: 1300 664 977.

Child Protection Crisis Line – 24 Hours, seven days a week. Telephone: 13 12 78



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Declaration

Child Safety Code of Conduct

I agree to adhere to the Northside Christian College Child Safety Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date: ____/____/____

Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure

I have read, understood and accepted the standards and expectations of the Northside Christian College, as detailed in each of the documents listed below.

Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedures (Policy No. 1)

Signature:

Date: ____/____/____