



# Northside

Christian College

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## Child Safety Code Of Conduct



# Child Safety Code Of Conduct

## 1. Introduction

Northside Christian College (the College) is committed to protecting its students from all aspects of harm and has established strategies, practices, policies and procedures to uphold its public commitment to student safety and wellbeing.

The College takes a zero tolerance approach to any behaviours that jeopardise student safety and wellbeing (including child abuse and reportable conduct).

Accordingly, this Child Safety Code of Conduct:

- Clearly establishes a list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by members of the College community towards our students, with the ultimate aim of protecting such students from harm.
- Offers guidance to College staff and inform them considerations relevant to personal, professional and ethical decision making.
- Serves to protect our students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote student safety and wellbeing in our School environment.
- Provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

This Code is part of a broader culture of student safety and wellbeing that is woven into the fabric of Northside Christian College. As a community, our unified commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students is paramount to our actions and decision making. As a College community, we are guided by a common commitment to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour to each other and when engaging with students.

This Code is a child safety code of conduct made in accordance with Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and the School Boarding Premises, and is part of the College’s student safety and wellbeing framework.

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

## 2. Application

This Code applies to all Committee of Management members, the Principal, employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on the College’s premises, or at College-organised activities and events. Collectively, these individuals are referred to as ‘staff’.

This policy extends to any other person who is engaged in student-connected work at the College, or that otherwise has direct and regular contact with the College’s students (whether supervised or not).

This Code is in addition to profession specific codes of conduct, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching’s (VIT) Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Conduct for teachers that outline behaviours expected by all teachers in Victoria. School staff must also comply with other policies and procedures at the College that apply to them, including the Child Safety Policy.

### 3. 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. seek input from families in relation to decisions impacting students, and act to reduce barriers to inclusion taking into account the diverse needs of students and their families;
- p. inform and empower all students about their rights, including in relation to safety, information and participation;
- q. in an online environment, identify and mitigate risks while ensuring students' rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities are upheld;
- r. ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child;
- s. comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- t. raise concerns about suspected abuse with the Head of Student Wellbeing, Chaplain, Deputy Principal or Principal as soon as possible;
- u. record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
- v. if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- w. be professional in their actions;
- x. maintain strict impartiality;
- y. comply with the College's guidelines on contact with children, including via social electronic media;
- z. respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the Child Safety Policy and Procedure and your reporting obligations;
- aa. maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people; and
- ab. operate within the policies and guidelines of the College.

#### 4. 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. i. swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;
  - II. ii. yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where the child's safety may be in danger;
  - III. 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. attend the College, or school-related activities and events, whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances, or whilst affected by prescription medication to the extent that the ability to perform professional duties is impaired;
- k. use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
- l. provide or allow a child to consume alcohol or illegal drugs;
- m. 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;
- n. engage in rough physical games;
- o. hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way;
- p. 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;

- q. 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);
- r. be naked in the presence of a child (unless the child is a member of your family);
- s. possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of children;
- t. sleep in the same beds, sleeping bags, rooms or tents with a child (unless the child is a member of your family);
- u. discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;
- v. engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
- w. be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time
- x. develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child for their own needs
- y. show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- z. photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
- aa. post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: name, age, email address, telephone number, residence, school, or details of any association, club or group they may be affiliated with;
- ab. do anything in contravention of the College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

### 5. Physical Contact / Touching

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.

## 6. 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).

## 7. 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 and participate in morning Home Group classes 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.

Students also participate in specific skill and strategy development for social and emotional learning through the "You Can Do It" and PeaceWise Programs.

### 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.

Students also participate in specific skill and strategy development for social and emotional learning through the Friendly Program.

All homeroom and classroom teachers may refer students to the College's Head of Student Wellbeing, the Chaplain, or appropriate Director of Learning for additional pastoral care. Sub-school e-newsletters are sent home by sub-school leaders to keep families in touch with upcoming 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..

## **8. 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.

## **9. Cultural Safety**

Northside Christian College is committed to providing culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.

The College is committed to ensuring that racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism within the College are addressed with appropriate consequences.

## **10. Staff as Parents and Members of the College Community**

The College recognises that many staff have children of their own, and in any case will socialise with other adults who have children.

While this Code is not intended to interfere with a staff member's right to a private life, working at the College requires a serious commitment to student safety and wellbeing.

Accordingly, in all aspects staff must conduct themselves in a way consistent with this Code, including by avoiding in private situations (including on social media) which could be perceived as contrary to this Code or involving a risk to student safety and wellbeing.

## **11. Report Concerns**

Members of the College community (other than staff) who are aware of actual or suspect child abuse or reportable conduct, or who otherwise have concerns about a student's welfare, should immediately raise their concern directly with the College in accordance with the Child Safety Policy.

Other concerns can be raised in accordance with the College's Grievance and Complaints Management Policy.

Staff should report any concerns about potential breaches of this Code to the Principal (or the Committee of Management if the concern is about the Principal), and otherwise comply with the Child Safety Policy.

Whenever there are concerns that a student is in immediate danger, Victoria Police should be contacted on 000.

## 12. Responsibilities

Student safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of everyone at Northside Christian College. For further information, refer to the Child Safety Policy and Child Safe Strategy document.

## 13. Breach of this Code

Where a staff member breaches this Code, the College will take appropriate disciplinary action, including in the case of a serious breach, summary dismissal.

## 14. Communication

This policy is made publicly available on the College's website.

This document is available to staff as part of the College's and the Committee of Management's internal policies and procedures. Aspects of (and updates to) the College's Child Safety Policy, including this Code will be addressed in the College's professional development updates, training programs, and newsletters.

To properly implement this Code:

- The Committee of Management will ensure the procurement of policies of the College for facilities and services from third parties to ensure the safety of students.
- The Committee of Management will review this Code and the College's student safe practices at least every two years (or more frequently after a significant student safety incident) and improve where applicable.
- Families and the College community will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the review and development of the College's child safety practises (including this Code).
- Periodic training and refresher sessions on this Code are provided to all staff.
- All staff must ensure that they abide by this Code and assist the College with its implementation.

## 15. Related Documents

Legislation:

- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- Ministerial Order No. 1359

Policies:

- Child Safe Standards - Document Quick Reference Guide
- Supervision Policy (Policy No. 22)
- Staff Contact with Students Policy (Policy No. 11)
- Student Travel in Staff Cars Policy (Policy No. 38)
- Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 9)
- Employment Policy (Policy No. 2)
- Working with Children Check Policy (Policy No. 40)
- Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 31)
- Visitors to the College (Policy No. 3)
- Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 32)
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 14)
- Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39)
- Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49)
- Social Media Policy (Policy No. 51)
- Parent Code of Conduct (Policy No. 56)
- Restrictive Intervention Policy (Policy No. 64)
- Privacy Policy (Policy No. 16)
- Records Management Policy (Policy No. 76)



Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – North Division Intake: 1300 664 977.

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

# DECLARATION

## 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: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_





# Northside

## Christian College

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