

Child Safety Code of Conduct

At St John's Lutheran Primary School Ltd, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school.

Central to the mission of the School is an explicit commitment to providing a safe and supportive environment where the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual and physical wellbeing of our students is a priority.

All students enrolled at the School have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our priority, and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

This policy aligns with the directions on Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct provided by Lutheran Education VIC, NSW, TAS and ACT Ltd (LEVNT) to provide minimum directions on Child Safety and Wellbeing in our system schools, promote consistency, good governance and best practice in our system and School policy.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everyone is educated about the 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, a Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

Scope

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to demonstrate the strong commitment of the School to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our School. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures, actions and strategies that will be implemented to ensure that a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the School, to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our School environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the School.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all Board Directors, Principal, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and Pastors and is to be made available to our community via our public website.

Purpose

This Code of Conduct has a specific focus on promoting child safety and wellbeing in the School environment and safeguarding children and young people at the School against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and occupational codes.

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Acceptable Behaviours

All School Board Directors, the Principal and all our other staff,volunteers, contractors and pastors at the School are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety, at all times.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect.
- Taking into account the needs of all children and students.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children – particularly if they are saying 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 children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification).
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero-tolerance for discrimination, racism and religious intolerance).
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the School's leadership or child safety officers.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).
- Understanding and complying with all obligations as they relate to the reportable conduct scheme including reporting allegations of reportable conduct in accordance with the school's Child safety reporting policy and procedure.
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the School's leadership or child safety officers.
- Ensuring as quickly as possible that all impacted children are safe if an allegation of child abuse is made.
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or specific allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.
- Ensuring they comply with any and all applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct.

Unacceptable Behaviours

All School Board Directors, the Principal and all other staff, volunteers, contractors and pastors at the School must NOT:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Fail to report any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps).

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- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors).
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves (for example, 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, religious beliefs, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- Discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Have contact with a child or their family outside school without the School leaderships or child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent or the School governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after-hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching); accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- Have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging) or their family unless necessary (for example, providing families with eNewsletters or assisting students with their School work).
- Use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account.
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses.
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parents, guardians or carers.
- Consume alcohol or illicit drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct published by the VIT. These principles include:

- Knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities.
- Working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect.
- Modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language.
- Protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm.
- Respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters.
- Interacting with students without displaying bias or preference.
- Not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

Psychologists and School Counsellors

In their dealings with students, psychologists and School counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.
- The Australian Counselling Association.
- Speech Pathology Australia.

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Sports and Recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- Using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language.
- Coaching students to be 'good sports'.
- Explaining the reason for any contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity.
- Avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

Agreement to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

A copy of this Child Safety Code of Conduct is provided for our community on our website and provided to all Board Directors, Staff, Pastors, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors at induction, or prior to them commencing work at the School. It is also communicated via refresher training at regular intervals. All Board Directors, Staff, Pastors and Direct Contact Volunteers must sign an agreement to adhere to this Child Safety Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at the School.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between the School and Direct Contact Contractors. Therefore, all Direct Contact Contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct upon signing the contract or upon commencing work at the School.

Code of Conduct Breach

All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to the Principal.

Compliance with this Code of Conduct will be monitored by the Principal and the School Board Chair and this may include independent audits and reviews.

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the School may start the dispute resolution process for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the Principal is suspected of breaching this Code of Conduct, the concerned party is advised to contact the Board Chair and/or the LEVNT Executive Director.

Where any other member of the School community, including volunteers and contractors, is suspected of breaching this code, the school is to take appropriate action, including (if applicable) in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing reporting policy following the PROTECT: Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools policy.

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In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body, such as the VIT.

Emergency and working circumstances breaches

From time to time an exception may need to be made that places you in breach of the code of conduct so as to prioritise child safety. This may reasonably occur due to emergency situation, staff availability, family situation or your assessment of child safety risk. Staff working circumstances such as working and living in regional communities and/or smaller schools and/or where your children attend at same school you work you may also be placed at risk of breach of professional boundaries and code of conduct. All exceptions that may result in breach or present a risk to your compliance with this code should be reported to the [Principal] in writing as soon as reasonably practicable in the form of an incident report. For staff due to their working circumstances find they may be at risk for breach of professional boundaries or code should report this to the Principal for review and logging onto the child safety risk and exceptions register. Refer to the Staff Professional Boundaries Procedure for further details. The Principal will review these incidents and circumstances to provide risk mitigation strategies and directions.

Policy Control & Approval Information

Policy Category	Policy Risk Rating	Approver	Date Approved	Next Review
Child Safety	High	Board	13 February 2026	February 2028

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