



MELBOURNE
GIRLS GRAMMAR
AN ANGLICAN SCHOOL

Child Safety Code of Conduct

POLICY CATEGORY: CHILD SAFETY

POLICY CONTROL INFORMATION

POLICY RISK RATING	VERSION	OWNER	PUBLICATION
High	2.1	Deputy Principal	Internal (eVI), School Community (eVI) and Public (website)
MGGS APPROVER	MGGS APPROVAL DATE	COUNCIL APPROVAL DATE	NEXT REVIEW DATE
Principal	14 June 2022	21 June 2022	June 2023

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to clearly outline policies applicable to Child Safety Code of Conduct by Melbourne Girls Grammar ("MGGS").

All staff, volunteers and Council and sub-committee members of MGGS are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. The purpose of this code of conduct 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 MGGS school environment;
- complement the MGGS *Child Safety Policy*;
- set standards about the ways in which individuals working in the MGGS school environment are expected to behave and conduct themselves when interacting with our students; and
- outline the possible consequences should this code of conduct be breached.

1.1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

- As MGGS staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other members of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment and protecting of all children / students in our care and adhering to our *Child Safety Policy*.
- We are committed to providing a child-safe and child-friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse and are committed to the protection of children from all forms of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. Our policies and procedures will provide the name and contact details of staff who have specific responsibilities in relation to child safety and who may receive reports of suspicion of child abuse. Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the emotional, physical and cultural safety of all children and to providing a safe environment for their learning.
- We are committed to promoting the cultural safety and participation of Indigenous children, young people and their families.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

1.2. Scope

All individuals working in the MGGS school environment are required to comply with this code of conduct. Such individuals, referred to as staff in this policy, include those who are:

- directly engaged or employed by MGGS, such as its teachers, administrative staff, non-teaching staff and specialist coaches;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider;
- a minister of religion; and
- the wider School community who are engaged in child-connected work.

This code of conduct applies to all school activities during and outside of school hours. This includes school activities that are occurring on school campus, boarding residences, offsite, online, co-curricular, sport activities and programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel. In the application and implementation of this policy full consideration is required regarding the needs of our students including culture, diversity and age.

The MGGS school environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by MGGS for use by a child during or outside school hours, and includes:

- our Morris Hall Campus in Caroline Street, South Yarra;
- our Merton Hall Campus and ELC and Boarding House facilities in Anderson Street, South Yarra;
- online school environments including our email and intranet systems; and
- other locations provided by MGGS for our students' use, including locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

2. POLICY SECTION

2.1. Standards of Conduct

The protection of children and young people is the responsibility of everyone at MGGS including staff, Council and Committee members, the Chaplain, contractors, parents and volunteers. 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.

MGGS staff are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and are expected to behave with children by:

- upholding the School's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times and adhering to the *Child Safety Policy*
- protecting them from violence, abuse, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect
- treating students and families in our school community with respect when in their presence, [both within and outside the school environment](#) and respecting the language and customs and religion of their family
- avoiding covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with them
- maintaining appropriate physical and emotional boundaries when in their presence
- refraining from using or possessing illegal drugs or alcohol when working with them
- being positive role models
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child
- respecting their privacy
- maintaining a duty of care towards students
- promoting the emotional, physical, and cultural safety of all children

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, regardless of age, gender or gender identity, religion, vulnerability, disability, neurodiversity, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, culture or language background (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students)
- understanding and complying 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)
- reporting immediately any child safety concerns (including any reasonable belief or suspicion that a student is being abused or neglected) and any allegations of child abuse to the Principal or another member of the MGGS Child Safety Team (Deputy Principal, Executive Director of Early Learning and Junior Years, Executive Director of Middle Years, Executive Director of Senior Years) and ensuring that the child(ren) is/are safe
- reporting immediately any concerns regarding the suitability of existing staff for child related work if a breach of the Code is observed to Principal or another member of the MGGS Child Safety Team
- encouraging students to have a voice and participate in all relevant school activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them
- using online contact with students and their families only for educational or relevant school purposes; adhering to the MGGS *Communication Technologies* and *Social Media Policies*
- having current Working with Children checks or equivalent background checks when required

The Principal or Principal's delegate will:

- report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

MGGS staff must not instigate inappropriate behaviours with children that include but are not limited to the following:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or amount to "grooming" behaviour (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily or inappropriately physical, sexual or otherwise in appropriate or discriminatory, or expose students to such behaviour
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- use physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of children (e.g. spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by children)
- put children at risk of abuse
- 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
- 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, because of (but not limited to) age, gender, gender identity, culture, race, sexuality, ethnicity, neurodiversity, vulnerability or disability engage in inappropriate contact with a student via social media platforms, via phone call, messaging or any other online method

- accept or send 'friend' or contact requests on Social Media, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.
- 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
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought
- work with students whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- consume alcohol or illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of students
- engage in prejudicial, oppressive or threatening behaviour towards a student
- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the [Photography and Publishing Policy](#) or where required for duty of care purposes
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- transport children without written permission of the Principal, delegate or child's parent/guardian other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen

2.2. Teachers

Teachers are specifically required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the *Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct* published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- do not violate or compromise the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students
- treating their students with courtesy and dignity

While using physical discipline in any way is not appropriate, physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove children quickly from danger or the threat of danger.

2.3. School Counsellors

As registered mental health professionals, school counsellors should also adhere to the ethical code, guidelines and policies of their relevant registration board such as the Psychology Board of Australia, the Australian Association of Social Workers or the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia.

2.4. 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"

- if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sport or other recreational activity then explain the reason for the contact and ask for the student's permission
- avoid 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.

2.5. School Nurses/Health Officers

Nurses/Health officers are responsible for maintaining their professional and personal boundaries when providing care to our students. This care is likely to include personal contact with a student. Nurses are to abide by the minimum standards for practice as set out in the current *Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia* which provides:

- nurses practice in accordance with the standards of their profession
- nurses respect the dignity, culture, ethnicity, values and beliefs of people receiving care and treatment
- nurses treat personal information obtained in a professional capacity as private and confidential
- nurses promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in their relationship with those in their care.

2.6. Boarding House Staff

The Boarding House staff are responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students for whom accommodation is provided by MGGS. Boarding House staff have additional responsibilities in relation to their conduct and behaviour towards children:

- supervision of boarding house buildings or grounds for security purposes should not intrude unreasonably on the boarder's privacy
- ensuring privacy for boarders when toileting and washing
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- ensuring that any permitted boarder access to staff accommodation does not involve inappropriate favouritism or inappropriate one-to-one contact between staff and boarders.

2.7. Implementation

The School community will be informed about this policy. It will be available on eVI and publicly available on the MGGS website and communicated in the School's newsletters.

3. POLICY COMPLIANCE

3.1. Policy Breach

Staff who breach this code of conduct will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with MGGS's disciplinary policies. Such disciplinary action will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will be at the discretion of the Principal or their delegate.

Contractors and volunteers of MGGS who breach this code of conduct may face termination of their engagement with MGGS. Employees of contractors or sub-contractors may also be refused permission to continue working in the MGGS school environment.

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

All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to the Policy Owner and the Risk and Compliance Manager.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with *Child Safety Response and Mandatory Reporting Procedure* and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

3.2. Policy Compliance monitoring

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Child Safety Team and the Risk and Compliance Manager and this may include independent audits and reviews.

4. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND LEGISLATION

4.1. MGGS policy and procedure alignment

- *Child Safety Policy*
- *Child Safety Response and Mandatory Reporting Procedure*
- *Child Abuse Redress Policy*
- *Child Safety Strategy*
- *Working with Children Check Policy*
- *Volunteer Management Procedure*

4.2. Related legislation

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

- *Ministerial Order 1359*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*

Further information on this policy can be obtained from: the Deputy Principal.

5. POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This Policy is rated High risk. This Policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis or more frequently, if required, following any significant incidents and to keep up-to-date with changes to laws and government policies. This Policy is to be reviewed by the Deputy Principal and the Risk and Compliance Manager.

Any significant changes to this Policy must be approved by the Principal and School Council.