

# CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3: CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ALTONA COLLEGE

## RATIONALE

Altona College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and 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.

- One of the most effective child safe strategies to help protect children from harm is a Code of Conduct.
- A Child Safe Code of Conduct establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
- It lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable relationships.
- If people behave in ways that are unacceptable the Code of Conduct enables the organisation to take action.
- Without a Code of Conduct, it can be very difficult to raise behavioural issues with staff and volunteers.
- If unacceptable behaviour continues, this can seriously compromise the safety of the environment,
- Swift and appropriate action must be taken when the Code is breached, otherwise people will continue to feel compromised or unsafe.

## PURPOSE

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 of ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The principal and school leaders of Altona College will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The principal and school leaders of Altona College will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

This Code of Conduct intends:

- To ensure Altona College complies with the legislative requirements of MO 870.
- To ensure the school demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
- To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
- To provide guidance to staff and volunteers on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.
- To ensure the school develops and publishes a code of conduct that is compliant with the Child Safe Standard 3.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards students.

## SCOPE

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.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- The safety and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for Altona College.
- The Leadership Team has drafted an interim Child Safe Code of Conduct and in due course will consult staff, volunteers, families and children on what should be included. Consulting children will help the staff become more aware of how their behaviour impacts on children.
- The school will know it has successfully implemented Standard 3 when:
  - appropriate behaviour with children is clearly defined, accessible and understood by staff, volunteers, families and children
  - steps staff should take if they identify child safety risks are clearly outlined
  - staff, volunteers, families and children understand culturally safe behaviour and relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - staff, volunteers, families and children understand safe behaviour and relationships with children with a disability and children who are vulnerable
  - children and families from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds can access and understand the Code of Conduct
  - efforts have been made to make the code of conduct accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability and children who are vulnerable

## CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.
2. It is binding all staff members, volunteers and external providers working with children on-site or off-site.
3. Staff, volunteers and external providers are expected to signify that they have read and understood this Code of Conduct by completing the attached statement which will be recorded and filed appropriately.

## ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

*As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the Altona College 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 at all times and adhering to the school's Child Safe 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/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, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the Altona College 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 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 manner
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes<sup>1</sup>
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances<sup>2</sup>

4. Staff, volunteers and external providers should avoid unnecessary physical contact with children.
5. The school has identified that the following are not beyond bounds for physical contact:
  - escorting a young, uncertain, primary aged (particularly), by holding the hand
  - rendering first aid
  - comforting a distressed child by holding the shoulders briefly
  - assisting children with disabilities to complete physical tasks e.g. dressing after a swimming class
  - demonstrating/reinforcing a skill in sports coaching by e.g. showing a student how to hold a bat
  - a congratulatory pat on the shoulders
  - shaking hands
6. Induction procedures or manuals for new staff, volunteers and external providers will include information about the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
7. The school will conduct workshops and training sessions for staff to ensure that everyone involved with the school understands the requirements of the Code of Conduct and are clear what to do when someone breaches it.
8. Other adults will be advised that if they become aware of any risk adults may pose to children, or that children may pose to each other, in both physical and online environments, they should inform a member of the Leadership Team as soon as practicable.
9. So that all members of the school community, including parents and children, are aware of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, it will be displayed prominently in various locations throughout the school and posted on the website.
10. All staff should be aware that unsatisfactory performance procedures in relation to the Child Safe Code of Conduct may be applied as per the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2017, Schedule 4.
11. If a volunteer or external provider does not comply with the expected standard of behaviour, the Principal will discuss their behaviour with them. Noncompliance can lead to disciplinary action being taken, which may result in the person being asked to leave the organisation.
12. The school will ensure that procedures for raising and managing complaints and consequences for breaching of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, are known and understood by everyone. For specific procedures, please refer to the school's Complaints & Concerns, Parents Policy.
13. For particularly high-risk activities, such as overnight camps, the school will determine whether or not a specific Code of Conduct is required. This could outline additional topics such as sleeping arrangements, personal care, leaving the site, no drugs or alcohol on site, staff-to-child ratio requirements, etc.

## **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was endorsed/approved by the Altona College school council in July 2020 and is scheduled for review in July 2023.

References:

Creating a Child Safe Organisation Guide p.26  
An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards State of Victoria, DHHS November 2015  
and  
Protect – Identifying All Forms of Child Abuse in Victorian Schools 2016



## Child Safe Code of Conduct Agreement

I have read and understood this Child Safe Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Principal's Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Signature of Witness .....