

## CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Echuca East Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a 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.

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 or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Echuca East Primary School 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 Echuca East Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

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.

### Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the 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 to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy when the school has a policy in place.
- 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/the 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 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 the 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 school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
- 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<sup>2</sup> or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

**Evaluation**

This Code of Conduct was ratified by School Council at the meeting held **Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>** 2016. For review if legislative or other changes require in the interim or no later than December 2018.

PRINCIPAL: Lyn Strachan

PRESIDENT: Brett Thomson

**References:**

Selecting the [Hyperlinks](#) will take you to the DET / or other websites that can provide further information.

**To be read in conjunction with the following EEPS policies:**

- Child Safe Policy & Statement of Commitment
- Student Engagement & Wellbeing
- Photographing and Filming
- Mandatory Reporting
- Visitors
- Volunteers

<sup>1</sup> SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

<sup>2</sup> SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafepages/standards.html>

[Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools](#)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullstoppers/Pages/adviceonlinegrooming.aspx>

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>

**The Ministerial Order 870 broadly defines some terms.**

**Child Abuse** includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving –
  - A sexual offence or
  - An offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)**.

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), which was amended in 2014 to include offences of: (i) failing to disclose a sexual offence<sup>1</sup>; (ii) grooming for

sexual conduct<sup>2</sup>; and (iii) failing to protect a child from sexual offence.<sup>3</sup>

**Child grooming** is befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a **child**, and sometimes the family, to lower the **child's** inhibitions for **child** sexual abuse. It lures minors into trafficking of **children**, illicit businesses such as **child** prostitution, or the production of **child** pornography.

**“Online ‘grooming’** is where an adult sexual predator tries to lower a young person’s inhibitions, or heighten their curiosity regarding sex, with the aim of eventually meeting them in person for the purposes of sexual activity.

The process may start with sending pornographic images to ‘normalise’ the discussion of sexual activities, and then move to requests for naked images or to perform a sex act on a webcam.

This can take place via all forms of digital technologies. Social media, gaming sites, email, instant messaging programs, forums and chat rooms with a young person and gain their trust.”

- The infliction, on a child, of –
  - Physical violence or
  - Serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Serious neglect of a child.

**Child-connected work** means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**Child Safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**School Environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours including:

- A campus of the school.
- Online school environments (including email and intranet systems).
- Other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for

school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

**School staff** means:

- In a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
  - Employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
  - Employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
  - A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- **School governing authority** means:
  - The proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; or
  - The governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act; or
  - The principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

**Explanatory note:** *There is a wide variety of school governance arrangements. Depending on the way a school is constituted and operated, the governing body for a school may be the school board, the school council, or some other person or entity. The school governing authorities may share or assign responsibility for discharging the requirements imposed by this Order, in accordance with the school’s internal governance arrangements.*