

Child Safe Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is an independent specialist senior secondary school based in Melton. The College delivers the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at Foundation, Intermediate and Senior levels for students aged 15-19 years. It provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. The College is committed to supporting students to reach their personal, social and educational potential by providing the tools and skills to reflect, set goals and plan.

Djerriwarrh Community College 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 and supportive environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of all young people attending the College.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, the College may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal.

2. Scope

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff;
- volunteers;
- parents/guardians and families;
- contractors and service providers;
- external education providers;
- the school council;
- visitors.

3. Statement of Commitment

Djerriwarrh Community College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Djerriwarrh Community College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Djerriwarrh Community College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Djerriwarrh Community College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

4. Acceptable behaviours

All staff, school council members, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children and young people by:

- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
- maintaining a professional relationships with students at all times;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse;
- treating everyone in the school community with respect;
- behaving as a positive role model to students;
- using positive and affirming language towards students;
- 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;
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a student. Where left with the responsibility of a single student, staff should ensure they are in an open space in view of others;

- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child or young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child or young person;
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under *the Crimes Act 1958*;
- If child abuse is suspected or an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm;
- managing child safety concerns in a sensitive, confidential, honest, responsible and timely manner;
- reporting:
 - any child safety concerns to the Principal or Child Safety Officer;
 - any allegations of child abuse to the Principal or Child Safety Officer;
 - any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct; and
 - 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.

5. Unacceptable behaviours

All staff, school council members, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students);
- use inappropriate language in the presence of students;
- use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student;
- use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students;
- engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including performing actions of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- 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;
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (for example, personal social activities);

- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability;
- communicate directly with a student or their family through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable e.g. by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work;
- have contact with a student or their family outside of school without the school's leadership 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;
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with students or their families;
- consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of students;
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate;
- take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent or where required for duty of care purposes.

6. Report any concerns

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

If staff, school council members, volunteers or contractors have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person, they should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST. They should also discuss their concerns with the Principal or the Compliance Manager.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

It is important to note that even if other staff members do not share the same view, the staff member is still required to make a report on each occasion they form a view that a young person is at risk. Where another mandated reporter undertakes to make the report, staff are required to confirm that the report is made.

Refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for full details on mandatory reporting and making a report.

7. Contacts and support

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection>

West Division Intake - metropolitan only - 1300 664 977

Child Protection business hours: 8.45am - 5.00pm (Monday - Friday)

After hours Child Protection Emergency Service - 13 12 78 (5.00pm - 9.00am Monday - Friday, 24 hours on weekends and public holidays)

child FIRST: <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-referral-child-first>

Melton: 1300 138 180

Commission for Children and Young People: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

Telephone: 1300 78 29 78 (Answered 9.00am–5.00pm, local call from landline)

Email: contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au

8. Related documents

Related policies and procedures	Child Safety Policy Mandatory Reporting Policy Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
Other related documents	VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics: www.vit.edu.au

9. Issuance and approval

Issue date:	30 June 2020	Review date:	30 June 2021
Version number:	1.0	Classification:	Welfare
Document owner:	Principal	Authorised by:	School Council