



## MELBA COLLEGE CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

### RATIONALE:

Schools are required to meet child safety standards as specified by Ministerial Order No. 870. The child safe standards outlined in Ministerial Order No.870 build on existing requirements for schools to ensure the care, safety and wellbeing of students and move to embed a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. The Child Safety Code of Conduct is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised periodically. The Child Safety Code of Conduct has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment by setting standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children.

### DEFINITIONS:

- **child** means a child enrolled as a student at the school.
- **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 abuse** includes
  - any act committed against a child involving:
    - a sexual offence; or
    - an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
  - the infliction, on a child, of:
    - physical violence; or
    - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
  - serious neglect of a child.
- **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); and
  - 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:
  - 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).

## **GUIDELINES:**

Melba College has clear and comprehensive policies, procedures and accountability mechanisms to regulate the conduct and decisions of school staff for the benefit of its students. All staff, volunteers and other adults contracted, employed or engaged by Melba College are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children. Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the policies and procedures regarding an allegation or disclosure of child abuse does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

## **IMPLEMENTATION:**

**Staff at Melba College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:**

- participating in training and guidance in regard to the school's child safety policies and practices. Melba College will provide, at least annually, professional learning that provides appropriate guidance and training about:
  - individual and collective obligations for managing the risks of child abuse
  - child abuse risks in the school environment
  - the school's current child safety standards
- taking account of and making reasonable efforts to accommodate the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable, same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse (SSAIGD) children
- modelling inclusive behaviour, and reporting any behaviour that appears racist, discriminatory or prejudiced
- supporting, enabling and encouraging school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- informing appropriate authorities when responding to an allegation of child abuse (including but not limited to mandatory reporting)
- protecting any child connected to the alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved
- making, securing, and retaining records of allegation(s) of child abuse and the school's response to it
- managing an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if you cannot perform your responsibility
- specifying actions and monitor risk management strategies regarding child safety that identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in school environments, by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics of all children expected to be in that environment
- inform all applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school about the school's child safety practices (including this Code of Conduct)
- making reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person who is engaged to perform child related work:
  - working with children status, or similar check
  - proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of work involving children
  - references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children

**Staff must not:**

- prohibit or discourage staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school
- state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities about the allegation
- make a judgement about the truth of an allegation of child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children inconsistent with child safety policies and procedures
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of non-age appropriate children (for example, personal social activities)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express disrespectful personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child
- have inappropriate contact with a child or their family outside the school environment
- have any inappropriate online contact with a child or their family outside the school environment

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000 and inform a Principal Class Officer**

**RELATED POLICIES & LINKS:**

- Australian Professional standards for Teachers: <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/registered-teacher/standards/apst>
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Information Privacy Act 2000
- Melba College Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Melba College Cultural and Social Diversity Policy
- Melba College Disabilities Policy
- Melba College Staff Handbook
- Melba Engagement and Wellbeing Policy
- Melba Excursions Policy
- Melba Camps and Tours Policy
- Melba Learning with an External Provider Policy
- Melba Duty of Care Policy
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/schobligationsorder.aspx>
- <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Documents/Min%20Order%20870%20Child%20Safe%20Standards.pdf>

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