



# Child Safety Code of Conduct

## **1. Purpose**

Victoria University Secondary 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, 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.

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All staff, contractors, volunteers, service providers, school council members and any other adult member of the school community involved in child-connected work are required to comply with this Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use, such as school excursions and camps.

## **2. Acceptable Behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Abuse (including grooming) - Identification and Response Policy and Procedures and Student Wellbeing and Engagement 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 disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and LGBTQIA+ students
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership and Student Wellbeing Leader
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our Child Abuse (including grooming) - Identification and Response Policy and Procedures
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

## **3. Unacceptable Behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work, we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- 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 with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate



# Child Safety Code of Conduct

- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexualised language with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of professional guidance or delivering the school curriculum
- 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
- 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
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance, or when the student is participating in a school event, and parental permission has been sought.

### **3. Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct**

All VUSC staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to a member of the principal team. If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact the South Western Victoria regional office on 1800 338 663 or email [enquiries@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@education.vic.gov.au).

### **4. Department of Education Speak Up Service**

Staff can use the Speak Up service to report improper conduct, fraud or corruption (including to make an anonymous report):

- Website: <https://www.pkftalkintegrity.com/?det>
- Email: [educationspeakup@pkf.com.au](mailto:educationspeakup@pkf.com.au)
- Phone: 1800 633 462

### **5. Communication**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Provided to staff at induction, in the staff handbook and via Sharepoint
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Available to students, parents and the community on the school website and on request.

### **5. Evaluation**

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every two years or as required by changes to VRQA and/or Department of Education legislation and guidelines.