



PENLEIGH AND ESSENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

If you require access to this policy in a language other than English, please contact the Principal's office on 9016 2000

Code of Conduct for Staff and others who interact with students

This Code is for those who work directly with students or have sustained or regular contact with students.

1. Introduction

Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School is committed to supporting a culture of safety, trust and respect. The school has a policy of zero tolerance for child abuse and recognises its obligation that all staff members and others interacting with students in **child-related work** are informed of their responsibilities and register their intention to adhere to this Code of Conduct.

The following Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with our **Child Safety Policy** and **Procedures to Protect Children from Abuse**. These documents describe our commitment to Child Safety and outline procedures for responding to and reporting incidents of abuse. Our **Privacy Policy** sets out how we collect, use, disclose and manage personal information and should be consulted with reference to your agreement to the Code of Conduct.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors are urged to use positive language and acknowledge and model respectful behaviour in all communications by following the Policy of Mutual Respect.

2. Purpose

The Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. The code also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

The code also addresses the responsibilities of adults involved in **child-related work** to comply with requirements in *Ministerial Order No 1359 – Implementing the Child Safety Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises* and Victorian Child Safe Standards. The school also has obligations under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* together with the *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)* which require adults to report suspected incidences of child abuse and to protect children under the age of 16 years from sexual abuse, including actions of grooming.

Staff and others in scope for this Code of Conduct will acknowledge their agreement electronically via our recruitment system or sign-in system (PASSTAB).

3. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all adults involved in **child-related work**, whose work at the school usually involves direct contact with students as a central part of their duties (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication). This includes members of staff,

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contractors, volunteers and visitors. This includes those engaged in contracted or agency work (paid or unpaid) that have sustained and/or regular contact with students, for example IT contractors, sports coaches. Its obligations are extended to include the Board of Directors, although they rarely have direct contact with students, they uphold the school’s commitment to a child safety culture.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Child-related work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involves an adult working with children under 18 years old (both paid and unpaid work) • having direct contact with children (physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact) and • is a usual part of the person’s duties (and is not occasional or incidental to their work) <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Child-connected work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • occasional direct or indirect contact with children that is incidental to the work may occur <p>Note: Working with Children clearance is required by law only for people who engage in child-related work. Schools may also choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children clearance) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sexual offence • Grooming • Physical violence • Serious emotional or psychological harm • Serious neglect of a child <p>Source: Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</p>
Grooming	<p>Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time.</p> <p>Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.</p> <p>Examples of grooming behaviour may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving gifts or special attention to a child or young person, or their parent or carer, making the child or young person feel special or indebted to an adult • making close physical contact sexual, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling or play fighting • openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material and sexual acts (this in itself is classified as child sexual abuse but can also be a precursor to physical sexual assault)

Term	Meaning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> controlling a child or young person through threats, force or use of authority making the child or young person fearful to report unwanted behaviour. <p>Groomers may rely on mobile phones, social media and the internet to interact with children in inappropriate ways and will often ask the child to keep their relationship a secret. The grooming process may continue for months before the offender arranges a physical meeting.</p> <p>Grooming is now a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1957. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in a sexual activity at a later time.</p> <p>Source: Child sexual exploitation and grooming</p>

5. Code of Conduct

All staff and others interacting with students within the Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School community are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of students by:

- adhering to the Child Safety Policy at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are reporting that they or another student has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- recognising the diverse and unique experiences of First Nations Australians and promoting a culturally safe environment where their empowerment and participation in school life is encouraged. (Refer to the First Nations Australians Policy)
- promoting the participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students identifying as gender diverse, by having zero tolerance of discrimination. (Refer to the Policy of Mutual Respect and Gender Inclusion Policy)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of vulnerable students including students with a disability, international students, students unable to live at home, and those experiencing other difficult family circumstances
- ensuring as far as practicable that only authorised adults are left alone with a student
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal, Vice Principal or Head of Section and ensuring any allegation is reported to the Police or Child Protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal, Vice Principal or Head of Section
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that students are safe
- encouraging students to 'have a say' and providing opportunities for students to participate on issues that are important to them.

Teachers and other mandated professionals are reminded of their reporting obligations in the event of suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child.

To support child safety the following behaviours must be adopted in all child-related work.

a) Actions:

- do not use physical contact to punish or discipline a student
- in a situation where physical restraint of a student is considered necessary, that it occur only until the danger has passed

- avoid unnecessary physical contact. Exceptions may exist, for example when demonstrating gymnastic skills, music or dance moves and other physical activities, but always seek the student's permission prior to instruction. Close physical contact may be appropriate with young children, for example, when consoling an upset child, but such actions would not be appropriate with older students
- except where care of a student's individual needs requires, avoid doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves
- avoid private interactions by keeping the door open and /or remaining clearly in view during individual exchanges. This includes while students are on camps, excursions, study tours or any other school authorised activity either on school property or elsewhere. Exceptions exist for staff in professional or operational roles where an open-door policy would be inappropriate, for example, providing personal care for students with individual needs or during counselling appointments
- avoid favouritism (for example, avoid the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).

b) Conversations and correspondence via any medium:

- use appropriate language in the presence of students
- avoid pet names
- do not have discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students, or make jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature
- do not use or condone obscene gestures or pornographic material
- do not permit access to sexually explicit material which is not part of the endorsed curriculum
- avoid expressing personal views on culture, race, or sexuality in the presence of students
- avoid discrimination against any student because of disability, culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality, or gender preference.

c) Additional advice, including telephone, online and social media:

- limit online contact with a student or their family to educational purposes, unless with the permission of the child's parent or guardian
- use the school's authorised IT system to contact students
- report to the Head of Section, Vice Principal or Principal any conduct encountered online which you consider may put a student's safety at risk
- limit telephone contact with a student or their family to educational purposes, unless with the permission of the student's parent or guardian
- ensure all other contact with a student outside of school occurs only with the permission of the child's parent or guardian
- photographs of students should only be taken for designated school purposes. Images must be transferred to a school file within seven days as specified in the Photography Protocol and deleted from personal devices
- do not publish or upload photographic or audio material of a student to any location without the consent of the student's parent and the school.

Note that exceptions to portions of this code may occur where other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate staff members would be breached by adherence to that aspect.

Any breach of this code may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the school. Depending on the circumstances, the school may also refer the matter to the police.

It is your responsibility to report any suspected or disclosed child abuse to the Principal, Vice Principal, Head of Section, or your supervisor.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

6. Related Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)

Ministerial Order No 1359 – *Implementing the Child Safety Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises* (effective 1 July 2022)

Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022)

7. Related Documents

Child Safety Policy

First Nations Australian Policy

Gender Inclusion Policy

Policy of Mutual Respect

Privacy Policy

Procedures to Protect Children from Abuse

Code of Conduct for Contractor, Volunteers and Visitors

Parent Code of Conduct

Photography Protocol