



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

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. It has an obligation to ensure that all staff members and others interacting with students are aware of their responsibilities and register their intention to adhere to this code of conduct. The Board of Directors ensures that the school reviews the effectiveness of the strategies put in practice regularly and after an event, and, when appropriate revises those strategies.

The school encourages an environment in which relationships are responsive and respectful and in which students' sense of security and belonging is promoted. The following code addresses the responsibilities of school staff and others who interact with children to comply with requirements set out in *Ministerial Order No 1359 – Implementing the Child Safety Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises* and with the reportable conduct scheme administered by the Commission for Children and Young People, Victoria (CCYP). 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.

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via social media, web forums and emails.

Any member of the school community who suspects that a child is in danger of abuse should notify the Principal and/or the police immediately.

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with our Child Safety Policy and Procedures for Protection of Children which outline responsibilities for responding and reporting and procedures for record keeping and information sharing.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and others interacting with children within the school community are urged to use positive language and acknowledge and model respectful behaviour in all communications by following the school's Mutual Respect and Behaviour Management Policy.

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.

Our Privacy Policy sets out the manner in which we collect, use, disclose and manage personal information and should be consulted with reference to your agreement as set out below.

Code of Conduct

All staff and others interacting with children within the Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School community are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children 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 children, particularly if they are reporting that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- recognising the diverse and unique experiences of First Nations children 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 children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children identifying as gender diverse, by having zero tolerance of discrimination. (Refer to the Mutual Respect Policy and Gender Inclusion Policy);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of vulnerable children including children 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 children are safe;
- encouraging children 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 particular reporting obligations in the event of suspected physical or sexual abuse of a child

To support child safety the following behaviours must be adopted by all staff, volunteers, and others:

1. In actions:

- do not use physical contact to punish or discipline a student;
- in a situation where physical restraint of a child is considered necessary, that it occur only until the danger has passed;
- avoid favouritism (for example, avoid the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- 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 children;
- 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;

- except where care of a child's special needs require, avoid doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.

2. In conversations and correspondence via any medium:

- use appropriate language in the presence of children;
- avoid pet names;
- do not have discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children, 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 cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- be alert to risks of discrimination against any child, including because of disability, culture, race, ethnicity, sexuality or gender preference.

3. Outside the school, including telephone, online and social media connections:

- ensure online contact with a child or their family is for educational purposes and by using the school's authorised IT system, unless with the permission of the child's parent or guardian;
- report to the Head of Section, Vice Principal or Principal any conduct encountered online which you consider may put a child's safety at risk;
- ensure telephone contact with a child or their family is for educational purposes, unless with the permission of the child's parent or guardian;
- ensure all other contact with a child outside of school occurs only with the permission of the child's parent or guardian;
- any photographic images of students are taken only for designated school purposes. Such images should not be stored on a personal device but must be transferred to a school file within seven days as specified in the Photography Protocol Policy and deleted from a personal device;
- 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.

Report any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

If you believe this code has been breached it is your responsibility to report immediately to the Principal of Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School.

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