

# CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

## EDU 4.14.4

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Policy Category:	Educational
Code Owner:	Principal
Approving Body:	College Board

### 1. Context

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

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for the Board, staff, and volunteers of SEDA College (Victoria). This Code of Conduct is intended to complement child safety legislation, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff (employees) and other personnel such as volunteers and contractors.

### 2. Definitions

A reference or term included in this code is defined as follows;

"SEDA College" or "the College" refers to SEDA College (Victoria).

"Staff" or "staff member" or "employee" in this policy includes all employees of SEDA College (Victoria).

For the purpose of this policy, an employee is a person of or over the age of 18 years who is:

- an employee of SEDA College, whether or not the person is employed in connection with any work or activities of SEDA College that relate to children; or
- engaged by SEDA College to provide services, including volunteers and volunteers from external agencies, secondees, individual business owners who employ or engage staff, contractors, office holders and directors of companies where the director performs work for the organisation, whether or not the person provides services to children.

"Children and young people" as defined by the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) means a person under the age of 18 years, but for the purposes of this policy, includes all children and young people enrolled at SEDA College (Victoria), regardless of their age.

"School Environment" means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the college for use by a young person during or outside school hours including:

- A campus of the school
- Online school environments, including email and intranet systems
- Other locations provided by the school and for a child's use including school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, or school community and other events.

#### SEDA College Victoria

### 3. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All SEDA College Board members, staff and volunteers and any other member of the School Community are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of children and young people by following policies and procedures developed by SEDA College (Victoria), including the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

SEDA College is a child safe organisation that welcomes children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing an environment where our children and young people are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views are respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and young people.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to children and young people in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between children and adults and between children and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to children and young people in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child Safety needs of Aboriginal children and young people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other children experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting children based on these characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child Safety is a shared responsibility and everyone's business. Every person involved with the College has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

The College is committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

### 4. Application & Compliance with the Code of Conduct

All SEDA College staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, Board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must be familiar with and comply with this code and:

- Conduct themselves in a professional manner that upholds the Mission, Vision and values of the College
- Comply with the school's policies and procedures
- Act ethically & responsibly
- Be accountable for their actions and decisions

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by children and young people. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the College for student use such as school excursions or camps.

## 5. Code

### 5.1 Acceptable behaviours

All College staff and persons associated with the College are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children and young people by:

- Upholding the College's commitment to the safety and welfare of children and young people at all times.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- Take disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child or young person seriously and listen & respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child.
- Treating children, young people and families of the College with dignity, equality and respect in and outside the College environment as part of normal social & community activities
- Participate in all compulsory training and professional development including training on child safety & wellbeing.
- Treat all children and their families with respect, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability or other characteristics.
- Consider the different needs of all children and young people and support them to participate fully in programs and help them and their families feel included in the school.
- Ensure Aboriginal children and their families feel included and welcomed.
- Support Aboriginal students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Never be racist towards anyone in the College and report any instances of racism.
- Ensure that the College is a place where people of all cultures feel safe and included.
- Value children and young people's opinions and ideas
- Promote friendships and encourage children and young people to support their peers.
- Involve children and young people in decisions about the activities they participate in at the College and welcome the participation of parents and carers in these decisions.
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a child – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a child are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- Respect the privacy of children and their families, including keeping all personal information confidential unless required by law to share it.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy* and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions.
- Children and young people understand their rights and have these explained to them in age-appropriate language as to what they can expect when participating in a service, activity or program offered by the College.
- Any serious complaints made by a child or their parent/carer are responded to quickly, fairly and transparently via the *Concerns, Complaints & Grievances Policy – Students*.
- Notify the relevant Child Protection Agency as soon as practicable if they have awareness or a reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected

- Comply with all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and the College Child Safe policies and procedures.
- Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.

## 5.2 Unacceptable behaviours

All College staff, volunteers, contractors and members of the College community involved in child connected work MUST NOT:

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behavior towards children and young people. This includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect, or sexual misconduct.
- Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- Exaggerate or trivialize child abuse issues.
- Use hurtful or offensive behavior or language with children and young people.
- Fail to report information to police if it is known that a child or young person has been abused.
- Persistently criticise or degrade a child or young person.
- Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
- Verbally assault a child or create a climate for fear.
- Offer children alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs.
- Show children pornographic images.
- Share details of sexual experiences with a child
- Use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children and young people.
- Be alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.
- Enter changing facilities without first knocking.
- Develop a "special" relationship with any child that could be seen as favoritism through the provision of gifts or unnecessary or unsuitable attention or amount to "grooming" behaviour
- Display behaviours or engage with children and young people in ways that are not justified by educational or professional context
- Ignore another adult's inappropriate behaviour towards a child
- Discuss intimate topics or use sexualized language (except when required to deliver the curriculum or professional guidance)
- Communicate directly with a child through personal or private contact channels including via social media, email, texting, instant messaging 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 urgent matter.
- Take photos of, or filming a child in the school environment except in accordance with the Colleges policy for photo consent or where required for duty of care purposes
- Consume alcohol or take illicit drugs in the College environment or at College events where children and young people are present.
- Have contact with any children outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the required curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, race, cultural background, religion, vulnerability, sexuality, disability or ethnicity

If it is suspected that this code of conduct has been breached by another person in the College, the staff member WILL:

- Act to prioritise the best interests of the children and young people.
- Promptly take actions to ensure that children and young people are safe.
- As soon as possible report the incident following the College's child safety responding and reporting obligations policy.
- Maintain the privacy of those involved, following the College record keeping, privacy and information sharing guidelines.

### 5.3 Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with children and young people as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting children and young people from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interacting with children and young people without displaying bias or preference
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with children and young people.

### 5.4 Student Connect

In their dealings with children and young people, psychologists and school counsellors should also consider their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their registration with / membership of:

- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- the Australian Counselling Association

### 5.5 Sports and Recreation

Coaches, sporting industry partners, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, high performance activities, training or assisting children and young people during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching children and young people to be 'good sports'
- explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the child's permission if physical contact with a child by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity
- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a child such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, or when the child needs to be transported in a vehicle.

## 5.6 Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All SEDA College Staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the College 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 contract. Disciplinary action can include increased supervision, appointment to an alternative role, suspension or termination from the College.

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to Victoria Police, the Commission for Children and Young People and other regulatory bodies such as the VIT. Our Complaints handling policy provides more information about our reporting obligations to external authorities.

### *PLEASE TAKE NOTE:*

If any person in a position of authority within the College becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child or young person may become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the college (for example, an employee, contractor or volunteer), and they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, then they must take all reasonable steps to do so. A person in authority who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk may be charged with the criminal offence of "failing to protect" and may face a term of imprisonment.

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. Failure to disclose this information may be a criminal offence.

All breaches and suspected breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the *College Principal*, Ph: 1800 11 7332 or email [Principal@scv.vic.edu.au](mailto:Principal@scv.vic.edu.au)

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact *the College Board of Management – Chairperson* via [SCVBoard@scv.vic.edu.au](mailto:SCVBoard@scv.vic.edu.au).

## 7. Communication and Consultation

This code will be communicated to the College community in the following ways:

- Available via the MySEDA Portal
- Available publicly on the College website
- Included in the staff induction process
- All Board members, staff and volunteers will be trained on this Code and any relevant policies. They will be required to sign off that they have completed this each year that they work with the College.
- Hard copy available from the College administration upon request

This policy will be reviewed annually and consulted with the College Board, relevant College Subcommittees, staff, children, and families.

## 8. Referenced and related Documents

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with other SEDA College (Victoria) policies, procedures, and supporting legislation. These include:

### SEDA College Policies:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Reportable conduct scheme policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy
- Concerns and complaints Policy – Students
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Record Keeping and Information Management Policy
- Anti-Discrimination, Harassment and bullying policy
- Student inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Safe use of ICT Policy
- Photographing, filming and recording students policy

### Supporting legislation and other documents:

- PROTECT Four Critical Actions
- Ministerial Order 1359
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Education & Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Health Records Act (2001)
- Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)
- Privacy Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

## Code History

Version	Policy Owner	Approval Date	Effective Date	Summary of Changes
V1		20/06/2022	01/07/2022	New Code
V2	Board Chairperson	01/01/2023	01/01/2023	Update to include Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours Details of Child Safety Champion, Principal and Chairperson for reporting purposes Breaches to Code Referenced Documents Consultation details of Code
V3	Board Chairperson	31/07/2023	1/08/2023	Added definitions, statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Compliance with the Code. Added several examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors including defining child abuse and harm. Included specific ramifications for staff who breach the Code and criminal offences have been noted for failing to act on Child Safety issues as per the CCYP guide for creating a Code of Conduct.

### SEDA College Victoria

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				<p>Added to referenced and related documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy</li> <li>-Record keeping and information management policy</li> <li>-anti-discrimination, harassment and bullying</li> <li>-student inclusion &amp; diversity Policy</li> <li>Safe use of ICT Policy</li> <li>Photographing, filming &amp; recording students policy</li> </ul>
V4	College Board	12/09/2024	13/09/2024	<p>Changed Code owner from Board Chairperson to College Board</p> <p>Added Approving Body</p> <p>Updated the definition of "Children and young people" to include all students enrolled at the College, regardless of age.</p> <p>Added section 5.3, 5.4, 5.5</p> <p>Added consultation method to section 7</p> <p>Updated letterhead to include new Head Office address.</p> <p>Other minor typographical changes have been made throughout the policy.</p>