



YARRA VALLEY
G R A M M A R

Child Protection Code of Conduct

Yarra Valley Grammar is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. The School has a zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at the School is responsible for the care and protection of children and for reporting information about child abuse.

Introduction

Any form of abusive, derogatory, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating behaviour or language by adults towards children and young people, or children towards other children and young people, is not acceptable.

A person must not engage in any action that is, or may be perceived by a reasonable observer as, grooming behaviour.

Comments or actions that are negatively and unreasonably critical of a person's culture, ethnicity, language, gender identity, disability, sexuality or age, are unacceptable.

Management, employees, volunteers, contractors and Board members at the School are required to abide by this Code.

The following list of behaviours includes examples of what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour.

Acceptable behaviours

All people involved in the care or unsupervised presence of children on behalf of, or in connection with, the School must:

- (a) conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as an employee, partner, volunteer or contractor of the School and as a role model to children and young people
- (b) treat all people with respect and be open to and accepting of diversity and difference in people's backgrounds, work style and personal preferences
- (c) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children and young people (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child or young person's self-identification)
- (d) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- (e) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with a disability
- (f) listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- (g) raise concerns, issues or problems about the suspected risk to a child with a Child Safety Officer
- (h) record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment
- (i) respect confidentiality when sharing information about children and young people in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and their reporting obligations

- (j) establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- (k) be professional in their actions
- (l) maintain strict impartiality; and
- (m) contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

Unacceptable behaviours

All people involved in the care or unsupervised presence of children on behalf of the School must not:

- (a) spend time alone with a child or young person where there is risk, particularly overnight
- (b) take a child or young person to their home or encourage meetings outside program activities
- (c) engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch children in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way
- (d) practice favouritism when building relationships with children
- (e) speak to a child or young person in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
 - (i) swearing in the presence of a child
 - (ii) yelling at a child or young person, except in an emergency situation where the a child's safety may be in danger
 - (iii) dealing with a child while angry with the child; and
 - (iv) use of hurtful sarcasm.
- (f) using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of a child
- (g) using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising a child
- (h) providing or allowing a child to consume alcohol or illegal drugs
- (i) engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with a child unless the conversations are part of a legitimately arranged instructional or reporting activity dealing with human sexuality issues
- (j) discussing sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to discuss these matters
- (k) being naked in the presence of a child
- (l) possessing sexually oriented or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.)
- (m) sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or small tents with a child or young person; and/or
- (n) engaging in sexual contact with a child.

For the purposes of this Policy, sexual contact is defined as vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral intercourse or the touching of an erogenous zone of another (including but not limited to the thighs, genitals, buttocks, pubic region or chest) for the purpose of sexually arousing or gratifying either person.

Physical Contact / Touching

All teachers are required to follow the Victorian Institute of Teaching's (VIT) Code of Conduct.

Employees, volunteers, contractors and Board members are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of children and young people. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by children and young people.

Physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove children and young people quickly from danger or threat of danger.

Appropriate contact between employees, volunteers, contractors, Board members and children is part of normal human relationships. Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

- (a) consider the child or young person's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a child to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed child or young person
- (b) work in an open environment; for example, in confidential interviews or a one-to-one meeting, the door should be open with visual access (NB: exceptions apply for professions with strict confidentiality requirements)
- (c) be alert to cues from children about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space
- (d) be sensitive when interacting with children who may misinterpret your actions, such as those who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex
- (e) be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour
- (f) be cautious about physical contact in games or practical instruction. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do, maintain a safe and appropriate distance
- (g) physical contact should be made in a way that makes children feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back or rub on the side of their arm for reassurance. Massaging a child or allowing a child to massage you is inappropriate physical contact
- (h) the use of images of children as screen savers or backgrounds on personal electronic devices is not appropriate. The collection and storage of photographs or images of children must be for educational or professional purposes. Use of social media and posting of student images related to the School by students, employees, contractors, volunteers or members of the Board must be consistent with the School's Social Media Policy and relevant IT Acceptable Use Agreement.
- (i) be aware that the giving and receiving of gifts, giving extra attention, accepting a different standard of behaviour from a child or young person having 'special time' with a child or young person must be appropriate and justified as a strategy to meet teaching and learning outcomes
- (j) obtain permission from the School and parents when meeting with students for activities outside of school hours
- (k) the provision of your personal contact details should be justified in terms of educational or professional purpose
- (l) it is not appropriate for employees, volunteers and contractors to initiate out of hours contact with a child unless it is in the context of an emergency or where the child is unavailable during work hours
- (m) all forms of physical contact should therefore be avoided where possible. The School has invested in a Student Wellbeing team who bring appropriate qualifications in addressing the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional needs of students.

The School's Policy on Bullying and Violence also addresses physical contact.

Transportation and off-site events

Other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen, it is not acceptable to transport children or young people without written permission of their parent, carer or guardian.

It is prohibited to have unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with children or young people while in vehicles.

Children and young people should be transported directly to their destination. No stops should be made other than those that are reasonably scheduled for meals or comfort stops.

It is prohibited to have children or young people spend the night at the residence of an employee, volunteer or contractor without parental/guardian prior approval.

Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults must be separate from facilities or arrangements for children and young people.

Confidentiality

Disclosing Information to Employees, Volunteers, Contractors and Board Members

When children or young people are having a written or verbal interaction with employees, volunteers, contractors and/or Board members of the School, that interaction is confidential to the organisation not to the individual. This means that an employee, volunteer, contractor or Board member is able to talk with other employees, volunteers, contractors or Board members in a way that identifies the child or young person. That said, where possible the privacy of the child or young person should be respected at all times. When considering breaching their privacy who and how many people are told should be based on what is believed to be in the best interests of the child or young person. In all cases, the advice of a Child Safety Officer should be sought before discussing with other personnel.

Disclosing Information to People External to the Organisation

Employees, volunteers, contractors and Board members should not discuss confidential matters about children or young people with people outside the organisation in a way that identifies that child or young person except when they have the express permission of the child or young person or it complies with the Child Protection Procedure. In circumstances where employees, volunteers, contractors and/or Board members believe that there is not enough knowledge within the organisation to provide the best possible assistance to a child or young person, they are able to seek expertise external to the School. When communicating with people outside the School the child or young person's identity should be protected.

Informing Children

It is the responsibility of the School to communicate the limits of confidentiality in the School to children and young people who are likely to have an ongoing relationship with the School. These guidelines should be published in an accessible place for children and young people.

Key contacts

- Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection – North-eastern rural and regional office
1300 360 391 – After hours 131 278
- Child Protection Crisis Line – 24 Hours, seven days a week. Telephone: 13 12 78
- Yarra Valley Grammar, Telephone 9262 7700 (8.00am – 5.00pm, Mon-Fri). Ask to speak with a Child Safety Officer