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## **CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT - CODE of PRACTICE**

### **RATIONALE:**

A child safety code of practice is intended to promote child safety in the school environment. It outlines professional boundaries and acceptable and unacceptable adult/child relationships and behaviour. It also assists schools, staff and volunteers to raise behavioural issues and should be read in conjunction with the CWPS Child Safe Environment policy and the Staff Code of Practice. It does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at school. ie The Victorian Institute of Teaching – Victorian Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics.

### **GENERAL STATEMENT:**

This code of practice has the following four specific requirements:

1. It has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment
2. It sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children
3. It takes into account the interests of school staff[ and the needs of all children
4. It is consistent with the school's Child Safety strategies, policy and procedures as revised from to time to time

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES:**

Some simple principles should guide an adult's behaviour when undertaking child connected work such as:

- The adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- An adults response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child
- An adult should not be alone with a child unless there is line of sight to other adults
- An adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school

At Cranbourne West Primary School the Principal and the school leadership will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Practice and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The principal and school leadership will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Practice to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child –related work are required to comply with the Code of Practice by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour as listed below.

The following lists provide examples of statements about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours [both lists are neither inclusive or exhaustive]

## **Acceptable Behaviours**

All staff, volunteers and board/school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the policies statements/intentions at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/safety of another child.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children [for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification]
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds [for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination]
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability [for example, during personal care activities]
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns to the schools leadership or Wellbeing Officer
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 [Refer Mandatory Reporting Policy]
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child[ren] are safe and the school reporting process is implemented
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher

## **Unacceptable Behaviours**

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism [for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children]
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be constructed as unnecessarily physical [for example inappropriate sitting on laps]
- Put children at risk of abuse [for example by locking doors]
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children [for example, personal social activities]
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against a child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership or child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval [for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching.] Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.

- Have any online contact with a child [including by social media, email, instant messaging etc] or their family [unless necessary eg by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work]
- Use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account\Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- Work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children

**EVALUATION**

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed on a cyclic basis [two years] to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement or if legislative or other changes are required in the interim.

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