

Child Safe Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is an independent specialist senior secondary school based in Melton. The College delivers the Victorian Pathway Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major Certificate (VM) for students aged 15-19 years. It provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. The College is committed to supporting students to reach their personal, social and educational potential by providing the tools and skills to reflect, set goals and plan.

Djerriwarrh Community College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe and supportive environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of all young people attending the College.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, the College may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal.

2. Scope

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff, volunteers, parents/guardians and families, contractors and service providers, external education providers, school council members and visitors.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school excursion). The Child Safe Code of Conduct is consistent with the College's child safety and wellbeing strategies, include the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and School-wide Positive Support policies and guidelines.

3. Purpose

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct is to:

- Promote child safety and wellbeing
- Provide clear guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected standards of behaviour

4. Statement of Commitment

Djerriwarrh Community College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Djerriwarrh Community College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Djerriwarrh Community College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students.

Every person involved in Djerriwarrh Community College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

5. Acceptable behaviours

As the College, staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding our College commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy,
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities,
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student,
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students,
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult,
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal and/or Child Safety Champion,
- Ensuring consistency with any relevant profession or occupational codes of conduct, such as the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct,
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our child safety responding and reporting policy and procedures available at reception and the College website and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions,

- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

6. Unacceptable behaviours

As the College, staff, volunteers, contractors and member of our school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm,
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts),
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context,
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student,
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance,
- treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity,
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter,
- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with our Privacy Policy or where required for duty of care purposes,
- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present,
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

6.1 Online Environments

At our school, we are committed to ensuring that all online interactions and digital environments uphold our commitment to child safety, wellbeing, and inclusion. All students, staff, volunteers, and members of our school community are expected to engage in safe, respectful, and responsible online behaviour in accordance with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and ICT User Policy.

We recognise that online spaces are an extension of our learning and community environments. In line with Ministerial Order 1359, our school ensures:

- Digital interactions between staff and students are appropriate, transparent, and professional at all times,
- Students are taught digital literacy, online safety, and respectful online behaviour through the curriculum and wellbeing programs,

- Any concerns relating to online behaviour, cyberbullying, grooming, or other forms of online harm are responded to promptly, in line with our Mandatory Reporting Policy, Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure,
- Parents, guardians and carers are supported with resources and communication to understand and monitor online safety at home.

All members of the school community are required to take action if they become aware of any online behaviour that threatens the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person. This includes reporting concerns to school leaders, the Child Safe Champion, or relevant external authorities.

7. Report any concerns

Whenever there are concerns that a student is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

If staff, school council members, volunteers or contractors have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person, they should report their concerns to Child Protection or Orange Door. They should also discuss their concerns with the Principal, Assistant Principal and/or Child Safety Champion.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

It is important to note that even if other staff members do not share the same view, the staff member is still required to make a report on each occasion they form a view that a young person is at risk. Where another mandated reporter undertakes to make the report, staff are required to confirm that the report is made.

Refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for full details on mandatory reporting and making a report.

8. Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All College staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school 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 agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the College Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, the breach should be reported to the School Council Chair. The College Administration Officer will be able to provide contact details where required.

9. Contacts and support

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

Website: <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection>

Child Protection West Division Intake - metropolitan only: 1300 664 977 (8.45am - 5.00pm Monday - Friday)

After hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 13 12 78 (5.00pm - 9.00am Monday - Friday, 24 hours on weekends and public holidays)

Orange Door

Website: <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-referral-orange-door>

Melton: 1300 138 180

Commission for Children and Young People

Website: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

Telephone: 1300 78 29 78 (Answered 9.00am–5.00pm, local call from landline)

Email: contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au

10. Related documents

Related policies and procedures	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy Mandatory Reporting Policy Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
Other related documents	VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics: www.vit.edu.au Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises

11. Issuance and approval

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