Monash Children's Hospital School
246 Clayton Road
Clayton VIC 3168
ABN: 75 602 247 317

Child Safety Code of Conduct - Child Safe Standards – Standard Three

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to guide school staff in identifying and regulating their own behaviour and the behaviour of other school staff, and to protect children from abuse in the school environment. Monash Children's Hospital School will, develop, adopt, review and maintain a Child Safety Code of Conduct and have this endorsed by the School Council.
The Code of Conduct is consistent with school policies related to student supervision, duty of care, volunteers, excursions, anti-bullying policy and disciplinary procedures described in the Student Engagement Policy.

Monash Children's Hospital School 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, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct 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 Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below as well as the comprehensive Monash Health Induction program. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including in the use of digital technology and social media. All staff, volunteers and school council members of Monash Children's Hospital School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

Embedding the Code of Conduct

To ensure the Code is fully appreciated, understood and applied by all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents the following actions will be taken:

- Ensure that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are aware of the code and how it applies;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of the induction for new staff;

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- Inclusion of the Code in induction for all pre-service teachers;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of annual training for existing school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers);
- Discussion of the Code at staff meetings; communication of the Code through school communication channels including email, online communication system, intranet, shared drive, team meetings and Consultative Committee meetings; as well as shared spaces including the staff room and office areas
- Informing parents/carers and other persons associated with the school of the expected behaviour for the school's leadership, staff, contractors and volunteers;
- Using the school's and the Department's reporting procedures should breaches of the Code be suspected or identified;
- Including the Code in employment advertisements and service contractors to ensure compliance;
- Communication to students in an appropriate way.

MCHS – Child Safety Commitment Statement

Monash Children's Hospital School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. ***The school has zero tolerance for child abuse****. The school 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 cultural safety of Aboriginal children, young children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability or significant health condition.*

Every person involved in the school has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role s/he plays 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.

In its planning, decision making and operations Monash Children's Hospital School will:
take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;

- *value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;*
- *foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children. This will be supported by all staff understanding their child safety role, being mindful of and building respectful and safe relationships between children and their teachers and other school staff;*
- *respect diversity in cultures and child rearing while keeping child safety paramount;*
- *provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;*
- *engage only the most suitable people to work with children and high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;*
- *ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise issues. Our school is structured around health conditions and will be based on the various paediatric wards and or mental health units and so all children will be able to forge*

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respectful relationships in their paediatric wards/mental health units/day treatment units with multiple teachers thereby giving them opportunities to seek support from a number of significant others in their immediate day to day learning environment.

Acceptable behaviours

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

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times, adhering to the school's child safe policy.
- communicating with students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with significant health conditions
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young children
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or Child Safety Leader.
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context

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- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, health condition, 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 school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes. The school must obtain consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. Written consent is sought at the beginning of each school year from parent/carers. This applies for excursions and school activities.
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.
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Making a professional judgement

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a member of School Leadership or Child Safe Leader
- Be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others
- Not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of an inappropriate nature.

Personal/living space

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and School Leadership or the home has been designated as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers
- Be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing

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themselves in vulnerable situations
- Not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Gifts, rewards and favouritism

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Be aware of the Department of Education and Training's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared
- Gift giving to an individual as part of a reward system should be avoided, instead, be based on collective or team based positive reinforcement.
- Ensure that if operating reward/award systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

Infatuations

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Deal with infatuations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned
- Make sure their own behaviour is beyond reproach
- If they become aware of an infatuation developing or any indications that it may, record it and discuss it with a School Leadership member or the Child Safe Leader so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

Communication (including the use of technology)

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries this includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, and blogs.
- Not share any personal information with a child
- Not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role
- Not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless the need to do so is agreed with School Leadership and parents
- Only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by their organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with school policy
- Only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible

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- Not use internet, web-based or social media communication channels to send messages
- Use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the school's policy.

Social Contact

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Not have social contact with children unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with School Leadership
- Not have secret social contact with children and/or their parent(s);
- Always approve any planned social contact with children with School Leadership
- Advise School Leadership or Child Safe Leader of any social contact that has occurred which may raise concern
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing.

Sexual Contact

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Not engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity, to do so would be considered a criminal offence;
- Not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically
- Not discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children
- Ensure relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism
- Ensure language, attitudes and demeanour do not give rise to comment or speculation
- Be aware that consistently displaying special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as part of a grooming process, and as such will give rise to concerns about behaviour.

Physical Contact

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities, never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary
- Seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable;

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- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort;
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Always encourage children, where possible to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with School Leadership and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan e.g. assisting the child from their wheelchair etc.
- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Behaviour Management

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Not use any form of degrading treatment towards a child
- Not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments
- Ensue any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Never use corporal punishment
- Follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property. In regards to restraint of a child/young person a 'Code Grey' is actioned through the Monash Health emergency system.
- When using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident. Monash Health Code Grey is called and implemented.
- Be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, i.e. bullying, changes in home circumstances

Note: the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Personal/Intimate Care

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Adhere to the schools Code of Conduct
- Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- Explain to the child what is happening
- Carefully and sensitively observe the emotional responses of the child, and record and report any concerns to School Leadership and parents, if appropriate
- Respect children's privacy at all times

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- Avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, other than as part of an agreed care plan
- Not change, in the same place as children
- Not shower or bathe with children
- Not assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves. This will be the responsibility of the Monash Health professionals if needed.

One to one situations/home visits

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Ensure that, when working alone is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed.
- Avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas
- Always inform colleagues (health and education) and/or parents about one to one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.
- When working in the patient's room keep the door open, where possible, and the bedside curtains open – retaining a direct line of sight into and out of the room. If the door is closed, the blinds are open.
- When working with students from the Stepping Stones Unit, one on one sessions should be performed at the classroom or in communal spaces and not bedside.
- When working with students from the Oasis Unit, one to one teaching will be performed in the communal spaces.
- If working with a child in one of the classrooms, please ensure location of the session is recorded on the child's bedside whiteboard.
- Avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs, where ever possible, these create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- Carefully consider the need of the child when in one to one situation and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry towards you to the nursing staff and to a member of the MCHS Leadership Team.
- Gain approval from school leadership for any home visit ensuring it is integral part of your role.
- Never put yourself into a one to one situation when little or no information is available about the child.

Transporting

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Ensure requirements specific to seat belts and car seats are adhered to
- Not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of school leadership and been agreed with parents

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- Ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive
- Record details of the journey in accordance with agreed DET procedures
- Ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance;
- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned.

Excursions and Camps

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with by school leadership
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken
- Have parental consent to the activity
  (please note that Monash Children's Hospital School does not run school camps)

Photography and Videos

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Be clear about the purpose of any activity involving photography and what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded
- Be able to justify the reason for having images of children in their possession
- Avoid making images in one to one situations or situations that may be construed as secretive or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by their school
- Immediately report any concerns if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found
- Have parental consent to take, display and/or distribute any images of children
- Not use images that may cause distress or offence

Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School will:

- Not access, make or store indecent images of children on the internet, to do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation
- Not make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment
- Follow their schools guidance on the use of ICT equipment
- Ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through ICT
- Ensure that any materials shown to children are age appropriate

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- Immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the school leadership and follow mandatory reporting policy.

Reporting and raising concerns

Adults at Monash Children's Hospital School are accountable for:

- Reporting and raising concerns about staff/volunteer/contractor conduct

Failing to Protect and/or Disclose offences against children

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last approved by school council on 22 March 2021 and is scheduled for review in March 2024.

[1] SPAG: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx . The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

[1] SPAG: http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet