

# CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

## INTRODUCTION

Victory Christian College (VCC) is committed to creating and maintaining a child-safe and child-friendly environment, where children and young people are safe. It is vital that we are diligent ambassadors for child safety as an expression of our Christian values and ethos.

It is an inherent requirement that any person employed at VCC must model and demonstrate the reality of the Gospel and the beliefs of the College, including as articulated in the Statement of Faith, in the way they undertake their employment responsibilities and by the way they live. This is particularly the case where those responsibilities concern child safety. Every activity undertaken by the College must be characterised by love, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation, humility and justice, all elements demonstrated by Christ's death, which is the core of the Gospel.

This policy has been established so that VCC attracts, recruits and maintains the best/most appropriate staff and volunteers for all positions. This includes quality screening, recruitment, induction/training and monitoring for all prospective and existing staff and volunteers.

This policy also serves as a deterrent against inappropriate or unsafe applicants.

## INTERPRETATION

All Victory Christian College documents, policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, codes of conduct and other documents are to be interpreted in a manner that is consistent with the Statement of Faith. The College may adopt, supplement, vary or rescind its documents, policies, procedures, guidelines, handbooks, codes of conduct and other documents it has adopted at any time in its absolute discretion by the provision of notice. It is the employee's responsibility to read these documents and understand the expectations regarding behaviour for everyone who works in the College community. It is also the employee's responsibility to read supplemented or varied versions of these documents as are notified to them as soon as reasonably practicable after such notification. Employees are to fully support the College in ensuring compliance with these documents.

This policy in no way diminishes the responsibility nor takes away the right of VCC management to respond to very serious incidents with summary dismissal or to exercise the remaining rights that the College may have pursuant to any employment or other contract. Nothing in this Policy should be taken to limit the circumstances in respect of which the College may take disciplinary action in respect of an employee.

The procedures outlined in this Policy are intended only as a guide to the disciplinary procedures which may be implemented by the College. In every case, the College will determine the actual disciplinary procedure to be adopted in its discretion and in consideration of the circumstances of the case as a whole. Nothing in this Policy prevents the College from issuing a final warning at any stage of the process. Similarly, nothing in this Policy prevents the College from dismissing an employee at any stage of the procedure set out in this Policy if the College deems this action is warranted, for example in circumstances involving an employee committing serious or wilful misconduct.

## AIMS

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, college Policies and Procedures, and professional standards, codes, or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

## DEFINITIONS

### Child abuse

This term includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, family violence, neglect, grooming and forced marriage of children. The legal definitions of 'child' and 'young person' are outlined more specifically in the Child Protection policies (Mandatory Reporting, Grooming, Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect)

## Child Safety Champions

Child Safety Champions are staff nominated to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training. The Child Safety Champions include the Chaplains, College Counsellor and Year Level Coordinators. The Child Safety Champions are responsible for assisting staff to make reports.

## Potentially vulnerable children

In the context of this code of conduct, the term 'potentially vulnerable children' pertains to children and young people who are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- from religiously, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- living with disabilities.
- unable to live at home (including international students).
- impacted by family violence.
- expressing romantic or sexual attraction to people not of the opposite sex, whether they describe themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual or otherwise.
- expressing a sense of personal identity inconsistent with their biological sex whether they describe themselves as trans, gender diverse, queer or otherwise.
- living with a difference/disorder of sexual development, whether they describe themselves as intersex or not
- very young.
- dealing with prior trauma, including many refugee children.
- living in remote locations.
- currently going through an adverse life event.
- likely to have fewer connections to trusted adults and less confidence or ability to speak out, including children whose additional safety needs are not being addressed by the adults around them.

Please note that students may have overlapping or cumulative risk factors.

## Screening

Victory Christian College undertakes a comprehensive screening and recruitment process for all workers and volunteers. Screening is a process that begins at advertising for a position (in the job description), and continues all the way through to recruitment. This process acts as a filter and aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the College;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share the College's biblical values, who are able to contribute to the College's religious ethos and who share a passion for Christian Education; and
- Deter and prevent a person from working at the College if they pose a risk to children.

Victory Christian College requires all workers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes satisfactorily before a formal offer of employment can be made and prior to commencing their engagement with the College.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Principal and College leaders of Victory Christian College will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly school including other learning environments such as camps and excursions. They will also provide information and support

to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, Board members and any other member of the College community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps, excursions and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Further information about the College's commitment and strategies regarding child safety are detailed in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

## Acceptable Behaviours

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

- Treating all students with respect as people created in God's image.
- Upholding the College's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

- Treating all students and families in the College community with respect both within the College environment and outside the College 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 safety, participation and empowerment of all students, particularly **potentially vulnerable students** (see definitions).
- Understanding all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse in line with the obligations set out in the Child Protection- Mandatory Reporting Policy.
- Reporting other child safety concerns (that do not amount to a mandatory report being needed) to the Child Safety Champions in line with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- 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 College community involved in child-related work we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse.
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts.)
- Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time.
- 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.
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people.
- Engage in open discussion of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
- Use sexual innuendo with students.
- Discuss content of a sexual nature, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of delivering the curriculum content or a therapeutic setting with a trained counsellor.
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, beliefs or ethnicity, in a way that amounts to unlawful discrimination.
- 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 in a school environment except in accordance with college policy (i.e. ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy) or where required for duty of care purposes.
- Consume alcohol, smoke cigarettes (including e-cigarettes) or take illicit drugs in the College environment or at other College events where students are present, under any circumstances.

## Consequences for Failure to Comply

Where it is found that this Code has been breached, the matter will be investigated. Depending on the nature of the breach, and the role of the individual responsible, failure to comply with this Code may result in one of the following:

- Reporting the matter to proper authorities such as Victoria Police, Child Protection, The Orange Door and/or the Commission for Children and Young People.
- Revoked volunteer status.
- Disciplinary action or dismissal.

## RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Camps and Excursions Policy
- Child Protection- Failure to Disclose Policy
- Child Protection- Failure to Protect Policy
- Child Protection- Grooming Policy

- Child Protection- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Gender Identity Administrative Guidelines
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Statement of Faith
- Student diary entry- Child Protection Fact Sheet and PROTECT Child Protection Poster
- Swimming Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Date of Approval</b>	03/02/2025
<b>Approved By</b>	VCC Board
<b>Review Date</b>	03/02/2026