

# Child Safety Code of Conduct



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact [info@ae.edu.au](mailto:info@ae.edu.au).

## 1.0 Rationale

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school. Members of the Acknowledge Education community have a responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe in all school environments and school related activities.

A Child Safety Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. For more detail refer to the College's Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Guidelines.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the College environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

## 2.0 Scope

This code of conduct:

- applies to all AE (Stott's College) staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, Board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and including locations managed by third-party providers, such as AE's boarding and homestay programs.
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related college policies section below.

## 3.0 The Code

### 3.1 Acceptable behaviours

As AE/Stott's 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 School 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 Head of School.
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our child safety responding and reporting policy and procedures 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.

## 3.2 Unacceptable behaviours

As AE/Stott's College staff, volunteers, contractors and members 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 the [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students 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.

## 4.0 Breaches of the Code

All AE/Stott's 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.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Victorian Government's Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the AE/Stott's College Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the HoS and CEO.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the HoS, or CEO, contact the Head of Operations at [operations@ae.edu.au](mailto:operations@ae.edu.au).

## 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

### Board of Directors

- Ensure the school maintains full compliance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct and all related child safety legislation.
- Provide governance oversight of child safety culture, risks, and organisational accountability.
- Support adequate resourcing for child safety training, reporting systems, and safe environments.
- Uphold the Code in all child-connected contexts and model expected standards of behaviour.
- Respond appropriately to any allegations involving Board members and ensure proper escalation.

### Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

- Ensure organisation-wide implementation of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Oversee and act on reports of child safety concerns or breaches escalated by the Head of School.
- Ensure compliance with the **Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme**, including notification, investigation, and liaison with authorities.
- Support and supervise the Head of School so they can enforce the Code effectively.
- Ensure all staff/contractors/volunteers receive induction and ongoing training related to the Code.

### Head of School (HoS) & VCE Coordinator

- Lead day-to-day enforcement of the Child Safety Code of Conduct within the school.
- Receive and manage child safety concerns, breaches, disclosures, or allegations.
- Immediately ensure student safety where abuse is suspected or disclosed.
- Escalate all breaches and reportable allegations to the CEO and, where required, to the appropriate external authorities.
- Promote and model safe, respectful, culturally inclusive practices.
- Ensure staff understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, reporting duties, and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#).
- Monitor staff conduct, respond to inappropriate behaviour, and enact disciplinary processes.

### Student Care / Wellbeing Team

- Support students who disclose or are affected by safety concerns, ensuring immediate steps to protect them from harm.
- Assist in identifying inappropriate behaviour, boundary concerns, or patterns of risk.
- Guide staff and students on safe, respectful interactions and appropriate professional boundaries.
- Work with HoS and CEO to report concerns and ensure that reporting obligations (mandatory reporting, RCS requirements) are met.
- Promote inclusion, empowerment, and cultural safety for all student groups, especially vulnerable cohorts.
- Maintain wellbeing records relevant to child safety incidents and follow confidentiality requirements.

## 6.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, readers should refer to the [Child Safe Standards – Definitions](#) provided by the Victorian Government for the definitions of terms used in relation to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

## 7.0 Related policies

### Related policies

- VCE-POL-01 Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- VCE-POL-02 Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- VCE-GUI-06 Guidelines to responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse
- VCE-POL-05 Bullying Prevention Policy
- VCE-POL-13 ICT Policy

## 8.0 Document Information

Document Name	Child Safety Code of Conduct
Document Number	VCE-CC-03
Purpose	Compliance with Child Safety Standards & Ministerial Order
Audience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public
Category	Learning Environment
Subcategory	Wellbeing and Engagement
Approval Date	18/12/2025
Effective Date	18/12/2025
Last date of endorsement	18/12/2025
Next Review Date	18/12/2027 <b>(Every 2 years)</b>
Policy Advisor	Head of School, VCE Coordinator, Head of Quality and Risk
Approving Authority	Board of Directors

## 9.0 Change Log

Date	Version	By	Notes
01/12/2025	4.0	HQR	Supercedes V3. Re-structured and re-written. Updated in line with DoE standardised Code of Conduct template.