



CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Statement of Context and Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

The Huntingtower Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in the School. All school staff, volunteers, contractors, School Board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work at Huntingtower must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Application

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all employees of Huntingtower, as well as Board members, volunteers, contractors, parents, students, prospective parents and prospective students and other people who are associated with, or come in contact with, the School. The Code also applies to the physical and online environments used by students and during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the School for student use (for example, school camps and excursions).

Acceptable Behaviours

At Huntingtower, all school staff, volunteers, contractors, School Board members and any other member of the School community involved in child-connected work are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding the Huntingtower commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and create a child safe culture
- Treating students and families in the School community with respect in 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 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 and Torres Strait Islander students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning and/or asexual (LGBTIQA+) 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 responsible adult
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to a Child Protection Officer and appropriate agencies when necessary

- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) and the following key policies:
 - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - Child Safety Identifying, Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy
 - Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy and Procedure
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm

Unacceptable Behaviours

At Huntingtower all school staff, volunteers, contractors, School Board members and members of the School community involved in child-connected work 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, special favours)
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- Initiate or allow unnecessary physical contact with students or do things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- 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 social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances (for example where a student is also a family member of the staff member and the staff member has advised the Principal of the connection and the circumstances), or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter and when Principal and parental permission has been sought; Photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except where written consent has been obtained or where required for duty of care purposes. Storage of photographs or videos should not be on any personal devices including, phone, leased or personal laptops; or any other portable devices. These items should be uploaded to a Huntingtower drive then removed from the device
- Consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the School environment or at school events where students are present, including working with students while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs
- Have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the School curriculum or professional guidance and Principal and parental permission has been sought; unless it is objectively appropriate, for example where a student is also a family member of the staff member, and the staff member has advised the Principal of the connection and the circumstances
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children or young people (for example: personal social activities)
- Allow any students to access a staff member's computer, files or internet locations
- Be alone in a room or office with students where the door is closed and there is no line of sight of the occupants from the corridor/area outside (except for Counsellors and the School Nurse. Permission is obtained through the parent/counselling consent)
- Transport a student or young person unaccompanied

Teachers

Teachers are required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct published by the VIT. These principles include:

- Knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- Working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- Modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- Protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- Respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- Interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
- Not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with student

Psychologists, School Counsellors and the School Nurse

In their dealings with students, Psychologists, School Counsellors and the School Nurse should consider their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice, and competency standards to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- The Australian Association of Social Workers
- Australian Psychologists Society (APS)
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA)

Sports and recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist students to feel safe and protected, including:

- Using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- Coaching students to be good sports
- Explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity
- Avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle

Breaches of this Code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching the Code of Conduct, they may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or the relevant industrial award.

All breaches and/or suspected breaches of this Code by volunteers, contractors and any other members of the School community must be reported to the Principal.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme and may be referred to the Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body such as the VIT.

Communication

This Code of Conduct is available to staff, parents, students and the school community via the School's website. In addition, relevant aspects of this Code will be raised at staff and student meetings and highlighted in Bulletins and newsletters.

Evaluation

The Principal is primarily responsible for monitoring the overall compliance, review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices. This document will be reviewed as part of the Huntingtower review cycle (and otherwise as and when required).

Authorisation

This Code of Conduct was authorised by the School Board in September 2022

Reviewed: October 2022, Feb 2024, 2025

Date of next review: February 2026

Acknowledgement of the Child Safe Code of Conduct

I have received and read the Huntingtower Child Safe Code of Conduct.

I understand my obligations and responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. This includes immediately reporting any breach of this Code to a teacher, a School Child Protection Officer or a member of the School's Leadership Team or the relevant authority.

If a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse, I will contact the Police on 000.

By signing the below, I agree to comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Name

Signature

Date

Please return this acknowledgement to Human Resources via childsafety@huntingtower.vic.edu.au