



Child Safety Code of Conduct

PRESHIL VALUES STATEMENT

At our core remains an unshakeable commitment to encouraging all children to set and achieve their own goals and to be respected as individuals in their own right. This is a commitment to our children to be nurtured and challenged in an atmosphere that inspires creativity and independent thinking in all areas of life and does not, overtly or subtly, use competition or punishment to motivate through the fear of failure.

As global citizens we encourage an awareness of world issues and encourage effort to make a positive difference. We believe that education should prepare students to be thoughtful, peace-loving and active citizens of the world. Preshil will remain a school that puts kindness, compassion and social relationships at the centre of its operations.

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

Preshil is committed to the creation and maintenance of a child-safe school environment. The care, safety and welfare of students are embedded in policies and procedures which ensure a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse. All actions and programs will maintain high ethical standards and comply with child safety standards and child protection reporting guidelines. We have a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and secure environment for children and young people and to protect them from all forms of abuse and neglect. We are steadfast in our resolve to honour this responsibility and promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and young people.

RATIONALE

The Preshil Child Safety Code of Conduct (“Code of Conduct”) identifies a set of principles which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a Preshil member of staff by their colleagues and the community. Mutual respect is at the core of the Preshil philosophy and is based on our long-standing commitment to the empowerment of our students, staff and parents/carers by providing respect and safety within the rich diversity of school life.

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 detailed guidance refer to the School’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 everybody is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the school 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.

SCOPE

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff members, including administration and support staff and temporary or casual staff, volunteers,

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- students, parents and carers, third party contractors and service providers (including External Education Providers)
- School Council members, teaching students on placement at the School, and visitors.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct set out below is designed to stand alone. It can also be incorporated in whole or part into broader codes of conduct that are developed by Preshil.

Certain staff members, volunteers and third-party contractors at Preshil may have professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate their profession or occupation. These codes of conduct must also be complied with, in the event that a staff member, volunteer or third-party contractor considers that there is a conflict between these codes of conduct and the Child Safety Code of Conduct in a particular matter, the relevant staff member, volunteer or third party contractor must seek advice from their professional or occupational regulatory body and or a Child Protection Officer and must advise the Principal of their proposed course of action.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct is made available to all staff, volunteers, families, and students via our School website.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The 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 Preshil 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, Preshil may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal. The School revises the Code annually.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

Preshil has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students in our community. This includes all teaching staff, administration and support staff, Council members, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers and parents / carers.

The School Council has endorsed this Child Safety Code of Conduct

Adults in the Preshil community are expected to:

- behave as a positive role model to students
- promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students
- be vigilant and proactive about student safety and child protection issues
- provide age appropriate supervision for students
- comply with guidelines published by the School with respect to child protection
- treat all students with respect
- promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of students with a disability (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students
- promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of First Nations students and their families (for example, by never questioning a First Nation child's self-identification)
- use positive and affirming language towards students, encourage students 'to have a say' and listen to them with respect

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- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child
- respect cultural, religious and political differences
- help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact and socialise
- intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way
- report any breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct
- report concerns of child safety to one of the School Child Safety Champions and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met
- where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe
- **call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety**
- respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know

Do Not

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour, or inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race, or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Engage in meetings with a child that is not your own, outside of school hours and without permission from Preshil and the child's parents/guardians.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

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- post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- consume alcohol ¹or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Our Child Protection Program includes Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Guidelines which provide detailed guidelines for all staff and volunteers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at Preshil .

PRINCIPLES FOR ADULT BEHAVIOUR IN CONDUCTING CHILD CONNECTED WORK

Some simple principles should guide an adult's behaviour when undertaking child-connected work such as:

- the adult / child relationship should be always professional
- an adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child
- an adult should not be alone with a child unless there is a line of sight to other adults
- an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school

CHLD CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

A copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct is provided to all staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing at Preshil. It is also communicated via refresher training at regular intervals for all staff.

All staff, as well as direct contact volunteers, must sign an agreement to adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at Preshil.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between Preshil and any direct contact contractors. Therefore all direct contact contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct upon signing the contract or upon commencing work at Preshil.

CONSEQUENCES FOR BREACHING CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Staff, including the Leadership Team and Principal, volunteers and contractors who breach the Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary actions that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach)

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches termination of employment, contract or engagement

¹ Alcohol consumption by school staff is permitted in moderation at school events where there is at least one parent or guardian in attendance for each family group present.

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REPORTING CONCERNS

The Child Protection Program includes information for School Council members, staff and direct contact volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Safety Champions. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to the relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents / carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School Child Safety Champions. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents, or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the School nominated Child Safety Champions.²

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

Wherever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted on 000.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)

[Complaints and Grievances Policy \(Community\)](#)

[Complaints Policy \(Students\)](#)

[Email Communications Policy \(Staff\)](#)

[Responding to Student Safety Concerns - Reporting Obligations](#)

[Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Guidelines](#)

[Staff Recruitment Policy](#)

[Victorian Institute of Teaching \(VIT\) Codes of Conduct and Ethics](#)

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

[Ministerial Order 1359 Implementing the Child Safe Standards](#) - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises

NON COMPLIANCE WITH THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

Preshil will enforce this Code of Conduct. Following any non compliance we will instigate a review that may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or other corrective action.

REVIEW

This Code of Conduct was reviewed and approved by the Management Team in July 2022 and by the School Council in August 2022. This document will be reviewed annually from the date of approval or as required by any critical incidents, legislative or regulatory changes.

²Our Child Safety Officers are listed on our website – Principal, Human Resources Compliance Manager, Heads of Campus, the Director of Kindergarten, the Inclusive Education Leader, the Student Youth Worker and the School Counsellor.