



Presbyterian Ladies' College

MELBOURNE

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Rationale/Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct (the Code) outlines appropriate, expected and requisite standards of behaviour for all PLC staff, contractors and volunteers towards students and children. The Code serves to protect students, reduce and aim to eradicate any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur to students and children, and promote child safety across the broader College, including the Boarding House environment.

In the context of child safety, the Code provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

The Principal, Head of Junior School, Deputy Principal (Wellbeing), Head of Learning Enhancement Department (JS), Head of ELC and Head of Boarding are responsible to oversee the development, implementation and review of PLC's child safety policies and practices, and this Code.

This Code should be read in conjunction with PLC's Child Safety and Wellbeing policy.

2. Scope

The Code applies to:

- all staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff
- College Council
- volunteers, including International Student Accommodation Providers
- parents and carers
- third party contractors
- external Education Providers
- teacher candidates or other tertiary students on placement at the College
- visitors.

3. Source of Obligation

Ministerial Order 1359 -Vic Child Safe Standards

Education and Training Reform Act (ETR) 2006

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

Crimes Act 1958

4. Guiding Principles

- 4.1 The Child Safety Code of Conduct (the Code) provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, standards of ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. It also provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations
- 4.2 This Code applies across all College environments, including Koorinya Boarding House and when international students reside with accommodation providers, both during and outside school hours,

within and outside the physical school environment (excursions, camps and tours) and the online environment

- 4.3 The College has expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all school staff and persons interacting with PLC students within the school environment and College community
- 4.4 Certain staff members, volunteers and contractors at the College may have additional professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate their profession or occupation. The requirements and guidance within these codes of conduct must, concurrently with this Code, be complied with and expectations therewith upheld. If a staff member, volunteer or contractor considers that there is a conflict between these codes of conduct and this Code in a particular matter, the relevant staff member, volunteer or contractor must seek advice from their professional or occupational body and/or PLC's Senior Child Safety Officer and must advise the Principal of their proposed rectification course of action.

5. Implementation

This Child Safety Code of Conduct predetermines and prescribes the following behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable and/or prohibited.

5.1 Acceptable Behaviours

The following expectations are required to be exhibited at all times by all members of the PLC Community across all facets of the school physical and online environments, including but not limited to international students, Boarding House students and all Accommodation Provider environments.

All members of the PLC Community must:

- call Victoria Police on Emergency 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety or imminent abuse
- be a positive role model to students and uphold the values of the school in their actions and decisions
- promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students across all school environments, including the Boarding House
- be vigilant, informed and proactive regarding student safety and child protection issues
- provide age and stage appropriate care and supervision for students, not only on College campus, but whenever students are involved in PLC approved activities
- comply with all policies, guidelines, procedures and materials published by the College with respect to child protection and safety
- behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards students and their families and towards other staff
- respect students' privacy, particularly in sensitive areas such as toilet areas, Health Centre, change rooms, Aquatic Centre, Performing Arts Centre, camping situations and Boarding environments
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students and their families, including but not limited to, international students and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- use positive and affirming language towards students
- encourage students to contribute and 'have a say', and then listen to their response (verbal and non-verbal communication) and respond to their views with due consideration and respect
- wherever possible, involve students and their families in making decisions about matters that concern them directly and specifically

- respect individuals' differences
- help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and appropriately socialise
- intervene when students are engaging in bullying behaviour towards others or behaving in a humiliating, vilifying and/or a discriminatory manner
- report promptly and proactively, any breaches of this Code or concerns about child or student safety to the Principal, Deputy Principal (Wellbeing) or one of the College's Child Safety Officers
- ensure that obligations (including legal, moral and professional) to report child safety or abuse allegations internally and externally are executed lawfully and are met and recorded as required
- where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure that the student's safety takes priority
- respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know with the primary consideration being safety of the child/student.

5.2 Unacceptable Behaviours

The following expectations apply across all facets of the PLC Community, including but not limited to, international students in the Boarding House and within all Accommodation Provider environments.

All members of the PLC Community must not:

- engage in or condone any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students that is illegal, unsafe or abusive to children or expose students to such behaviours
- use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with, to or in the presence of students
- exaggerate or trivialise allegations or issues relating to child abuse or the safety and wellbeing of students
- express personal views on cultures, ethnicity, sexuality or disability in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, ethnicity, sexuality or disability
- engage in open discussions of an adult nature and topics when in the presence of students
- engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including partaking in sexually charged discussions or making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material
- engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal or private 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 or contact
- use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student
- engage in any form of behaviour that has the likelihood or potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm
- be alone with a child unnecessarily
- seek to use children in any way to meet their needs
- 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/s regardless of whether the student/s is your own or not, inside or outside the school and boarding environment
- engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including but not limited to, any online contact, online applications or interactions with a student
- use any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children and young people or expose them to offensive or sexualised content
- give out personal telephone numbers or social media contact details unless a student needs a phone number in specific circumstances (e.g., providing a mobile phone number when on extended trips and student exchange programs)

- accept or request students as 'friends', 'follow' students on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate or interact with a student in any way that is not condoned or approved by the College
- students who graduate from the College and return as an employee must not remain connected with current PLC students who they teach/coach who will graduate more than two years behind the employee on social media platforms
- take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parent / guardian consent unless it has been authorised for educational purposes at PLC or show/provide children with access to inappropriate images or material
- post online any information about a student that may identify them, such as their full name; age; specific physical attributes; email address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend
- work, communicate or interact with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited and/or unprescribed drugs
- form a sexualised relationship with a student within 2 years of the student graduating from the College
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

5.3 Reporting and Compliance Obligations

5.3.1 In addition to meeting core functions, duties and responsibilities as outlined, all staff are required to:

- report any suspicions, concerns, allegations or disclosures of alleged child abuse to a PLC Child Safety Officer who will provide information, guidance and support to the staff member, as required

Note: Staff need to be aware that consulting with a Child Safety Officer does not change or remove any obligation they have pursuant to applicable legislation to report the allegation or abuse to an external authority

- maintain valid VIT or WWCC documentation, and
- report to the Principal any criminal charges or convictions received during employment or volunteering that may indicate a possible risk to children and young people, including any such charges or convictions prior to employment

5.3.2 TAFE providers must be proactive in contacting the VET Staff liaison at PLC in relation to any child safety concerns

External education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse must be proactive in contacting one of the PLC College Child Safety Officers or the College Principal

5.3.3 Communications involved with the reporting of concerns or allegations of child abuse will be treated confidentially and on a strict 'need to know' basis

5.3.4 The Principal will be informed of any allegations of child abuse or misconduct towards children against a member of staff, contractor or volunteer

5.3.5 The Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 (Vic) also requires school Principals to have systems in place to prevent child abuse and to investigate and respond to such allegations. Upon receiving the allegation, the Principal will:

- take immediate action to protect children from a further potential for abuse and act to prioritise the best interests and safety of the child
- report the allegation to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). In circumstances where an allegation of criminal conduct is made, Victoria Police will be informed as the priority
- ensure investigation of the allegation promptly occurs, that appropriate action is taken in

response, and records of the outcome are kept

- report the finding and reasons for the outcome to the CCYP at the conclusion of the investigation
- ensure there is follow up regarding the ongoing safety of the child, including strategies by the College to support the child
- not disclose details or share information of the allegation internally except when assistance from a Child Safety Officer or member of the College Executive is required by the Principal in the administration of the reportable conduct reporting procedures and obligations.

5.4 Agreement to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

5.4.1 This Code is provided to all members of the College Council, staff, direct contact volunteers (those who access the PLC school environment) and direct contact contractors (those who access the PLC school environment) at induction, or otherwise prior to commencing work at the College.

5.4.2 This Code is also communicated and reaffirmed via refresher training at regular intervals. All staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors must acknowledge that they have read and will adhere to this Code.

5.5 Breach of this Code

Breaches of these established unacceptable behaviours are treated seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with the applicable College policy.

6. Key Related Policies

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Complaints and Grievances Policy
Privacy Policy
Critical Incident Policy
Supervision Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Staff and Students Professional Boundaries Policy
Mandatory Reporting Policy
Reportable Conduct Policy
Student Wellbeing Policy
Site Access Policy
Risk Management Policy
Working with Children Clearance Policy
Gender and Sexual Identity Policy

7. Definitions

PLC means Presbyterian Ladies' College.

The definitions for this Child Safety Code of Conduct are as outlined in Ministerial Order 1359 unless otherwise noted and can be found at Appendix 1 of this Code.

8. References

Nil.

9. Communication of this Code of Conduct

Staff

This Code is communicated, via email, to all staff following each review.

Staff can access this Code via Wyse>Staffroom>PLC Policies>Staff Policies>Child Safety>CHI.2 Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Parents/Guardians and Students

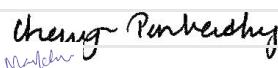
Parents/Guardians can access this Code via Wyse>Parent Neighbourhood resources>Parent Policies.

PLC Community

This Code is located on the PLC public website.

10. Policy Approval

For Office Use Only

Approved By:	Principal	Date Approved:	November 2024
Principal's Signature:		Endorsement Date	6 February 2025
Council Endorsed Code		Next Review:	November 2027
Policy Owner/s:	Exec. or senior member of staff responsible for developing and reviewing the policy.		
Review History	9/21: Policy reviewed by PLC Executive's; addition of legislative context for Reportable Conduct Scheme 02/22: Updated policy to comply with Ministerial Order 1359 and current PLC operations 11/22: Broadened scope to specify International Student Accommodation Providers 08/23: Review and update 09/24: Review now and move from annual to biennial reviews in line with VRQA child safe compliance obligations.		

All policies at Presbyterian Ladies' College are subject to a two-year review cycle (unless otherwise stated within the policy), irrespective of any amendments made during this period.

Appendices/Attachments (see next page)

Key Definitions of this Code

Term	Definition
Child	A child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.
Child safety	Includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.
Child abuse	Means <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence; or an offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958; and b) the infliction, on a child, of physical violence; or serious emotional or psychological harm; and c) the serious neglect of a child.
School Boarding environment	Means any physical, online or virtual space made available or authorised by the school boarding premises governing authority for a child or student boarding at a school boarding premises to use at any time, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) online or virtual school boarding environments (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); b) other locations provided by the provider of school boarding services or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. camps ii. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or iii. sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events iv. environments where tutors are working with boarding house students.
School Boarding premises governing authority	Means <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the provider of school boarding services b) the governing body of a school boarding premises (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of school boarding services or the ETR Act c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the Education Training Reform Act (ETR Act) 2006.

School (College) environment	Means any physical, online or virtual places, using during or outside school hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a campus of the school b) online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for the use of a child or students (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services) c) other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, location used for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. camps ii. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school iii. sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.
School governing authority	Means <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.
School (Boarding) staff	In a non-government school/ boarding premises means an individual working in a school/ boarding environment who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) directly engaged or employed by a school/ boarding premises governing authority b) a contracted service provider (whether a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school/ boarding premises governing authority to perform child-related work. This includes tutors working with Boarding House students. c) a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school/ boarding premises
School (College) staff	Means an individual working in a school environment who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority; b) a contracted service provider (whether a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work; or c) a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.
Student	A person who is enrolled at or attends PLC or student at the school boarding premises.
Volunteer	Means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment. For /this policy this term also includes International Student Accommodation Providers as the College does not utilise commercial or paid International Student Accommodation Providers.
Wyse	Wyse is the name given to PLC's intranet.