



ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

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“Let your light shine”

St Mary's Staff Child Safety Code of Conduct

Reviewed: Term 3 2016

Ratified by School Board:

Commitment to Child Safety

All students enrolled, and any child visiting, have the right to feel safe and be safe in all school environments and outside of school hours. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we have zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety.

The Code of Conduct has been developed for and by the Victorian teaching profession for all Registered Schools. It identifies a set of principles, which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community. It is based on the values set out in the accompanying Code of Ethics, namely Integrity, Respect and Responsibility. It draws on the Victorian Institute of Teaching's Standards of Professional Practice, and Codes of Conduct for teachers developed by schools and other registration authorities.

Purpose:

The Code of Conduct states what is already common practice within the teaching profession. Its purpose is to:

Promote adherence to the values teachers see as underpinning their profession provide a set of principles which will guide teachers in their everyday conduct and assist them to solve ethical dilemmas affirm the public accountability of the teaching profession promote public confidence in the teaching profession.

- The Code of Conduct is not a disciplinary tool. The Code of Conduct will not cover every situation.

Definitions

Professional Conduct -Teachers' professional conduct is characterised by the quality of the relationships they have with their students, their students' parents (guardians and caregivers), families and communities and their colleagues.

Relationships with Students:

- Teachers provide opportunities for ALL students to learn.
- The main focus of teaching is student learning.
- **Teachers demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:** knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment accepting professional responsibility for the provision of quality teaching having high expectations of every student; recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents considering all viewpoints fairly communicating well and appropriately with their students.
- **Teachers treat their Students with courtesy and dignity.**
- Teachers work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect model and engage in respectful and impartial language protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm enhance student autonomy and sense of self worth and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values'
- Teachers work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect model and engage in respectful and impartial language protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm enhance student autonomy and sense of self worth and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values.
- Respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate. That is: if the student has consented to the information being used in a certain way to prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare of a person (including the student.)
- As part of an investigation into an unlawful activity if the disclosure is required or mandated by law to prevent a crime or to enforce the law
- refrain from discussing students' personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially.
- Use consequences appropriate with the offence when disciplining students.(Refer PBIS Negative Behaviours and Consequence Chart, Behavioural Management Policy)

Teachers work within the limit of their expertise:

- In fulfilling their role, teachers carry out a wide range of responsibilities.
- They support students by knowing their strengths and the limits of their professional expertise.
- Teachers: seek to ensure that they have the physical, mental and emotional capacity to carry out their professional responsibilities.
- Are aware of the role of other professionals and agencies and when students should be referred to them for assistance
- Are truthful when making statements about their qualifications and competencies.

Teachers maintain objectivity in their relationships with the Students.

In their professional role:

- Teachers do not behave as a friend or a parent.
- They: interact with students without displaying bias or preference.

- Make decisions in students' best interests.
- Do not draw students into their personal agendas.
- Do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals.

Teachers are always in a Professional relationship with the students.

- Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised.
- They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits:
- A professional relationship will be violated if a teacher:
 - has a sexual relationship with a student.
 - Uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students.
 - Touches a student without a valid reason
 - Holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines.
 - Without a valid context accepts gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents.
- A professional relationship may be compromised if a teacher: attends parties or socialises with students
 - Invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present.

Relationships with Parents, Guardians, Caregivers, Families and Communities

Teachers maintain a professional relationship with parents, guardian and carers

- Teachers should be respectful of and courteous to parents.
- Teachers: consider parents' perspectives when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student.
- Communicate and consult with parents in a timely, understandable and sensitive manner.
- Take appropriate action when responding to parental concerns.

Teachers work in Collaborative relationships with students', Families and Communities.

- Teachers recognise that their students come from a diverse range of cultural contexts and seek to work collaboratively with students' families and communities within those contexts.

Relationships with Colleagues

Collegiality is an integral part of the work of Teachers:

Teachers demonstrate collegiality by:

- Treating each other with courtesy and respect.
- Valuing the input of their colleagues using appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters.
- Sharing expertise and knowledge in a variety of collaborative contexts respecting different approaches to teaching.
- Providing support for each other, particularly those new to the profession.
- Sharing information relating to the wellbeing of students.

Personal Conduct

The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as a whole.

Although there is no definitive boundary between the personal and professional conduct of a teacher, it is expected that teachers will:

- Be positive role models at school and in the community
- Respect the rule of law and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations.
- Not exploit their position for personal or financial gain.
- Ensure that their personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties.
- Act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues.

Professional Competence

Teachers value their professionalism and set and maintain high standards of competence.

- Are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise
- Are committed to pursuing their own professional learning
- Complete their duties in a responsible, thorough and timely way.

Teachers are aware of the legal requirements that pertain to their profession, in particular, they are aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to:

- Discrimination, harassment and vilification
- Negligence
- Mandatory reporting
- Privacy
- Occupational health and safety
- Teacher registration.

Code of Ethics

As teachers, we use our expert knowledge to provide experiences that inspire and facilitate student learning.

• We are a significant force in developing a knowledgeable, creative, productive and democratic society. The values that underpin our profession are integrity, respect and responsibility. We hold a unique position of trust and influence, which we recognise in our relationships with students, parents (caregivers and guardians), colleagues and the community. We demonstrate our integrity by: acting in the best interest of students maintaining a professional relationship with students, parents, colleagues and the community behaving in ways that respect and advance the profession. We demonstrate our respect by: acting with care and compassion treating students fairly and impartially holding our colleagues in high regard acknowledging parents as partners in the education of their children.

We demonstrate our integrity by:

- Acting in the best interest of students.
- Maintaining a professional relationship with students, parents, colleagues and the community.
- Behaving in ways that respect and advance the profession.

We demonstrate our respect by:

- Acting with care and compassion
- Treating students fairly and impartially
- Holding our colleagues in high regard
- Acknowledging parents as partners in the education of their children.

We demonstrate our responsibility by:

- Providing quality teaching
- Maintaining and developing our professional practice
- Working cooperatively with colleagues in the best interest of our students.

The purpose of this Code is to:

- State the values that guide our practice and conduct.
- Enable us as a profession to affirm our public accountability.
- Promote public confidence in our profession.

This Code of Practice is aligned to the standards set out in the VIT "The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct."