

Verney Road School

Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy



Rationale:

Verney Rd. School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015). We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

Aims:

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

Implementation:

The Principal and school leaders of Verney Rd. School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of VRS will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively. All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS:

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times.

- Treating students and families in the school community with respect both within 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 are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child.

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- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and Indigenous Australians.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability through the use of inclusive practices.
- Taking actions to uphold and maintain the human rights and dignity of a person with a disability in accordance with the Disability and Discrimination Act; and of those from Indigenous Australian or culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership, Social Worker and/or a member of the Principal Class Team.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.

If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS:

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts).
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive or harmful and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context.
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting.
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.

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- 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 school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.

- Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes.

In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

- Use restrictive practices (e.g. physical restraint or seclusion) on a student that is not at immediate and significant risk of harm or injury to self and others.

- Remove, withhold or exclude the use of educational or therapeutic strategies and tools used to support, uphold and maintain student's human rights, independence, wellbeing, and engagement (i.e. student's individual Augmentative and Alternative Communication system e.g. PODD).

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the VRS Principal.

REFERENCES

VRQA Website <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html>

DET Website

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

Commission for Children and Young People Website <http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

Evaluation:

This policy was ratified by School Council in 2018

Review Date: 2019

School Council President

Principal