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## Child Safe Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to Department of Education and Training (DET) employees, volunteers, visitors, International Student Program (ISP) Homestay family members and contractors working at Essendon Keilor College including any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School Council for use by a child during or outside school hours.

It is to be read in conjunction with the related policies listed below including the Essendon Keilor College Child Protection Policy, and all appendices. For definitions in relation to Ministerial Order No. 870 on which this Code of Conduct is based, see Appendix 1.

We are committed to promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally/and or linguistically diverse backgrounds. In recognition of the diverse cultural and linguistic needs represented within the college community, the Child Safety Code of Conduct will also be provided in Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese and in other languages as requested.

Staff, volunteers and contractors at Essendon Keilor College are required to abide by this Code.

Under the School Council the Principal will:

- be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
- be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
- nominate Essendon Keilor College's Student Wellbeing Leader as the Child Protection Officer. The Child Protection Officer will provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

**All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Essendon Keilor College will:**

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the college
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area
3. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities
4. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work
5. Be fair, considerate and honest with others
6. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions
7. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people
8. Be professional in their actions
9. Maintain strict impartiality
10. Comply with specific college guidelines on physical contact with children. **See Appendix 2.**
11. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know

12. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people. This includes not communicating directly with a student through personal or private contact channels including by social media, email, instant messaging, or texting 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 matters. All employees, volunteers and contractors will abide by the college Essendon Keilor College Employee and Volunteer Social Media Guidelines. **See Appendix 3.**
13. Operate within the policies and guidelines of Essendon Keilor College
14. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

**No person shall:**

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of Essendon Keilor College's programs and activities
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
13. Do anything in contravention of the Essendon Keilor College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

**What happens if you breach this Code of Conduct**

If DET employees breach this Code of Conduct they will face disciplinary action in line with the Department's Guidelines for Managing Complaints, Misconduct and Unsatisfactory Performance - Teaching Service.

[www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/conduct.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/workm/Pages/conduct.aspx)

Volunteers and contractors will face termination of contract or cessation of engagement with the college.

**Related Policies and Links:**

Child Protection Policy

Duty of Care  
Bullying and Harassment  
ICT Acceptable Use  
Mandatory Reporting  
Student Engagement  
Privacy  
Working With Children Check  
Visitors  
Camps and Excursions

[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes)

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx>

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### **Essendon Keilor College Child Safety Code of Conduct Agreement**

I have read and understood the Essendon Keilor College Child Safety Code of Conduct and agree to adhere to it.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

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## Appendix 1

### Definitions: Ministerial Order No. 870

**Child abuse** includes:

- any act committed against a child involving
  - a sexual offence or
  - an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of
  - physical violence or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

**Child-connected work** means work authorised by the School Council and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**Child safety** encompasses 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 incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School Council for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

**School staff** means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

## **Appendix 2**

### **Guidelines on Physical Contact with Students**

All Essendon Keilor College DET employees, volunteers, visitors and contractors need to be aware of the following good practice with students:

- when touch is required, ask the student's permission to touch and explain what form it will take
- avoid being in a one-to-one situation with a student where possible
- never assume that physical contact is acceptable to a student
- respect the signs that a student is uncomfortable with touch
- use verbal directions rather than touch, for example, when directing students to an area
- use the above approach with activities such as dance, sport, music or drama
- make sure the physical contact is appropriate to the activity
- students must not be left in a distressed state for long periods. Parents need to be contacted.

### **Cultural Protocols and Appropriate Physical Contact**

All Essendon Keilor College DET employees, volunteers, visitors and contractors need to be aware that:

- some cultures and religions disapprove of physical contact between adults and children, especially if the adult is a male and the child is female
- some students from other cultures may have backgrounds of severe trauma
- it is usual for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to touch an adult to communicate a need rather than to express it verbally
- some cultures including Aboriginal and Polynesian children prefer not to make direct eye contact.

### **Use of physical contact for the purposes of health and safety at the college**

DET employees may make legitimate use of physical restraint if all non-physical interventions have been used unsuccessfully and as a last resort in the following situations:

- A student or adult's safety is threatened
- A student is attacking another student
- A student is posing an immediate danger to themselves or others
- It is the teacher's duty of care to protect students from risks of injury

Teachers need to keep talking to the student throughout the incident.

If it is necessary to physically restrain a child for safety reasons, grip clothing rather than the body wherever possible.

### **Inappropriate Physical Contact**

All DET employees, volunteers and contractors are prohibited from:

- using any form of corporal punishment/physical discipline. This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, tapping, poking or any other physical force as retaliation or correction.
- massaging a student or having a student massage them
- touching the groin, genital area, buttocks, breasts or any other part of the body that may cause distress or embarrassment.
- Initiating, permitting or requesting contact including kissing, tickling, hand holding
- Inappropriate use of physical restraint including:
  - force applied to the head or neck

- restrictions to breathing
- punching or kicking
- holding by the hair or ear
- confining a student in a locked room or limited space
- any physical contact in a private area of the college, or in one-on-one situations on camps, tours or excursions

### **Appropriate Physical Contact**

- **Sport and Physical Education**

Touching students is a natural part of coaching and instructing in sport. This is an important and necessary aspect of safe and effective teaching especially in activities such as gymnastics and demonstrating a range of games skills.

In line with a teachers' duty of care and the community's view of acceptable standards of appropriate behaviour and physical activity, teachers will only make physical contact if the aim is to:

- develop sports skills or techniques
- to treat or prevent an injury
- meet the requirements of the sport.

Teachers will:

- explain what the touching will be and ask for volunteers, or ask students if they mind a hands-on demonstration approach
- explain when spotting is required in programs such as gymnastics
- be explicit about where contact will be made, for example, around the waist or hips
- be explicit about the fact that if students need 'catching' for safety reasons, touching may not proceed as planned, to ensure their safety
- give students verbal instructions first and only follow up with a demonstration if the student permits it. (Such as in throwing a javelin or ball).
- minimise the need for touching.

- **Other Circumstances**

With the permission of the student, and with prior explanation of the touching, physical contact may occur in the course of:

- music, drama or dance demonstrations
- administering first aid
- Physical contact is acceptable in a non-intrusive form such as:
  - shaking hands or a pat on the back or upper arm when congratulating a child. Positive reinforcement with encouraging words should accompany this.
  - a hand on the upper arm or upper back to comfort a student who is experiencing grief and loss or distress.

### **Appropriate Physical Contact with Children with Additional Needs or Disabilities**

Students with diagnosed conditions may engage in a much wider range of physical behaviours towards DET employees and other students as a result of their condition. Staff may need to engage in more physical contact as a means to their duty of care.

Staff may need to:

- be more thoughtful about their physical contact with children with additional needs and

disabilities

- be aware that these children have an increased reliance on staff to keep them safe
- involve specialised staff to set up education plans to provide strategies to support the child and minimise the need for physical contact
- ensure children with Asperger's have facts; a list of do's and don'ts in relation to appropriate touching
- assist with the toileting and personal care needs. An individual plan for these needs must have been negotiated with parents.

### **Supervision of Change Rooms On and Off Site**

Teachers have a duty of care, which includes the supervision of change rooms on and off site.

Teachers will:

- develop and give explicit rules about behaviour in the change room
- set a routine for going into change rooms and keep to it
- as a rule, stand at the door with their back to students. Student privacy will be respected.
- let students know when entering with the request that they cover up.

There are particular community sensitivities around male/female teacher supervision of the opposite gender students in change rooms.

Where this is absolutely necessary, teachers will:

- make sure that students know you will need to enter the change room if there is an emergency following a warning and advice to cover up
  - choose two student representatives to report any problems in the change rooms
  - call all students out if there is any disturbance
  - ask a same sex teacher to enter the change room if students remain inside.
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## Appendix 3

### Essendon Keilor College Employee and Volunteer Social Media Guidelines

#### Essendon Keilor College Social Media Policy

Employees, volunteers and contractors **will not** communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels including by social media, email, instant messaging, or texting 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 matters.

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#### Using Social Media: Considerations

##### Things to consider when setting up a profile

As a professional working in a Victorian government school you are expected to act in a manner that reflects your standing in the community; that of a respectful and responsible citizen. Therefore, it is imperative that you always reflect on how you conduct yourself online.

When using social media tools always:

##### 1. Consider any relevant codes of conduct or employer policies in relation to using social media

- a) Familiarise yourself with your employer's policies including their Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.
- b) Familiarise yourself with any professional codes of conduct that may also apply to your use of social media tools.

##### 2. Determine the purpose for setting up your profile

It is recommended that you define your online space as either *personal OR professional* and then apply the appropriate privacy and/or filtering controls. Combining your personal space with your professional space may result in the blurring of your professional relationship with students, parents and others in the school community; or may, in some circumstances, even amount to professional misconduct.

If you decide to use a social media tool for classroom/professional use then it is recommended that you create a completely separate online space for this purpose. This online space should be treated with the same professionalism as is displayed at school. All correspondence and content that is uploaded must have a clear educational context/purpose.

Within a school, classroom and/or professional environment, expected behaviours are outlined and communicated to students and their families within policies such as a *Code of Conduct* or an *Acceptable Use Agreement*. These include appropriate language and behaviours and the consequences for behaving inappropriately. It is essential that these same rules are established and understood for the online classroom/professional space.

In addition, it is important to consider whether you require the consent of others ( i.e. parents / guardians of the students and/or management) before registering/using a social media tool.

##### 3. Obtain the appropriate permissions (if necessary)

Establishing a social media tool for an educational purpose may require the consent of your manager/principal. You should consult with the Department / school-based policies and your manager/principal for further information.

In addition, you should seek the consent of parents/guardians for students to participate and register to use social media tools.

You will be required to gain parent/guardian consent to upload information, images and videos of the students. This is very important as a failure to obtain this consent may amount to a breach of



privacy.

#### **4. Consider the privacy implications**

- a. Determine whether you must issue a privacy notice
- b. Consider the privacy notices of the social media
- c. Set your privacy settings

Most social media tools have privacy and filtering controls. This allows content to be public or restricted. These controls allow you to restrict who can and cannot view personal information, images and comments that are posted by you or others on to your online space. Be familiar with the site's privacy options and consider how you can use these controls to protect your online identity.

Most social media tools provide varying levels of privacy; the following are general examples: Maximum privacy restrictions can hide your profile within a search function. This means that you will need to invite people to join your profile. If other social media users attempt to search for your profile it will not be listed in the search results. All personal information, images and comments will only be seen by people that you have granted access.

Custom privacy restrictions can enable you to restrict individual elements of your profile's content. For example, you may choose to restrict a selected person's access to some of your profile's content, such as images.

Public/no privacy restrictions will enable all users of the social media tool to access all of your profile's content.

\*Some social media sites allow search engines such as Google access to unrestricted profiles; even if the viewer is not a member of the social media site.

\*\*Remember privacy options and settings are extremely useful to protect your online identity and professional reputation but they are not fool proof. These settings can be changed by the owners of the tool who do not always have an obligation to inform their users. The best way to maintain your professional image is to manage your profile professionally and regularly check for updates to Terms and Conditions that may occur. When using social media tools it is prudent to err on the side of caution.

For more information, see: *Public Administration Act 2004* in the context of Social Media

#### **5. Read the Terms and Conditions**

Many social media tools have policies that explain the terms and conditions that apply when using the tool. It is important to be aware of the terms and conditions for each specific social media tool.

**DET Recommends:** DET Employees in schools do not allow students under 13 years of age to register for a social media tool where the terms and conditions require them to be 13 years or older.

#### **6. Other considerations when online**

##### a) Uploading Information, Images and Video Content

- Consider the content you upload or view and whether it reflects your professional image and how you wish to be perceived by others.
- Consider whether the content is detrimental to your standing in the community.
- Consider whether your friends or others can upload content that may adversely affect your reputation
- Consider whether your personal information could potentially be copied and shared with a wider audience.
- Consider whether you need specific permission to upload the content. Content may have copyright protection or may require specific permission before it can be uploaded. For example, before uploading images and videos of student on an online space, specific permission should be sought from the student or their parents / guardians.

##### b) Subscribing to Groups

Social media tools often encourage people to set up or subscribe to groups. These groups are an

effective means of meeting people with common interests on professional and/or personal topics. They assist to share ideas and resources as well as reflect on issues of interest or concern. When setting up or subscribing to groups be sure to keep in mind your professional status and how these groups may or may not uphold your professional image.

#### c) Sharing and Viewing Content

The digital world is full of books, newspaper articles, research reports and commentaries, as well as illustrations, presentations, video and music. Social media tools allow users to access, read and/or view these items. It is important to note the history of your reading and viewing activity may be highlighted and shared on your profile. Consider how you could protect your professional image by using the privacy and filtering options that are available within the particular social media tool that you are using.