

Child Safe Code of Conduct

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

- (1) To state our rules and expectations for child safe behaviour in our service, and to outline the likely action we will take in the event of any breaches
- (2) We are required to have a Code of Conduct under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*
- (3) A child safe code of conduct is required under the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- (4) This Code of Conduct also helps to fulfil our obligation under the Reportable Conduct Scheme to have systems in place to prevent and respond to child abuse
- (5) This code of conduct aligns with the ECEC Code of Ethics and the National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care (National Model Code)

SCOPE

- (6) This code applies to:
 - a. 'Staff': the approved provider, persons with management or control nominated supervisor, paid workers, volunteers, work placement students, and third parties (e.g., contractors, subcontractors, self-employed persons, employees of a labour hire company) who perform work our behalf
 - b. Visitors to our service who carry out child-related work, including allied health support workers
- (7) This Code applies to all behaviour and conduct that is reasonably related to or connected with our service, including our day-to-day operations, service hosted events where there are children present, excursions, and the use of technology. It is not limited to behaviour within the physical workplace or during normal business hours
- (8) This Code should be read in conjunction with our Child Safe Environment Policy and Child Protection Policy
- (9) The Staff Code of Conduct also applies to staff
- (10) The Families and Visitors Code of Conduct applies to families and visitors

DEFINITIONS

- (11) The following definitions apply to this policy and related procedures:
 - a. 'Breach' means any action or inaction that fails to comply with this Code

- b. 'Capture' in relation to an image of a child includes to film, record or take an image
- c. 'Child-related work' is used in this Code to refer to the work of our service (an education and care service for children). It does not apply where contact with children is incidental or would not reasonably be expected to occur (e.g. a plumber or delivery driver who are supervised at all times)
- d. 'Harm' and 'risk of harm' are used in this policy as overarching terms that cover neglect and various forms of abuse. It includes physical, sexual and psychological abuse; neglect; ill-treatment; grooming; exposure to family violence; commercial child sexual exploitation; online child sexual abuse; and sexual abuse that is perpetrated by other children and young people
- e. 'Inappropriate conduct' in relation to a child that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in an education and care service. Includes behaviour that is inconsistent with professional standards; causes or is likely to cause emotional, psychological or physical harm; or has violent or sexual connotations. Can be through verbal or electronic communication or electronic capture (e.g., photos, recordings), repeated actions or ongoing patterns of behaviour over time
- f. 'Parents' includes guardians and persons who have parental responsibilities for the child under a decision or order of court
- g. 'Staff' refers to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, paid employees, volunteers, students, and third parties who are covered in the scope of this policy – unless indicated otherwise

CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

- (12) Our [Child Safe Code of Conduct- full version](#) is at **Appendix A**; a quick summary version is at **Appendix B**
- (13) It provides examples of the child-safe behaviour we want our staff to engage in and the behaviour that is unacceptable. Engaging in unacceptable behaviour is a breach of our Code and may result in performance management or disciplinary action
- (14) Examples of concerning behaviour are also described. On its own, a concerning behaviour may not be a breach of the [Code](#); however, a pattern of concerning behaviour may pose a risk to children and be deemed a breach

CODE COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND MONITORING

- (1) This [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) can be found in our front office and on our website
- (2) The approved provider and nominated supervisor provide information, training and other resources and support regarding the [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) and related documents

- (3) All staff (including volunteers and students) are formally inducted. They are given access to, review, understand and formally agree to uphold this Child Safe Code of Conduct and related documents
- (4) The nominated supervisor runs a professional development program for each staff member, which covers this Code
- (5) The approved provider and nominated supervisor monitor the Child Safe Code of Conduct and staff practices to ensure our staff are understand and uphold the Code The approved provider and nominated supervisor monitor and audit staff practices. They address non-compliance. Breaches are taken seriously
- (6) Families are given access to our Child Safe Code of Conduct and related documents at the time of enrolment and any other time upon request
- (7) Families are notified in line with our obligations under the *National Regulations* when changes are made to our policies and procedures, including this Child Safe Code of Conduct

(8) RELATED DOCUMENTS

Key Policies	Child Protection Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Child Safe Risk Management Plan Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy Complaint Handling Policy Excursions Policy Tobacco, Vape, Drug and Alcohol Policy Safe Arrival of Children Policy Transport Policy Sleep and Rest Policy Managing Emergencies and Evacuations Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy ECEC Code of Ethics Physical Environment Policy Staffing Arrangement Policy Social Media Policy Technology and Device Use Policy Photography and Video Policy Work Health and Safety Policy Positive Relationships for Children Policy Orientation for Children Policy Family and Community Partnerships Policy Governance and Management Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Delivery and Collection of Children Policy Lock Up Policy Staff Code of Conduct Visitors Policy Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy Child Safety and Family Violence Information Sharing Policy
Procedures	Complaint Handling Procedure (in Complaint Handling Policy) Child Protection Procedures (in Child Protection Policy)
Resources	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record template (in Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record Policy) Recording disclosures of harm/risk of harm template (in Child Protection Policy) Recording suspicions of harm/risk of harm template (in Child Protection Policy) Child Safety and Wellbeing Breach – Incident Report Form (in Child Protection Policy) List of indicators of harm (in Child Protection Policy) Child protection reporting summary (in Child Protection Policy)

POLICY INFORMATION

Approval	Dina Kahn
Review	Reviewed annually and when there are changes that may affect this policy, a related procedure or child safety, including after any responses to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of harm or risk of harm. The

review will include checks to ensure the document reflects current legislation, continues to be effective, or whether any changes and additional training are required

Last reviewed: 25th March 2026

Date for next review: 25th March 2027

Child Safe Code of Conduct

[THE FOLLOWING CODE OF CONDUCT SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED AND AGREED UPON BY YOUR SERVICE. IT SHOULD REFLECT YOUR INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. PLEASE REVIEW AND EDIT ACCORDINGLY]

Commitment to child safety and wellbeing

Children's rights, best interests, health, safety, welfare and wellbeing are our top priority and paramount in every decision or action we take. We champion and model a child safe culture at all levels in our service.

We will not tolerate harm or the risk of harm to children or young people, including anyone at our service subjecting a child to inappropriate conduct or discipline. We will not tolerate bullying, discrimination or harassment. We act on any concerns about child safety and encourage a culture of reporting harm and risk of harm.

We listen to all children. We uphold their rights and empower them to know and exercise their rights. Children and families are involved in making decisions about matters that concern them. We are committed to equity and the inclusion of all children, regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social, economic or cultural background. We have an inclusive and welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and respect and value their diverse and unique identities and experiences. We do not tolerate racism.

[insert your service's own statement of commitment to child safety and wellbeing, if it is different from this one, and edit/add to this Child Safe Code of Conduct according to any specific arrangements/risk management strategies at your service]

Commitment to child safety and legal obligations

I WILL:

- Uphold our commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- Put children's safety, health and wellbeing first at all times, remembering my duty of care to protect children from hazards and harm
- Act in line with all relevant laws and regulations, including the Child Safe Standards
- Be responsible for knowing and following all the relevant child safety and protection policies and procedures that apply to my role, including our policies and procedures, including our [Child Safe Environment Policy](#) and those that cover supervision practices, interactions with and between children, child protection, discrimination, bullying and harassment, communication (including online), technology use, photography, privacy and record keeping
- Be aware of current child safety and protection laws and my obligations under them, and undertake all the training I need, including mandatory child protection and child safety training
- Meet my child protection reporting obligations including mandatory reporting, and reporting criminal conduct, allegations of sexual misconduct, allegations of reportable conduct, and inappropriate conduct by staff (including contractors, students and volunteers)

- Keep all information about child protection concerns confidential, except when it must be disclosed by law to a relevant authority under information sharing laws
- Identify, assess and manage risk of harm to children in line with our Child Safe Risk Management Plan and our other risk assessments, policies and procedures
- Take a child seriously if they make a disclosure about harm or risk of harm concerning themselves or another child
- Manage allegations of a child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour
- Respond to all suspicions, beliefs, disclosures, incidents, allegations, concerns and complaints about child safety, including harm or the risk of harm by an adult or another child following the relevant policy and procedure, including our Child Safe Environment Policy, Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure
- Use positive behaviour management for children who are exhibiting challenging or inappropriate behaviour
- Immediately notify the approved provider of anything that may or does prohibit my working or volunteering with children or in an education and care service - e.g., in relation to my WWCC or educator's accreditation/ teacher's registration (e.g., cancellations, suspensions, relevant charges or convictions), or suspension, supervision or prohibition notices

I WILL NOT:

- Condone or engage in any inappropriate conduct or activity that harms or risks harm to a child <including:
 - Physical, sexual or psychological/emotional abuse
 - Verbal abuse or intimidation, such as yelling and shouting, speaking aggressively to a child, invading a child's personal space, finger pointing, talking over, persistently criticising and/or denigrating, humiliating, shaming or name calling
 - Ill-treatment
 - Neglect (e.g., inadequate supervision, nourishment, water, education or medical care)
 - Sexual grooming, commercial child sexual exploitation, online child sexual abuse
 - Bullying
 - Harassment
 - Unlawful discrimination
 - Use passive aggressive behaviour, such as deliberately ignoring, isolating or being dismissive of others
 - Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
 - Engaging in rough physical games with children that could lead to injury
 - Any other unsafe behaviour towards a child>
- Use corporal punishment or other forms of inappropriate discipline <, including:
 - Smacking, pushing, hitting, pinching or biting
 - Force feeding
 - Yelling, belittling or humiliation
 - Physically dragging a child
 - Locking a child away (or isolating them)
 - Depriving a child of food or drink
 - Unreasonable restraining or immobilisation of a child (this may include restraint in a highchair)
 - Excluding children from events
 - Consistently moving children to the office or other space away from the play areas
 - Moving children to another room as punishment>
- Use any other form of inappropriate practice, <such as:

- Negative labelling of a child or family
- Criticising a child's actions or behaviour
- Discouraging a child from taking part in activities
- Blaming or shaming a child
- Making fun of or laughing at or about a child
- Using sarcastic or cruel humour with or to a child
- Excessive use of negative language to a child, such as, "no" or "stop that!" or "don't..." or "you never...".

[It is optional to include specific examples. These rules are covered in our [Positive Relationships for Children Policy](#), but some services may wish to have a very clear and detailed Code of Conduct, others may prefer to be brief and more general]

- Ignore or disregard any incidents, suspicions, disclosures or knowledge of harm or risk of harm to a child
- Exaggerate or trivialise harm or risk of harm to children
- Talk with other adults about hurting a child

Professional conduct and boundaries

I WILL:

- Behave in a courteous, ethical and respectful way towards children, families, staff and visitors
- Use appropriate and non-intrusive physical contact with a child when it is warranted, such as to soothe, build trusting relationships, demonstrate learning, treat or prevent an injury, and to meet the health and hygiene needs of a child or the needs of a child with disability
- Report any actual or perceived conflicts of interest to the nominated supervisor (such as an outside relationship with a child in our care)
- Maintain a professional appearance and proper hygiene
- Communicate in a polite and respectful way, verbally and in written material (e.g. emails, social media)
- Be aware that purposely forming relationships with families outside of work may be perceived as grooming behaviour

I WILL NOT:

- Condone or engage in any sexual act with, towards or in the presence of a child, any sexual touching, voyeurism, recording or distributing intimate images, grooming behaviour or inappropriate conduct in relation to a child in our care, **<including the following:**
 - Offer a child gifts, food, money, attention or affection in exchange for sexual activities or images or with the intention of making it easier to access the child for sexual activity
 - Discuss my sexual experiences and preferences with a child or ask a child to share intimate or sexual information about themselves
 - Show children pictures, animations, images or websites of an inappropriate or adult nature
 - Undress in front of, or expose myself to, a child
 - Go to the toilet in front of a child
 - Communicate with a child about romantic, intimate or sexual feelings
 - Initiate inappropriate and unwarranted physical contact including touching in a sexualised or intrusive way, such as tickling, wrestling, massages, kisses or prolonged, unwarranted or unwelcome hugging, or physical closeness (including encouraging a child to sit on my lap for an extended period) that is not age appropriate or required based on the needs or abilities of a child
 - Deliberately facilitate situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child, such as wrestling or tickling

- Make negative, overly flattering or sexualised comments about a child's appearance
- Flirt with a child
- Undress a child unless it is necessary to do so, and the child is unable to undress themselves
- Form any intimate relationship with a child in our care >

[It is optional to include specific examples. Some services may wish to have a very clear and detailed Code of Conduct, others may prefer to be brief and more general]

- Talk about adult or sexualised topics – including telling adult jokes, or use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- Do personal care tasks that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting
- Engage in any sexual or intimate acts with anyone while at the service or during work-related activities outside the premises (e.g. excursions, staff development activities)
- Encourage a child to communicate or meet with me in a private setting, or arrange personal contact, including online, with children in our care for any purpose that is not related to our service's activities unless I have prior approval from the nominated supervisor or approved provider and the child's parent/s
- Babysit, mentor and/or tutor a child in our care out of work hours unless I have the nominated supervisor or approved provider's prior approval
- Develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism
- Ask a child to keep a secret, including a relationship with an adult

Photography, social media, devices and technology

I WILL:

- Follow our policies and procedures for photography, social media, and using devices and online platforms
- Get consent from parents before photographing or recording a child or using their image
- Only use service-supplied devices to take photos or make recordings of children
- Keep my personal devices securely stored away from children
- Only connect with children online in relation to my work and include the child's parent in any electronic communication with a child
- Report to the nominated supervisor if a child communicates with me online outside of a work-related matter

I WILL NOT:

- Have personal devices capable of capturing, storing or transmitting an image or video (such as cameras, smartphones, tablets, computers, smart toys, wearables including smartglasses and smartwatches SD cards, USB drives, and cloud storage) in my possession or control while providing education and care and working directly with children (unless I have been authorised otherwise)
- Capture, store or transmit images of a child on a personal device
- Take, access, share, store, publish photographs or recordings of a child for an unauthorised reason or without the written consent of their parent/s
- Have unauthorised contact with a child online
- Use private text messages to communicate with a child where open communication is possible
- Use an electronic device to exploit or harass a child or their family
- Capture, store or transmit explicit or intimate images or recordings of a child, including those in which they are in a state of undress, bathing or using the toilet
- Access, retrieve, display, view, forward and/or store offensive obscene, pornographic, threatening, abusive or other inappropriate material in the workplace

Cultural safety and inclusion

I WILL:

- Welcome and celebrate all children (and their families and communities), regardless of their race, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, health status, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, property, ability or other status
- Acknowledge the histories, cultures, language, traditions, religions, spiritual beliefs, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families
- Make reasonable adjustments for children who have different needs, such as a disability
- Take part in discussions and share knowledge about cultural safety with my colleagues
- Communicate in ways children (and their families and communities) can understand

I WILL NOT:

- Treat a child (or their family) unfairly or unfavourably because they have a particular characteristic or belong to a certain group, such as disability, sex, race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religious appearance
- Express my personal views about gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, race, religion, or disability in front of children in any way that might negatively impact them
- Use offensive language, or racial, cultural, homophobic or sexist slurs

Supervision

I WILL:

- Strictly follow our supervision procedures and plans, including during high-risk activities e.g., during the delivery and collection of children, travel between services, excursions, transport, toileting, water-play, special events with visitors, sleep and rest etc
- Work with children in an open and transparent way, so that the other adults know what work I am doing with children
- <Always stay within the line of sight of other staff while I am working with children> **[It is best practice to have educators work in pairs with children at all times, but not law. Whatever your service's arrangements, you must as far as possible minimise the risk of children being harmed by staff]**
- <Work in pairs with another staff member while I am carrying out intimate care routines with a child (including toileting or hygiene related)> **[OR]** <Ensure that I am within the line of sight of other staff at all times while I am carrying out intimate care routines with a child (including toileting or hygiene related)> **[select applicable rule or delete both (noting this is higher risk)]**
- <Report to the nominated supervisor any situations in which I am, or another staff member is, out of the line of sight of other staff while I am working with children> **[delete if not applicable]**
- Not carry out intimate care routines with children unless I am authorised to do so
- Raise any concerns I have about supervision with the nominated supervisor or approved provider

Alcohol, drugs, tobacco and vapes

I WILL:

- Follow our [Alcohol, Vape, Drug and Tobacco Policy](#) and keep our service free of these substances

I WILL NOT:

- Be affected by or in possession of alcohol or illicit drugs (including misused prescription medication) while I am at work

- Smoke or use e-cigarettes (vapes) at the service, in the carpark, or within 4 metres of the pedestrian entrances/exits from our service
- Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes, vapes or illicit drugs

Breaches of this Code of Conduct

Breaches and suspected breaches of our Child Safe Code of Conduct must be reported as soon as practicable to the <nominated supervisor and/or approved provider> either in person, by telephone on <insert number> or via email <insert email>.

If the breach relates to harm or the risk of harm to a child by an adult or another child (including inappropriate conduct by staff), staff must follow our [Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#). Staff should complete the Child Safety and Wellbeing Breach – Incident Report Form which is available <insert location> [a template is available in Centre Support’s Child Safe Environment Policy].

Breaches and suspected breaches will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly, transparently and according to our relevant policies and procedures, including our HR/management policies, our Complaint Policy and Procedure and Child Protection Policy and Procedure, where appropriate.

Staff, including volunteers and students, who breach our Code may have disciplinary action taken against them, such as formal warnings, increased supervision, being transferred to another role, or having their employment suspended or terminated. Staff who break the *National Law* or *Regulations* may also face disciplinary action by the regulatory authority.

Depending on the breach, we may need to refer the matter to the police and/or another relevant authority.

Reporting requirements

In Victoria:

- Mandatory reporting laws require us to report reasonable beliefs a child is need of protection because they have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child’s parents have not, or unlikely to protect, the child
- There are criminal offences relating to failing to disclose information to police about child sexual offenses and failing to protect children against the risk of sexual abuse
- The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires the approved provider to report allegations of child abuse (and other child-related misconduct) made against their workers and volunteers, irrespective of whether it relates to their employment or activities at the service
- The *National Law* requires the approved provider to notify the regulatory authority of notifiable incidents, including serious incidents, inappropriate conduct towards a child by staff or volunteers, any reportable sexual conduct (sexual offences and sexual misconduct) committed by staff, and any incident or allegation that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while the child or children are being educated and cared for by the service

Our [Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#) detail our legal obligations and set out how to respond to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of harm and risk of harm, and how to make reports to the relevant authorities

Agreement and signature:

I have read and understood this [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) and agree to abide by it and its terms:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

RESOURCE - Child Safe Code of Conduct – quick guide

[THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY VERSION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT IS OPTIONAL FOR SERVICES TO DISPLAY OR TO SHARE WITH PEOPLE WHO DON'T NEED THE FULL, DETAILED VERSION (E.G., VISITORS, FAMILIES). IT SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED AND AGREED UPON BY YOUR SERVICE. PLEASE REVIEW AND EDIT ACCORDINGLY]

A full version of our Child Safe Code of Conduct is available <insert location>. All staff, students and volunteers must read and follow our full Child Safe Code of Conduct

DO:

- Always put children's best interests, rights, safety, health and wellbeing first
- Follow our child safety policies and legal obligations, including for mandatory reporting
- Respond immediately to any concern, risk, disclosure or incident
- Use positive, respectful and non-intrusive behaviour guidance
- Maintain professional boundaries and conduct with children and families
- Use physical contact only when appropriate (e.g., to comfort, prevent harm, assist with care)
- Ensure supervision is active, constant and appropriate for each child
- Communicate respectfully and professionally, including online
- Follow our rules for devices, photography, technology, and record keeping
- Welcome and support all children and families, regardless of background, identity or ability

DO NOT:

- Engage in any behaviour that harms, risks harm, or exploits a child
- Subject a child to any inappropriate conduct (includes inappropriate physical contact, grooming behaviour, ill-treatment that is not disciplinary in nature or unprofessional communication)
- Use physical punishment, shaming, intimidation or humiliation
- Show favouritism, develop inappropriate relationships, or ignore boundary violations
- Communicate privately or online with children
- Have your personal devices or control in your possession while you are working directly with children, or use a personal device to take, store or transmit a photograph or video of a child in our care
- Take or share images or recordings of children if they are not authorised or without written parental consent
- Make negative, discriminatory or inappropriate comments about a child or their family
- <Be alone with a child or> work in ways that are not visible to others
- Talk about adult topics or use adult language around children
- Smoke, vape, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work

****Breaches and suspected breaches must be reported to the <nominated supervisor and/or approved provider> either in person, by telephone on <insert number> or via email <insert email>**

If the breach relates to harm or the risk of harm to a child by an adult or other child, (including inappropriate conduct by a staff member), staff must follow our Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

