



CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

[Standard 3]

Rationale

- Northcote Primary School is 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.
- 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.
- The Principal and school leaders will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Northcote Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.
- All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of Northcote Primary 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.

Purpose

- To ensure Northcote Primary School complies with the legislative requirements of MO 870.
- To ensure Northcote Primary School demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe culture.
- To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers and visitors on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.
- To ensure Northcote Primary School develops and publishes a code of conduct that is compliant with Child Safe Standard 3.
- To ensure Northcote Primary School discharges its duty of care towards children.

Implementation

- This policy is intended for School Leadership, all other staff, School Council, visitors to Northcote Primary School and volunteer workers.
- The safety and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for Northcote Primary School.
- This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.
- It is binding all staff members, volunteers and external providers working with children on-site or off-site.
- Staff, volunteers and external providers are expected to signify that they have read and understood this Code of Conduct by completing the attached statement which will be recorded and filed appropriately.

- Northcote Primary School has identified the following acceptable and unacceptable behaviours:

Acceptable Behaviours

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

- upholding Northcote Primary School's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- treating children and families in Northcote Primary School community with respect both within Northcote Primary School environment and outside Northcote Primary 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
- 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
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to Northcote Primary School's leadership
- 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 child/ren are safe and protected from harm

Unacceptable Behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of Northcote Primary 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 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.
 - 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 Northcote Primary School environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.
- All staff will be made aware that unsatisfactory performance procedures in relation to the Child Safe Code of Conduct may be applied as per the Victorian Government Schools Agreement 2013, Schedule 5.
 - If a volunteer or external provider does not comply with the expected standard of behaviour, the Principal will discuss their behaviour with them. Noncompliance can lead to disciplinary action being taken, which may result in the person being asked to leave Northcote Primary School.

- Northcote Primary School will ensure that procedures for raising and managing complaints and consequences for breaching of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, are known and understood by everyone. For specific procedures, please refer to Northcote Primary School's *Complaints, Parents Policy*.
- For particularly high-risk activities, such as overnight camps, Northcote Primary School will determine whether or not a specific Code of Conduct is required. This could outline additional topics such as sleeping arrangements, personal care, leaving the site, no drugs or alcohol on site, staff-to-child ratio requirements, etc.
- By observing these behaviours all staff, volunteers and members of School Council of Northcote Primary School acknowledge their responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Northcote Primary School Child Safety Officer or to the Principal Class.

- **If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000 and ask for the police.**

- Induction procedures or manuals for new staff, volunteers and external providers will include information about the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Please refer also to Northcote Primary School's *Mandatory Reporting (Child Protection) Policy*, the *Bullying & Harassment Policy*, *Duty of Care Policy*, *Visitors to Northcote Primary School Policy* and the *Camps & Excursions Policy*.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed every two years as part of the VRQA requirements, if an incident occurs **or if guidelines change (latest PROTECT update 11 April 2018)**. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and Northcote Primary School community.

NPS School Council ratified this policy on the 5th December 2018

References:

Creating a Child Safe Organisation Guide

Child Safe Standards Toolkit

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/safety/Pages/chilsafestandards.aspx

and

Protect – Identifying All Forms of Child Abuse in Victorian Schools April 2018