# Child Protection Staff Code of Conduct

Gippsland Grammar (the **School**) is committed to protecting its students from all aspects of harm, and has established strategies, practices, policies and procedures to uphold this commitment.

The School takes a zero tolerance approach to any behaviours that jeopardise student safety (including child abuse and reportable conduct).  The School regards its student safety responsibilities with the utmost importance, and strives to deliver an academic care model that promotes the School's core values of compassion, leadership, excellence, respect and responsibility.

The School's aim is to create an environment where students can learn in a calm and focused environment characterised by ethical behaviour and defined professional boundaries, and where they feel safe and supported by the School.

This Child Protection Staff Code of Conduct (**Code**) is part of the School's Child Protection Program, and clearly lists specific behaviours of staff towards students that are acceptable and those that are not, with the overall aim to help protect its students from harm.

This Code is a child safety code of conduct made in accordance with *Ministerial Order No. 870 - Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*.

This Code takes into account the interests of staff (including by having regard to other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff), and the needs of all students who are educated at the School.

**Definitions**

A number of terms in this Policy are defined in the Child Protection Program Definitions document (a copy of which is available on Complispace and the School's website).

**DO:**

All staff are expected to abide by the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and conduct themselves accordingly.

Staff are responsible for supporting the safety of the School's students as follows:

- Behave as a positive role model to students, including through words, conduct and actions.

- Actively promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.

- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and child protection concerns, and take all reasonable steps to protect students from such harm (examples of which include, but are not limited to bullying, discrimination, grooming, harassment, neglect, sexual misconduct, sexual offences, physical violence, reportable conduct and victimisation).

- Encourage and support students who raise safety concerns (including about actual and suspected child abuse or reportable conduct).

- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.

- Comply with any directions, guidelines, policies, procedures and rules promoted by the School with respect to student safety.

- Promote awareness of definitions, prevention and redress actions to help the School create, maintain and foster a student safe environment.

- Ensure, as far as it is reasonably practicable, that staff are not alone with students, unless (and then only to the extent that) it is necessary to fulfil that staff member's duty of care or professional duties.

- Treat all students, and members of the School community with courtesy and respect (including by modelling positive, professional and respectful relationships, and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment for students).

- Respect cultural, religious and political differences, and encourage others to do the same.

- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability, or whom are vulnerable.

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

- Use positive and affirming language toward students.

- Encourage students to 'have a say' and participate, then listen to them with respect. In particular, listen and respond to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another student has been abused (or that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another student).

- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.

- Intervene when students or staff are engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards each other, or towards others.

- Report concerns about student safety (including actual or suspected child abuse or reportable conduct) to the Principal, the Executive Leadership Team or one of the School's Student Protection Officers, in accordance with the Make a Report Procedure and ensure that all other reporting obligations are met.

- Be aware of and alert to the risk factors of behaviour in breach of this Code or that otherwise pose a harm to students, and promptly report such concerns to the School.

- Where an allegation about actual or suspected child abuse or reportable conduct is made, ensure (as far as it is quickly and reasonably possible) that the student(s) involved are safe.

- Call Victoria Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety.

- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

**DO NOT:**

Staff must not:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students (including by engaging in bullying, discrimination, grooming, harassment, neglect, sexual misconduct, sexual offences, physical violence, reportable conduct or victimisation), or expose students to such behaviour.

- Use prejudicial, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with (or in the presence of) students.

- Promote personal views on cultures, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on such matters.

- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students without a valid professional context.

- Encourage or suggest that students keep secrets, or engage in any behaviour, regardless of the context, that would confuse professional boundaries, thereby exposing students to greater vulnerabilities.

- Cross professional boundaries with a student, including without limitation by:

  o Engaging in any form of sexual conduct with a student, including by making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.

  o Engaging in inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact or behaviours (including without limitation doing physical things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes).

  o Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriate or unnecessary physical play.

  o Providing or offering gifts or special treatment.

  o Exchanging personal contact details.

  o Meeting with a student in their home, or a location otherwise separate to the School, whether for educational purposes or otherwise, without the School's permission.

- Having any electronic, online or private contact (other than via the School portal or network) unless necessary to assist a student with matters of an academic, administrative or pastoral nature and conducted in a way that is authorised by the School.

- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.

- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious or significant emotional or psychological harm.

- Take, publish or disseminate (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.

- Post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of any association, club or group they may be affiliated with.

- Ignore or disregard student safety concerns (including allegations or actual or suspected child abuse or reportable conduct).

- While attending the School, or school-related activities and events, consume alcohol in the presence of students, unless doing so responsibly at an official School function at which alcohol consumption has been approved by the Principal.

- Attend the School, or school-related activities and events, whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances, or whilst affected by prescription medication to the extent that the ability to perform professional duties is impaired.

## Staff as parents and members of the School community

The School recognises that many staff have children of their own, and in any case will socialise with other adults who have children.

While this Code is not intended to interfere with a staff member's right to a private life, working at the School requires a serious commitment to student safety.

Accordingly, in all aspects staff must conduct themselves in a way consistent with this Code, including by avoiding in private situations (including on social media) which could be perceived as contrary to this Code or involving a risk to student safety.

## Report any concerns

Members of the School community (other than staff) who are aware of or suspect child abuse or reportable conduct, or who otherwise have concerns about a student's welfare, should immediately raise their concern directly with the Principal, the Executive Leadership Team or one of the School's Student Protection Officer.

Other concerns can be raised in accordance with the School's Grievances Policy.

Staff should report any concerns about potential breaches of this Code to the Principal (or the Board if the concern is about the Principal), and otherwise comply with the Make a Report Procedure.

**Whenever there are concerns that a student is in immediate danger, Victoria Police should be contacted on 000.**

## Breach of this Code

Where staff breach this Code, the School will take appropriate disciplinary action.

## Communication

This Code is available to parents, students and the School community via the School's website.

This Code is available to staff as part of the Child Protection Program. The Child Protection Program forms part of the School's induction program for incoming staff, and aspects of (and updates to) the Child Protection Program will be addressed in the School's professional development updates, training programs bulletins and newsletters.

## Authorisation and Evaluation

This Code was authorised by the Principal and the Board in December 2020.

This Code will be reviewed annually.

## Related Policies

- Child Protection and Safety Policy

- Child Protection Program Definitions

- Child Protection Responsibilities

- Make a Report Procedure