

Student Protection Staff Code of Conduct

Introduction

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 and wellbeing (including child abuse and reportable conduct).

This Student Protection Staff Code of Conduct (**Code**) is part of the School's Student Protection Program, and:

- Clearly establishes a list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by members of the School community towards our students, with the ultimate aim of protecting such students from harm.
- Offers guidance to School staff and informs them of considerations relevant to personal, professional and ethical decision making.
- Serves to protect our students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote student safety and wellbeing in our School environment.
- Provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

This Code is part of a broader culture of student safety and wellbeing that is woven into the fabric of Gippsland Grammar. As a community, our unified commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students is paramount to our actions and decision making. As a School community, we are guided by a common commitment to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour to each other and when engaging with students.

This Code is a child safety code of conduct made in accordance with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and Boarding Premises*.

Scope

This Code applies to

- All Board members, the Principal, employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on the School's premises, or at School-organised activities and events. Collectively, these individuals are referred to as 'staff'.
- Any other person who is engaged in student-connected work at the School, or that otherwise has direct and regular contact with the School's students (whether supervised or not).

This Code is in addition to profession specific codes of conduct, such as the Victorian Institute of

Teaching's (VIT) Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Conduct for teachers that outline behaviours expected by all teachers in Victoria. School staff must also comply with other policies and procedures at the School that apply to them, including the Student Protection and Safety Policy.

Definitions

A number of terms in this Code are defined in the Student 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 Student Protection and Safety Policy and conduct themselves accordingly.

Staff are responsible for supporting the safety and wellbeing 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.
- Provide a learning experience which is consistent with the School's and relevant professional or occupational codes of conduct, which supports students to achieve their personal best, and takes into account individual learning and behavioural needs.
- Act consistently (both in person and in the online environment) with the School's student safety and wellbeing strategies.
- 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 to ensure equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected.
- Inform and empower all students about their rights, including in relation to safety and wellbeing, information and participation.
- In an online environment, identify and mitigate risks while ensuring students' rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities are upheld.
- 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.
- Seek input from families in relation to decisions impacting students, and act to reduce barriers to inclusion taking into account the diverse needs of students and their families.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences, and encourage others to do the same.
- Report concerns about student safety and wellbeing (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 others by not sharing personal information about a student (including any information that could be used to identify a student) unless necessary for their safety or to promote their wellbeing and educational experience. Where it is necessary to share personal information about a student, only do so in an environment where it will be treated confidentially.
- Understand and comply with the School's recordkeeping obligations.

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 views on cultures, disability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, politics, gender diversity or sexuality in the presence of students (unless a valid professional context arises) 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:
 - Developing 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism or something more (including by providing or offering gifts or special treatment).
 - Encouraging or suggesting that students keep secrets, or engage in any behaviour, regardless of the context, that would confuse professional boundaries, thereby exposing students to greater vulnerabilities.
 - Engaging in any form of sexual conduct with a student, including by making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
 - 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).
 - Using physical force (or the threat of physical force) or engaging in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriate or unnecessary physical play.
 - Exchanging personal contact details such as personal phone numbers, social networking sites or private email addresses with students, unless approved by the Principal. .
 - 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.
- Use inappropriate language, jokes or gestures in the presence of students.
- 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 and wellbeing 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 and wellbeing.

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 and wellbeing.

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 Student Protection Program. The Student Protection Program forms part of the School's induction program for incoming staff, and aspects of (and updates to) the Student Protection Program will be addressed in the School's professional development updates, training programs bulletins and newsletters. Periodic training and refresher sessions on this Code are provided to all staff.

All staff must ensure that they will abide by this Code and assist the School in the implementation of this Code.

To properly implement this Code, the Board will ensure the procurement of policies of the School for facilities and services from third parties to ensure the safety of students and that this Code is incorporated into the Board's records.

Authorisation and Evaluation

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

This Code and the School's student safe practices will be reviewed at least every two years (or more frequently after a significant student safety incident) and improve where applicable.

Families and the School community will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the review and development of the School's student safe policies and practises (including this Code).

Related Policies

- Student Protection and Safety Policy
- Student Protection Program Definitions
- Student Protection Responsibilities
- Make a Report Procedure

Version	Reviewed by	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1	<i>Kate Ray</i>	<i>Board of Directors & Principal</i>	<i>December 2020</i>	<i>December 2020</i>	
2	<i>Kate Ray</i>	<i>Board of Directors & Acting Principal – Michele Wakeham</i>	<i>August 2022</i>	<i>August 2022</i>	<i>Title; Introduction; Scope</i>

Contractor and visitor use only

Child Safety Compliance	
I have read and understood the Gippsland Grammar Student Protection Staff Code of Conduct	
Name:	
Date: / /	Signature:
Reason for visit:	