



# CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY HEAD OFFICE

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ministerial Order 1359 provides the framework for child safety in schools. It requires all schools to have a child safety code of conduct that:

- promotes child safety and wellbeing in the school
- provides guidance for staff and volunteers on expected standards of behaviour
- considers the needs of all children and students
- is consistent with other codes of conduct and child safety and wellbeing strategies, policies and procedures.

The child safety code of conduct does not affect the responsibilities of staff or volunteers arising from any other code of conduct, such as: [Victorian Teaching Profession's Codes of Conduct](#)

## 2. PURPOSE

The AIAE Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our campuses.

All AIAE staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct and must comply with policies listed in the CompliSpace platform.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example: excursions, school camp).

This policy will provide guidelines to promote desirable and appropriate conduct to ensure that all interactions with children and adults is respectful, honest, courteous, sensitive, tactful, considerate and within the law.

The Code of Conduct may not cover every situation. There are other policies or procedures set down by the CompliSpace platform and other publications.

The conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as a whole. It is expected that staff will:

- always be in a professional relationship with their students, whether at campus or not.
- be positive role models at school and in the community.
- Respect the rule of law, follow all policies and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations.

### 3. VICTORIAN INSTITUTE OF TEACHING (VIT) CODE OF CONDUCT

AIAE staff are required to comply with the [Victorian Teaching Profession's Codes of Conduct](#)

The Victorian Teaching Profession's Codes of Conduct and [Ethics](#) are public statements developed for and by the teaching profession to:

- reflect shared principles about practice, conduct and ethics to be applied to promote the highest standards of professional practice
- enable registered teachers to reflect on their ethical decisions
- establish the quality of behaviour that reflects the expectations of the profession and the community, and
- provide a clear statement to the community about these expectations.

The [Victorian Teaching Profession's Codes of Conduct](#) clearly states the expectations placed on teachers by the profession and the community. VIT may consider a departure from the Code of Conduct to be grounds for an allegation of misconduct or serious misconduct, or call into question a teacher's fitness to teach. Whether it does will largely depend on the individual circumstances and the context in which the conduct occurred. Any regulatory measures should always be viewed within the context of what is considered necessary to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

It is the responsibility of all staff including casual relief staff, members of the Board and temporary workers to be fully aware of their obligations according to this staff code of conduct policy, child safety, mandatory reporting, other policies and their legal responsibilities.

### 4. CHILD SAFETY

AIAE will comply with [Ministerial Order 1359](#) and committed to child safety. AIAE child safe policy applies to all school environments, including physical and online environments. AIA has zero tolerance of child abuse.

Child abuse can be defined in many ways. The term is often used broadly to cover behaviour by people in a position of responsibility, trust or power that results in a child being harmed physically or emotionally.

The Standards use a particular definition of 'child abuse' from the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) which includes:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

### 5. LEGAL AND REGULATORY BASIS FOR COMPLIANCE

- Duty of Care
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act



- Ministerial Order 1359 2022 (Vic.)
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards: mandated registration requirements
- Crimes Act 1958 (amended) (Vic.)
- Betrayal of Trust Report 2014 (Vic.)
- Working With Children Act 2005.

## 6. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff must be familiar with the following policies and must fully understand their legal responsibilities: Including

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy – (the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) - Mandatory reporting Obligations.
- Crimes Act 1958

The three new criminal offences that have been introduced under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) are:

- failure to disclose offence, which requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.
- failure to protect offence, which applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but failed to do so.
- grooming offence, which targets communication with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

Staff member or volunteer who breaches this Code of Conduct may face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the Academy.

## 7. STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS OBLIGATIONS

AIAE staff and volunteers will comply with Ministerial Order 1359 and committed to child safety. AIAE child safe policy applies to all school environments, which includes physical and online environments. AIAE staff and volunteers have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

All staff, volunteers, visitors and board members of AIAE are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All AIA staff are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children.

Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy is made available to all Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, families and students via our public website.

**Each member of the Campus Community is responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of students by adhering to the following standards of behaviour:**

**Do:**

- Uphold and act in accordance with AIAE's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all times.
- Comply with applicable guidelines published by the Campus with respect to child safety, such as the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy (see CompliSpace).
- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and wellbeing, including child protection issues.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and/or culturally diverse students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Use positive and affirming language towards students.
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and participate, and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the Campus's Child Safe Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report child abuse or other harm externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse or other harm is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.
- Call the 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:**

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Engage in prejudicial or oppressive behaviour or use inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means (other than as expressly outlined in the [Restraint of Students Policy](#) or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.



- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not your own child.
- Engage in activities with a student who is not your own child, outside of school hours and without permission from the student's parent/carer.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post identifying information about a student online unless it is necessary for the Campus's activities or you have consent from the student and/or their parents/guardians. Identifying information includes things such as the student's: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group that they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or other harm.
- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

## 8. GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

### **Staff & Mobile Phones:**

Staff members must not use mobile phones for personal communication in classrooms, school yard or playgrounds. If they keep their mobile phones with them, then they must switch them off when they are in classroom. Mobile phones should be switched on during yard duty in case of an emergency. Mobile phones could be used only after hours or inside offices or staffrooms.

### **Using Optical Surveillance Devices or Tracking Devices:**

A person must not knowingly install, use or maintain a listening device to overhear, record, monitor or listen to a private conversation and communicate or publish a record or report of such activities or conversation.

At AIAE, the Policy in regard to filming or recording within the Academy and all its campuses is very clear and strict: Academy employees must not do filming or photographing of other people (students or staff members) or make recording of private or business conversation or telephone conversation without the consent of concerned parties. Employees who do not observe this policy will be subject to severe penalties including the termination of service.

### **Social Media Use Policy at the Academy.**

This policy provides guidance for all employees at AIAE on their professional and personal use of social media.

## Definitions

Social media comprises tools that enable anyone to publish or access information relatively quickly and easily and may include (although is not limited to):

- social networking (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, etc.)
- video and photo sharing apps (e.g. Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, etc.)
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter)
- wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool)
- vod and podcasting
- instant messaging (including SMS, WhatsApp, Viber)

## Personal use of social media

The Academy recognises that staff may wish to use social media in their personal life. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit personal expression or online activities.

However, staff should recognise the potential for damage to be caused (either directly or indirectly) to the Academy in certain circumstances via personal use of social media when they can be identified as an AIAE employee. Accordingly, staff should expressly state on any social media postings (identifying themselves as an AIAE employee) the stated views are their own and are not those of the Academy, and ensure that any content published is accurate and not misleading and complies with all relevant Academy policies.

## Professional use of social media

### Staff must not:

- use or disclose any confidential or secure information obtained in their capacity as an employee of the Academy
- make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the Academy's reputation or bring it into disrepute.
- post material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright or is otherwise unlawful.
- imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of the Academy, nor give the impression that the views you express are those of the Academy.
- use excessive criticism to portray a person as socially, mentally, physically or intellectually inferior.
- use Political views in any forum on any social media within the school facility and outside the school hours.
- give religious views (fatwa) in forum on any social media within the school facility and outside of the school hours
- publish, support, or endorse views of any banned political groups or organisations, by the Australian Government, on any social media within the school facility and outside school hours
- use their school email address, logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support or endorsement of their personal comment



### **Reasonable and unreasonable personal use**

When accessing social media via the Academy's internet and intranet systems, staff must do so in a manner that does not unduly or unreasonably interfere with their work, and is not inappropriate or excessively accessed.

Academy resources should not be used to access or post any material that is fraudulent, harassing, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, racist, sexist, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful

### **9. Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct**

All AIAE staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the AIAE policies and any other relevant authority. Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the AIAE Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Head of Campus and/or Executive Principal.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Head of Campus or Executive Principal, contact AIAE Board Chairperson Ms Melinda Baarini at [board@aia.vic.edu.au](mailto:board@aia.vic.edu.au)

### **References:**

<https://www.vic.gov.au/protect>

[Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct](#) (VIT code of conduct)

Independent Schools Victoria

The Victorian Teaching Profession's [Ethics](#)

[A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation](#) – Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)