



AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY



CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Advancement
Determination
Faith

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY CHILD SAFETY - CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Last Review Date: June 2020

Review Date: June 2022

Date Ratified by AIA Board: June 2020

INTRODUCTION:

Code of conduct is an integral part of keeping children safe from abuse. All staff, students and visitors are required to comply with this code of conduct.

AIA will comply with Ministerial Order 870 and committed to child safety. AIA child safe policy applies to all school environments, including physical and online environments. AIA has zero tolerance of child abuse.

Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence
- a grooming offence; or
- the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect.

The new minimum Child Safe Standards which aim to create child safe cultures and environments in organisations that work with children were released by the Government. The Ministerial Order 870 provides what the Child Safe Standards mean in a school environment, and demonstrates the Government's "zero tolerance" for child abuse in Victorian schools.

The Code of Conduct policy addresses standard 3 of the minimum standards released by the Ministerial Order 870. Standard 3 requires all schools to have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

This policy is an amalgamation of the previous AIA staff code of conduct, VIT code of conduct and information from VRQA, ISV and DET.

All staff, volunteers and Board members are required to be fully aware of their obligations according to child safety, mandatory reporting, other policies and their legal responsibilities.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY BASIS FOR COMPLIANCE

- Duty of Care
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 (Vic.)
- Ministerial Order 870 January 2016 (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.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

AIA takes its legal responsibilities seriously. All staff must be familiar with the following policies and must fully understand their legal responsibilities: Including

- Child Safe Policy
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - 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:
1. failure to disclose offence, which requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.
 2. 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.
 3. 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.

PURPOSE

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. This Code of Conduct applies to all staff, volunteers, board members and visitors.

The Code of Conduct may not cover every situation. There are other policies or procedures set down by the AIA in the Staff Handbook 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 teachers 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.

STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS OBLIGATIONS

AIA staff and volunteers will comply with Ministerial Order 870 and committed to child safety. AIA child safe policy applies to all school environments, which includes physical and online environments.

AIA 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 AIA 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 by:

1. adhering to AIA child safe policy at all times / upholding AIA's statement of commitment to child safety at all time.
2. taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
3. treating everyone with respect.
4. listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
5. promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children.
6. promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
7. promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care and PE activities)
8. taking account of the diversity of all children at the school, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable. AIA staff and volunteers recognise that these differences do not reduce the child's right to be safe.
9. ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
10. ensuring that girls and boys attend separate camps and adequate number of same gender staff attend all camps.
11. reporting any allegations of child abuse to Campus Head, and ensure any allegation to be reported to the police or child protection as per Mandatory reporting policy.
12. if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.
13. encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.
14. reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or serious misconduct and allegations about a registered teacher.

A: CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Staff and Volunteers Must Not:

1. have a relationship beyond what is normally acceptable between a staff member, volunteer and a student within the context of learning areas or school approved practices.
2. use sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students.

3. touch a student inappropriately. Any physical contact outside of emergency situations must not happen.
4. make available to students personal information including telephone numbers, personal or non-school email and home addresses.
5. have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary purely for school purposes and only via approved school's communication channels).
6. ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
7. make contact with students outside of normal working hours to discuss school work or any other matter via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, (except via the Academy Intranet, internal communication channels, and if necessary via email purely for school purposes.)
8. express personal views on present conflicts, cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
9. If extra classes need to be conducted, these classes must be held at school with the prior approval of the Campus's Senior Management, and school work should be discussed and submitted at school.
10. have inappropriate contact with a student at any time.
11. have secluded sessions with individual students (male or female) behind closed doors. (exception is made for approved social workers and student counsellors, who must make written records of such sessions).
12. enter PE change rooms unless it is necessary for behavior management. Girls change room can only be entered by female teachers and boys change room can only be entered by male teachers.
13. engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, private personal relationships and personal social activities)
14. use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
15. discriminate against any child, including because of culture, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or disability.
16. develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
17. accept gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents.
18. attend students' parties outside school hours or socialising with students during school hours or after school hours.
19. do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
20. invite a student or students back to their home.
21. have students in their cars without parents' written permission and Academy's prior approval.
22. have a single student in his/her car (even with parent's permission).
23. hold conversations of a personal nature, with a student or students, without a valid context and prior Academy's authorisation.
24. exploit their position for personal or financial gain. [e.g. use students or their parents to promote personal activities outside school time].

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. According to Surveillance Devices Act 1999, a person who breaches section 11(1) of that Act would be subject to 2 years imprisonment or a fine of up to 240 penalty units, or both.

At AIA, 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.

B: CODE OF CONDUCT – STAFF 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.

AIA Full time Employees:

AIA staff who are full time employees must not engage in another job or activity during or after school hours without prior written approval from the Academy.

Social Media Use Policy at the Academy.

This policy provides guidance for all employees at AIA 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)

Statement of Policy

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 AIA employee. Accordingly, staff should expressly state on any social media postings (identifying themselves as an AIA 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

Compliance

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligation.

Teaching & Educating Students.

This Section goes side by side with VIT's guidelines on teacher professional conduct.

Teachers demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- knowing their students well within the context of their subject area, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities.
- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment.
- accepting professional responsibility for the provision of quality teaching.
- having high expectations of every student, recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents.
- considering all viewpoints fairly.
- communicating well and appropriately with their students.
- Using the time during the school working hours for planning and work preparation purposes and not for socialising with other staff members, except during lunch and recess times.

Treating Students in a Learning Environment.

In their professional role, teachers do not behave as a friend or a parent. Teachers are expected to:

- work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect.
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language.
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm.
- enhance student autonomy and sense of self worth and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values.
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate.
- interact with students without displaying bias or preference.
- make decisions in students' best interests.
- do not draw students into their personal agendas.
- do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals.

Staff Personal Appearance:

Teaching is a highly respected and dignified profession, and teachers' personal appearance should reflect such a high standard. It is expected that all Academy's teaching and non-teaching staff present themselves in a more businesslike manner/dress. Overall appearance should be respectful, professional and conservative.

All staff should read and adhere to the Academy's Clothing Policy as published in the Staff Handbook.