

Child Safety Code of Conduct

- All of Brighton Grammar School's policies are intended to be up to date and be consistent with all relevant laws.
- Employees are expected to comply with all applicable policies.
- Various parts of the policies require managers and staff to exercise discretion, and the policies are not intended to be applied in a legalistic or prescriptive manner.
- These policies may be varied by Brighton Grammar School from time to time, at its absolute discretion.
- Brighton Grammar School is fully committed to the protection of children and young people during all School activities and environments both within and outside of School hours.
- This is a whole of school policy and there may, from time to time, be variations in different parts of the School. In such circumstances, advice will be issued by the relevant Head of School.

Purpose

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school. All Brighton Grammar School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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 (including but not limited to, School camps, Sports and Excursions).

The Code has been developed in accordance with the requirements of *Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*.

Acceptable behaviours

As Brighton Grammar School, staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding our Brighton Grammar School commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- Respecting the language, customs, religions, political differences and cultures of children, young people and students
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student

- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal, First Nation or Torres Strait Island students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- Respect the privacy of children and young people in sensitive areas such as toilet areas, change rooms, swimming facilities.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all children and young people to interact and socialise.
- Intervene if children or young people are engaging in antisocial behaviours towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Ensure any physical interactions with a child or young person are based on the needs of the child or young person (e.g. to comfort, assist with fitting of sporting or safety equipment).
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to Headmaster, Heads of School, Child Safety Officer, School Psychologists, Head of Year, Head of House, Director of Students or a Member of the School's Senior Executive team.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our child safety responding and reporting policy and procedures and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm. Call the Police on 000 if you have concerns for a child or young person's immediate safety.

Unacceptable behaviours

As Brighton Grammar School, staff, volunteers, contractors and member of our school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts)
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a child or young person including rough physical play
- Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- Treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity

- Use language that is intended to threaten or frighten, or is derogatory, belittling or negative.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child or young person
- 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 schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- Engage in private meetings with a child or young person outside the school environment. One-on-one meetings within the school environment, where these cannot be avoided, should be conducted in open spaces and in the potential line of sight of other personnel (this may include line of sight through an open or glass-panelled door)
- Photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except where permission has been granted or where required for duty of care purposes (refer to Photography and Video Policy)
- 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.
- Fail to disclose any relevant conflict of interest as it arises

Teachers

Teachers are required to adhere to the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct, published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching, particularly the principles related to their relationships with students. These principles include teachers:

- Demonstrate commitment to learners by recognising and accommodating individual learning styles, respecting differences, and supporting unique abilities.
- Create and maintain an environment of respect for all individuals.
- Model and promote respectful, impartial language and behaviour at all times.
- Protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation, and harm.
- Respect students' privacy, particularly in sensitive situations.
- Interact with students in an unbiased manner, without showing preference.
- Maintain the trust and professionalism inherent in the teacher–student relationship, avoiding any actions that could compromise it.
- Avoid physical contact with students unless there is a justified and valid reason.
- Limit communication with students to professional matters only, refraining from personal contact—including written, electronic, or online communication (e.g., social media)—both during and for two years after a student leaves the School, unless there is a valid reason.
- Refrain from favouritism or bias towards any student or their family.

Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Brighton Grammar School 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 Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) Reportable Conduct Scheme and may be subject to referral to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and/or Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Brighton Grammar School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Headmaster or via the Complaints Policy and Procedures available on the School's Website.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Headmaster, contact the Chief Operating Officer.

Reporting

There are criminal offences in Victoria for failing to act on child safety issues within the School:

- **'Failure to protect'**: a person in a position of authority within the School who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk that a child may become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the School may be charged with the criminal offence of 'failing to protect'.
- **'Failure to disclose'**: if an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence (exemptions apply).

All BGS personnel must make a report as soon as reasonably practicable if they become aware of a breach of the Code, including if they:

- Become aware of any allegation of child abuse
- Have a concern for the safety of a child or young person in the School services
- Notice any BGS personnel whose practice or behaviour is contrary to the expectations of behaviour set out in this Code.

It's important for staff to consult with the Headmaster, Head of School or Child Safety Officer and read the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy in conjunction before making a report or not reporting because of an exemption.

Legal obligations

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) – Criminal Offences Related to Child Safety*
 - *Failure to Disclose (s.327)*
 - *Any adult who fails to report child sexual abuse to police may face criminal charges.*
 - *Failure to Protect (s.490)*
 - *Applies to people in authority (e.g., school leaders, managers) who fail to act on a known risk of child abuse.*

- *Grooming Offense (s.49M)*
 - *Criminalizes any act of grooming a child or their caregiver for sexual abuse.*
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Offences Under the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Offences Under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)*

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000

Or the local 24-hour Police Station:

Bayside Police – 03 8530 5100

Moorabbin Police – 03 9556 6565



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the Director of Students or Head of School

Reporting instances of alleged child abuse can be distressing for some staff, all Brighton Grammar staff have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided by Converge International. Please refer to the Staff Intranet for more details on how to access this service.

Other related documents

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Obligations Policy
- Mandatory Reporting template
- Whistleblower Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process
- Child Safety Complaints template
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Staff Handbook
- ELC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

This Policy is a controlled document. Any printing of this document is uncontrolled. Please refer to the school portal for the latest version of this policy

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