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Mater Dei > Student/Participant Duty of Care > Child Safety Code of Conduct



## Child Safety Code of Conduct

### Preface

Mater Dei is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our organisation is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people and enables them to thrive in their learning and personal development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and young people and minimise any opportunity for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The CEO/Principal and Program Managers of Mater Dei will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning/service environments. The CEO/Principal and Program Managers will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

### Who Has to Comply with the Code of Conduct?

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

### Acceptable Behaviours

All personnel of Mater Dei are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Mater Dei's Child Protection Compliance Policy suite at all times and upholding Mater Dei's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- treating children/young people and families in the Mater Dei community with respect both within and outside the Mater Dei environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and young people, 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 child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children or young people
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the relevant Program Manager or CEO/Principal, and ensure that any allegation is reported to appropriate authorities

- reporting any child safety concerns to the relevant Program Manager or CEO/Principal
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child or young person is safe and protected from harm
- encouraging children and young people to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

### **Unacceptable Behaviours**

Staff and volunteers must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures suspected of child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with children or young people which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area) or abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards children or young people when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- put children or young people at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children or young people (for example, personal social activities)
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with children or young people, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children or young people
- treat a child or young person unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- have contact with a child/young person or their family outside of our organisation without the CEO/Principals knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate)
- communicate directly with a child or young person 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 school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child or young person in any Mater Dei learning or therapeutic environment except in accordance with Organisational policy or where required for duty of care purposes

### **Discipline for Breach of Policy**

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Karen Taylor (Executive Assistant to the CEO/Principal).

Where a staff member breaches this policy Mater Dei may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

### **Related Policies**

**[Abuse, Grooming & Neglect Identification & Initial Notification](#)**  
**[Mandatory Reporting of Abuse & Neglect Policy](#)**  
**[Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers & Others Policy](#)**  
**[Detecting, Reporting and Addressing Grooming Behaviours Policy](#)**  
**[Statement of Commitment to Child Safety](#)**

### **Acknowledgement**

**[Child Protection Code of Conduct Acknowledgement](#)**