

	Corporate Services Manager
Reviewed and Approved by	Executive
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**Introduction**

Yarra Valley Grammar (the School) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. The School has no tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at the School is responsible for the care and protection of children and for reporting information about child abuse.

Forms of abuse and young people, discrimination, offensive or intimidating behaviour, language acceptable.

A person must not engage in any act that is, or may be perceived by a reasonable observer as, grooming behaviour. Comments or actions that are negatively and unreasonably critical of a person's culture, ethnicity, language, gender identity, disability, sexuality or age, are unacceptable.

The School is committed to upholding the diverse needs of children and young people, and their families, including but not limited to the diverse and cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children,

children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

The objective of this Code is to promote child safety and wellbeing in the School Environment.

### Scope

Management, employees, volunteers, homestay families, contractors and Board members (Staff) at the School must abide by this Code. This Code must be read in accordance with any relevant legislation, the Child Protection Policy and Procedure, the Staff Codes of Conduct and any other applicable professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate School employees, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching Codes of Conduct.

All teachers are required to follow the Victorian Institute of Teaching's (VIT) Code of Conduct.

This Code applies in all School Environments including homestay accommodation. This term is defined in the Child Protection Policy.

### Acceptable behaviours

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of, or in connection with, the School.



## Use of electronic communications

Electronic communication between a staff member of the School and a student and/or their families should only occur for reasons relating to the School community and for educational purposes. The School environment includes online and virtual environments made available to students by the School.

Such communication:

- (a) should pertain to issues directly associated with a class, activity or trip; and
- (b) should not be used to promise unauthorised social activity or to arrange unauthorised contact.

Staff are reminded they must not

- (a) post images on school communication channels that offer personal information such as address, phone numbers, email address and instant messaging names;
- (b) use of images of students as screen savers or backgrounds on personal electronic devices;
- (c) exchange personal contact details with students;
- (d) store images of students on their personal devices;
- (e) possess, post or transfer obscene or pornographic images, and that the law is extremely strict with reference to images of young people;
- (f) engage with students on social media platforms outside the School environment including becoming 'friends' with, follow or add a student on any social media platform (unless the Staff Member is related to that student);
- (g) unreasonably interfere with a student's privacy, access to information, social connection or learning opportunities online. An interference will be unreasonable when it is not necessary for the safety and/or discipline (in line with the School's Behaviour Management Policy) of the student.

The collection and storage of photographs or images of children must be for educational or professional purposes. Use of social media and posting of student images by students, employees, contractors, volunteers or members of the Board must be consistent with the School's Social Media Policy and School Interaction on On-line Social Networks Procedures

## Physical Contact

It is the overall principle that all forms of physical contact should be avoided where possible. Staff must engage in physical contact with children only to the extent that it is reasonably necessary in all the circumstances and use no more contact or force than is absolutely necessary. For example, the School recognises that:

- (a) occasionally physical contact between Staff and students may be reasonably necessary and appropriate to provide appropriate instruction, such as demonstrating where to place fingers on an instrument or how to hold a cricket bat; and
- (b) physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove children quickly from danger or threat of danger.

Other examples of appropriate and acceptable physical contact for the duty to be performed include:

- (a) Applying medical treatment;
- (b) Comforting an upset student;
- (c) Guiding a student in a non-threatening manner;

- (d) Separating students who are fighting.

The physical contact referred to above is only acceptable if the contact was reasonable necessary for the purposes of discipline, management or care of the student. The contact must also be appropriate given the student's age, maturity, health or other characteristics.

In the case of a student with special needs, physical contact with the student is to be consistent with the management and/or support plans developed for that student.

Staff are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of children and young people. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by children and young people.

Appropriate contact between employees, volunteers, contractors, Board members and children is part of normal human relationships. Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

- (a) consider the child or young person's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a child to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed child or young person
- (b) work in an open environment; for example, in confidential interviews or a one-to-one meeting, the door should be open with visual access (NB: exceptions apply for professions with strict confidentiality requirements)
- (c) be alert to cues from children about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space
- (d) be sensitive when interacting with children who may misinterpret your actions, such as those who may have been traumatised by abuse
- (e) be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour, and what is acceptable in terms of personal space
- (f) be cautious about physical contact in games or practical instruction. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do, maintain a safe and appropriate distance
- (g) physical contact should be made in a way that makes children and young people feel comfortable, for example, a high five or fist bump



Suspected breaches will be investigated in accordance with the Child Protection Policy and any relevant legislation (for example, the Reportable Conduct Scheme), and in a manner that provides procedural