



St Scholastica's College

A Catholic Day and Boarding School
for girls in Years 7-12

Child Safe Code of Conduct

The Child Safe Code of Conduct (the Code) outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, the College may take disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Scope

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all adults in the College community, including:

- Board members
- Principal and Executive Leadership Team
- Staff members, including teaching, non-teaching, temporary or casual and Boarding House staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- External education providers
- Teaching students on placement at the College
- Parents/carers and other adult family members of students
- Visitors

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies in all College environments. College environments include both physical and online environments, as well as any environment (including those outside the College's grounds) where College-related activities are occurring.

Commitment

St Scholastica's College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The Child Safe Code of Conduct is intended to assist employees engaged in child related work in identifying appropriate and inappropriate behaviour towards students, promote a consistent standard of behaviour for employees, and ensure students who interact with employees do so in a safe and supportive environment. All employees are expected to adhere to the behaviour, processes and procedures outlined in this document.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct

Each member of the College community is responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of students by adhering to the following standards of behaviour:

Employees must:

- a) uphold and act in accordance with St Scholastica's College Student Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all times
- b) comply with applicable guidelines published by the College with respect to child safety, such as the staff professional boundaries
- a) behave as a positive role model to students
- b) promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students
- c) be vigilant and proactive with regard to child safety and protection issues
- d) provide age-appropriate supervision for students
- e) treat all students with respect
- f) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability

- g) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and/or culturally diverse students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- h) use positive and affirming language towards students
- i) encourage students to “have a say” and participate, then listen to them with respect
- j) respect cultural, religious and political differences
- k) help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact and socialise
- l) intervene when students are engaging in bullying or inappropriate behaviour towards others, for example acting in a humiliating or vilifying way
- m) ensure as far as practicable, that adults are not left alone with a child
- n) report any breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- o) report any concerns about child safety to one of the College’s Child Protection Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report child abuse or other harm externally are met
- p) where an allegation of child abuse or other harm is made, ensure as quickly as possible, that the student involved is safe
- q) call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety
- r) respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

Employees must not:

- a) engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour
- b) engage in prejudicial or oppressive behaviour, or use inappropriate language with students
- c) 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
- d) engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students (Reasonable person would deem the discussion inappropriate)
- e) engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material
- f) engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviour, including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- g) engage in any form of physical violence towards a student, including inappropriate rough physical play
- h) use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student
- i) engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional, or psychological harm
- j) develop “special” relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students)
- k) engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not your own child
- l) engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student
- m) take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent
- n) post online any information about a student that may identify them, such as -: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend, without parent/carer consent
- o) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or other harm.

Agreement to The Child Safe Code of Conduct

The College provides a copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct to all staff, volunteers and contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing work at the College. The College also communicates the Code via refresher training at regular intervals for all staff, as well as volunteers and contractors. All staff, including casuals and volunteers must sign an agreement to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at the College. The Child Safe Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between the College and Contractors. Therefore, all contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct on signing the contract or on commencing work at the College. A copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is provided to parents/carers, who must sign an agreement to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct on enrolment.

Professional Boundaries

The following guidelines are designed to raise awareness of situations where professional boundary violations may occur and strategies to minimise the risk of boundary violations. The practice of protective behaviours protects not only the students who come into contact with employees, but also protects employees by ensuring they are aware of and understand appropriate behaviour with students. Employees must:

- a) exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with children and young people at all times
- b) ensure interactions with children and young people are professional
- c) report conflicts of interest involving children and young people to the Child Protection Officer as soon as practicable.

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person entrusts their welfare and safety to another person, in circumstances where a power imbalance exists. When dealing with children and young people in the course of their employment or engagement with, employees should consider:

- a) Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?
- b) How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting?
- c) Am I sharing information for the child's/young person's benefit, or for my benefit?
- d) Am I dealing with this child/young person differently from others in similar circumstances?
- e) Is my language or demeanour different from normal when dealing with this child/young person?

Employees must not initiate or develop a relationship with any child/young person that can be misinterpreted as having a romantic or sexual nature, or that can be perceived as having a personal, rather than professional basis, regardless of the relationship being consensual or condoned by the child's/young person's parents/carers. Breach of professional boundaries includes, but is not limited to:

- a) flirtatious behaviour or dating
- b) development of an intimate personal relationship
- c) sexual relations
- d) the use of sexual innuendo, inappropriate language and/or material with children
- e) unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- f) unwarranted and inappropriate filming or photography
- g) deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others (e.g. pornography)
- h) having intimate contact without a valid context via written or electronic means (e.g. email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms)
- i) going out, whether alone or in company, to social events, such as the movies or dinner with children/young people
- j) exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship with children/young people
- k) attending parties or socialising with, or meeting children/young people outside of organised events (without parental/carer permission) except where attendance is in a professional capacity
- l) sharing personal details about their private lives with children/young people.

Electronic Communication with Students

Employees must comply with the following guidelines:

- a) all use of technology should be for the College purposes only
- b) employees should not communicate with students via text message where it is not in a professional context
- c) employees should not give out their personal telephone numbers or social media contact details
- d) employees are not to accept or request students as 'friends' on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate in any way that is not condoned or approved by the College.

Physical Contact with Students

Employees should be aware that situations may arise that can be perceived in a manner that was not intended. For this reason, employees should comply with the following guidelines for contact with students involved in activities:

- a) employees should avoid unnecessary physical contact with students
- b) minimal, non-lingering, non-gratuitous physical contact in the context of the situations acceptable (for example, a congratulatory pat on the back or handshake)
- c) contact for sport is acceptable in a team situation but not in a 1:1 situation. If physical contact is required for specific technical instructions, it must be brief and only with the consent of the student which the student may withdraw either verbally or gesturally and employees must remain vigilant whilst engaging in necessary contact situations. Once consent has been withdrawn no further contact can be or should be made.

Where activities involve students staying overnight under the supervision of employees, the following guidelines will apply:

- a) checking of sleeping arrangements, or supervising students whilst dressing or undressing should only be done with another employee present (unless unreasonable in the circumstances) and always in a manner that respects children’s privacy and personal space
- b) always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory
- c) ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict employee/student relationship is upheld and that employees do not engage in inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student’s bed.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest may exist where an employee, in the course of their duties, is required to make a decision about a student with whom they have a pre-existing family or close relationship. All employees must report any conflicts of interests and remove themselves from decision making where a conflict has been identified.

Consequences for Breaching the Child Safe Code of Conduct

Staff, including the Principal and Executive Leadership Team, volunteers and contractors who breach the Child Safe Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action which may include the termination of employment, contract or engagement. Where any other member of the College community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within our Child Safe Code of Conduct, St Scholastica’s College will take appropriate action.

Report any Concerns

It is the College’s policy that any breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is a child safety incident. Therefore, all staff, volunteers, and contractors who witness, or suspect, any breach of this Code of Conduct must report their concern to Child Protection Officers immediately and externally where required by law. The College Child Protection Officers are:

	Title	Name	Email
Senior Child Protection Officer	Assistant Principal Pastoral Care & Wellbeing	Jen Petschler	jpetschler@scholastica.nsw.edu.au
Child Protection Officer	Assistant Principal Teaching & Learning	Margaret Taborda	mtaborda@scholastica.nsw.edu.au
Child Protection Officer	Head of Boarding	Libby Molony	lmolony@scholastica.nsw.edu.au

Parents/carers, family members or other community members who witness or suspect that there has been a breach of this Code of Conduct, or have concerns that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or harm from a member of staff, a volunteer or a contractor, should contact the Principal. Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.