



Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct (the **Code**) outlines appropriate, expected and requisite standards of behaviour for all St Margaret's Berwick Grammar (**SMBG, School**) staff, contractors and volunteers towards students and children. The Code serves to protect students, reduce and aim to eradicate any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur to students and children, and promote child safety across the broader school environment.

In the context of child safety, the Code provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

This Code is also a child safety code of conduct made in accordance with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 (Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools)* and is part of the School's Student Wellbeing framework of policies and procedures. This Code is in addition to profession-specific codes of conduct, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching's Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Conduct for teachers that outline behaviours expected by all teachers in Victoria. School staff must also comply with other policies and procedures at the School that apply to them, including the Child Safety Policy

SCOPE

The Code applies in all School environments. School environments include the following physical, virtual, and online places used during or outside school hours. The Code applies to all adults in the school community, whether their work involves direct contact with students, including:

- all staff members, including administration and support staff and temporary or casual staff, volunteers,
- students, parents and carers, third party contractors and service providers (including external education providers)
- School Council members, teaching students on placement at the School, and
- visitors.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

St Margaret's Berwick Grammar, holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility and is resolutely committed to embedding a child safe culture and providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. All staff, volunteers and members of our community have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of all children in their care.

St Margaret's Berwick Grammar considers the needs of all children and students, this includes students with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and values diversity and does not tolerate any racist or discriminatory practices.

INTRODUCTION

The SMBG *Code* outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all community members towards students. It provides guidelines for school staff, contractors, and volunteers on expected standards of behaviour in relation to child safety and wellbeing to ensure professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and highlight acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This includes during the school day, but also out of hours activities

The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote student safety and wellbeing in the School environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or more effectively manage difficult situations For more detailed advice, staff should refer to the *Staff and Student Professional Boundaries* guidelines.

Expectations

This Code predetermines and prescribes the following behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable and/or prohibited.

Acceptable Behaviours- <i>The following expectations are required to be exhibited at all times across all facets of the school physical and online environments and MUST</i>	Unacceptable Behaviours- <i>the following expectations apply across all facets of the school physical and online environments and MUST NOT:</i>
call Victoria Police on Emergency 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety or imminent abuse	Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour
be vigilant, informed and proactive regarding student safety and child protection issues	Discriminate against any student on the basis of characteristics that are protected in antidiscrimination legislation or express personal views that support or promote such discrimination
Comply with guidelines published by the School with respect to student safety	Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students
Ensure as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a student	Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material
Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students	Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students
Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating, bullying, or vilifying way	Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student
Report any breaches Code of Conduct to the School's Safety Officers	Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without obtaining consent from the school and the student's parent or guardian
Respect cultural, religious and political differences Do ensure, as quickly as possible, that where an allegation of child abuse is made the student involved is safe	Ignore or disregard any reasonable suspicion, or disclosed child abuse

Encourage students to 'have a say' and then listen to them with respect	Post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name, age, e-mail address, telephone number, residence or details of a club or group they may attend
Use positive and affirming language towards students	Engage, follow or allow students to follow staff on personal social media accounts.
Behave as a positive role model to students	Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student
Provide age-appropriate supervision for students	Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student/s regardless of whether the student/s is your own or not, inside or outside the school environment

Agreement to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

A copy of Code is provided to all staff, direct contact volunteers and direct contact contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing at SMBG. It is also communicated via refresher training at regular intervals for all staff.

All staff, as well as direct contact volunteers, must sign an agreement and a Declaration (see **Appendix 1**) to adhere to the Code prior to commencing work at SMBG.

The Code forms part of the contract between SMBG and any direct contact contractors. Therefore, all direct contact contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct upon signing the contract or upon commencing work at SMBG.

Breach of this Code

Breaches of these established unacceptable behaviours are treated seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with the applicable SMBG policy.

Reporting and Compliance Obligations

Wherever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the police should be contacted on 000.

In addition to meeting core functions, duties and responsibilities as outlined, all staff are required to:

- report any suspicions, concerns, allegations or disclosures of alleged child abuse to a SMBG Child Safety Officer who will provide information, guidance and support to the staff member, as required
 - **Note:** Staff need to be aware that consulting with a Child Safety Officer does not change or remove any obligation they have pursuant to applicable legislation to report the allegation or abuse to an external authority
- maintain valid VIT or WWCC documentation, and
- report to the Principal any criminal charges or convictions received during employment or volunteering that may indicate a possible risk to children and young people, including any such charges or convictions prior to employment.

Communications involved with the reporting of concerns or allegations of child abuse will be treated confidentially and on a strict 'need to know' basis

Related Policies and Sources of Obligations

Child Safety Volunteer Training

Child Safety Staff Training Presentation

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

Responding to Child Safety Concerns – Reporting Obligations

Complaints and Grievances Policy

Ministerial Order 1359 Implementing the Child Safe Standards - *Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises*

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017

Crimes Act 1958

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Guidelines

Staff Recruitment Policy

Volunteers Policy

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Codes of Conduct and Ethics

Policy Title	Child Safety Code of Conduct
Policy Owner	Principal
Effective Date	February 2026
Approved by	Executive
Review Date	February 2028
Published	Website, Nexus

Appendix 1 – Declaration

Declaration

I acknowledge that I have read St Margaret’s Berwick Grammar’s Child Safety Code of Conduct (the **Code**)

I understand and agree to abide by the Code and that if I am found to be in breach of the Code I may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: _____ Date _____

Signature