



## CODE OF CONDUCT

<b>Responsible Officers:</b>	Principal
<b>Approved By:</b>	MMS School Board
<b>Date Approved:</b>	18 May 2023
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	10 May 2024

### FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING AT MELBOURNE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

#### PURPOSE

Melbourne Montessori School (MMS, the School) is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of care and behaviour for the educational environment that benefits our entire community.

This Code of Conduct sets out to clarify the actions, behaviours and conduct which are naturally expected of our MMS community being all employees, volunteers, board members and others acting on behalf of MMS in any capacity at all times. This way of behaving is outlined in the Staff Charter, Children's charter but need to also include families and care-givers, fellow MMS colleagues (staff and volunteers alike), regulatory bodies, and contractors.

#### SCOPE

The Code of Conduct applies to all Melbourne Montessori School Staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, Board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work (School community).

The application of this Code is not limited to the normal place of work and work hours. It extends to all School physical and on-line environments, during and outside of school hours, such as camps, functions and events that are work-related and when representing or acting on behalf of the School.

This Code does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or applicable professional codes of conduct that applies to any workers at Melbourne Montessori School (e.g. *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics*).

#### PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE

**Melbourne Montessori School expects all its Staff and volunteers to act with integrity, respect and responsibility.**

It is expected that those bound by this code will:

- work towards the achievement of the School's vision and mission;
- treat others fairly and with dignity and respect;
- conduct themselves as an appropriate role model and maintain high standards of personal conduct at all times;
- operate with and adhere to all Melbourne Montessori School policies and procedures, including but not limited to, the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Privacy Policy* and *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*;
- never unlawfully harass, bully, victimise or discriminate against any person (adult or student) on the basis of personal attributes, including ethnicity, aboriginality, disability, age, gender, race, religion, political affiliation, marital status or sexual preference.
- not tolerate behaviour that a reasonable person would consider offensive, intimidating, humiliating, aggressive, threatening or abusive;
- use all of the School's systems and equipment appropriately and observe the acceptable and appropriate use of all electronic, digital devices and communication systems (refer to *ICT Staff Use Policy* and *Social Media Policy - Staff Use*);



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- never treat anyone unfavourably because they have brought a genuine complaint of improper behaviour.

Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- theft, fraud or misappropriation or misuse of School funds or resources;
- any form of physical violence including fighting, assault or threats of violence;
- the use of inappropriate or profane words, gestures and images;
- smoking or consuming alcohol within the School precinct or within a radius of the School operation that would reasonably link the individual to the School (unless authorised by the Principal);
- attending work, social, sporting or other functions as a representative of the School while affected by adverse effects of alcohol or illicit drugs (thereby placing the individual and others at risk);
- touching, handling, pushing or otherwise physically engaging with students or others, other than in exercising sound professional judgement and consistent with our duty of care to students;

### We are committed to Child Safety

It is expected that all those bound by this Code will support the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by;

- upholding Melbourne Montessori School's commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*;
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, 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;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children, particularly Indigenous children (e.g. by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification);
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or diverse linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (e.g. during personal care activities);
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with same-sex attracted, intersex or gender diverse backgrounds;
- reporting any child safety concerns to a member of the Melbourne Montessori School Leadership Team who are our Child Safety Officers;
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe and protected from harm (if you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone Police on 000);
- understanding and complying with all reporting of disclosure obligations (including *Mandatory Reporting* and *Crimes Act*) as they relate to protecting children from harm and abuse in line with our *Mandatory Reporting, Child Protection and Reportable Conduct* policies and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#);



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- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.
- All persons bound by this code **must not:**
  - ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm;
  - put a child at risk of abuse (e.g. locking doors);
  - develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to grooming behaviour (e.g. offering gifts or special treatment of specific children);
  - display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context;
  - exhibit behaviours with children that may be construed as unnecessarily physical (e.g. inappropriate sitting on laps);
  - initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
  - 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;
  - engage in open discussion of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (e.g. regarding the adult's personal or social activities);
  - express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
  - treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity;
  - arrange personal communication or contact with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting, etc.) outside of the School's educational programs and activities or without a valid context. Staff must not breach the boundaries of their profession;
  - photograph or video a child without a valid educational context;
  - work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
  - have personal 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.

### Respecting and maintaining confidentiality and privacy

It is expected that all members of the School community will:

- only share private or confidential information held by the School either on-line or otherwise, with other Staff or members of the School community where it is legitimately required for them to undertake their role;
- collect, use, maintain and destroy information, particularly personal or sensitive information, in accordance with the School's *Privacy Policy* and applicable legislation;
- never discuss/disclose any information about Melbourne Montessori School that is not already public knowledge, without the appropriate authority to do so.



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#### Avoiding and managing conflicts of interest

It is expected that all members of the School community will:

- be aware of potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest and disclose them immediately to the Principal or a member of the School Leadership Team;
- never accept a gift, reward or entertainment if it could create an obligation or expectation, or could be perceived to create an obligation or expectation, that would be in conflict with your role at the School;
- maintain appropriate relationships when dealing with students, parents and suppliers, particularly recognising the need to maintain professional (not personal) relationships with students.

#### Complying with the requirements of the law

It is expected that all members of the School community will comply with all relevant laws, regulations, policies and procedures. Any actual or suspected breaches of this Code, any law, regulation, policy, or procedure should be honestly reported.

#### 4. BREACH

A breach of this *Code of Conduct* may be considered misconduct and, depending on an investigation of the circumstances, may result in disciplinary action. Any concerns about the conduct covered by this policy should be raised with a member of the School Leadership Team.

All Staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers and other members of the School community involved in child-connected work who breach the child safety component of this *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.

By observing these Standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Code to a member of the School Leadership Team.

I have read this *Code of Conduct* and the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and agree to abide by it at all times.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_