1. Code of Conduct – Child Safe

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Version 1.2
7th November 2016
Community Code of Conduct Policy
(excerpt from the Bacchus Marsh Grammar 2015 Business Notice p21)

Statement of Context and Purpose

Bacchus Marsh Grammar promotes values that are in keeping with the School’s Mission Statement and in accordance with the values that underpin the Victorian Ecumenical System of Schools, of which it is a member.

All students, parents, teachers and staff have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety or wellbeing of others.

This Code of Conduct provides members of the School Community with guidelines for the effective development of positive relationships with in the School Community and assists in promoting the values that are in keeping with the School’s Mission.

This School Community Code of Conduct sets clear standards of behavior which are expected of members of the School Community in the School environment or when attending and School related function or activity at any other location.

The Code specifies the consequences for any member of the School Community who does not comply with these standards of behavior.

Code of Conduct – Child Safe

The Code of Conduct – Child Safe has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people against child abuse.

At Bacchus Marsh Grammar we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children’s / young people’s best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

All staff, volunteers, contractors and board members of Bacchus Marsh Grammar are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children / young person. They are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and young people, as noted below:

- Adhering to Bacchus Marsh Grammar’s child safe policy at all times / upholding Bacchus Marsh Grammar’s statement of commitment to child safety at all time
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children / young people from abuse
- Treating everyone with respect (modelling positive and respectful relationships and acting in a manner that sustains a safe, educational and pastoral environment)
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children / 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
• Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children / young people (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child’s / young person’s self-identification)
• Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children / 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 / 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 / young person
• Reporting any allegations of child abuse to Bacchus Marsh Grammar’s Child Safety Officers Jennifer Jovanovic and Jan Loftus or school leadership, and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
• Reporting any child safety concerns to Bacchus Marsh Grammar’s Child Safety Officers Jennifer Jovanovic and Jan Loftus or school leadership
• If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) / young people are safe
• Acknowledge any contact with a child / young person or their family outside Bacchus Marsh Grammar by completing and submitting a Staff Student Association Register Form
• Comply with the guidelines for tutoring students as outlines in the Teachers Code of Conduct Guidelines

Unacceptable Behaviours

• Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
• Develop any ‘special’ relationships with children / young people that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children / young people)
• Exhibit behaviours with children / 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)
• Put children / young people at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
• Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children / young person or do things of a personal nature that a child / young person can do for themselves (e.g. such as toileting or changing clothes)
• Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children / young people (for example, personal social activities)
• Use inappropriate language in the presence of children / young people
• Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children / young people
• Discriminate against any child / young person, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
• Have contact with a child / young person or their family outside of our organisation without completing an Association Register Form. (Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate)
• Have any online contact with a child / young person or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters)
• Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Bacchus Marsh Grammar’s Child Safety Officers Jennifer Jovanovic and Jan Loftus / leadership.

If you believe a child / young person is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

What to do when an allegation of child abuse is made
(Source: The Department of Health and Human Services)

If a child / young person discloses an incident of abuse to you

- Try and separate them from the other children / young people discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child / young person use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child / young person that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child / young person such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child / young person in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child / young person is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child’s / young person’s words and report the disclosure to your manager or your organisation’s child safety officer/champion,\(^1\) police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in your organisation or raises a concern

- Explain that your organisation has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.

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\(^1\) A child safety officer/champion is a person in your organisation who has knowledge of child safety issues, and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse. You could consider including child safety officer/champion duties in the person’s job description.
• Ask about the wellbeing of the child / young person.
• Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
• Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
• Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the organisation’s management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
• Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child / young person safe.
• Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
• Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
• Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

You need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people’s needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child / young person, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children / young people, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.


If you believe a child / young person is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Legal responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child / young person has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The failure to disclose criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about failure to disclose is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website
While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.


Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.


The failure to protect criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

Child Safe Incident Report

(Adapted from: The Department of Health and Human Services)

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. You can provide this resource to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern in your organisation. Your staff can also use this resource to record disclosures.

All incident reports must be stored securely.

Incident details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of incident:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time of incident:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of incident:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Available on Synergetic
Name(s) of child/children involved:
Birthday
Address
Grade
Report (academic progress - DocMan)
Religion/Nationality (Flags)

Siblings
Contact details of parents

Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

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3 The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. For further explanation of the different types of child abuse, please see <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>. 
Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Synergetic – Flags)

(Mark with an ‘X’ as applicable)

No  [ ] Yes, Aboriginal  [ ] Yes, Torres Strait Islander  [ ]

Please categorise the incident

- Physical violence
- Sexual offence
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse
- Serious neglect

Please describe the incident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When did it take place?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who was involved?</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did you see?</th>
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Other information

Child’s presentation at school:
- Physical – e.g. signs of abuse such as visible bruising, neglect
- Emotional – e.g. withdrawn, etc.
### Parent/carer/child use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of incident:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time of incident:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of incident:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name(s) of child/children involved:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Office use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date incident report received:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff member managing incident:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-up date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incident ref. number:</td>
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</table>

Has the incident been reported?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child protection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>Another third party (please specify):</td>
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</table>

**NOTE:**

DHHS will require the details of the incident reporter.
Further information
(Source: Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, Department of Health and Human Services)


Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards, has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms:


Note for registered schools: a forthcoming Ministerial Order under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 will contain the minimum actions that schools must take to meet each of the child safe standards. There will be a lead in time before regulation will commence to allow schools time to prepare. The Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority will provide information and materials specifically for schools to assist with capacity building and compliance.

Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au

Early childhood services operating under the National Quality Framework or Children's Services Act 1996 should contact: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Licensed children’s services enquiry line: 1300 307 415.

Related Policies

- Child Protection and Safety Policy
- Teachers Code of Conduct Guidelines GOV.021 (ii)