

Child Safety Code of Conduct

School Context:

Doxa School Bendigo is a Child Safe community committed to providing an environment that is true to the values of our schoolwide expectations: being **Safe, Kind** and **Curious**. We promote care for all individuals in the school community and this is reflected in our support of students to learn to understand and regulate their own behaviour.

All of Doxa School's policy and procedural documentation is underpinned by our **5 key Pillars of the Doxa School Model: Student-Centred Approach, Trauma Sensitive Practice, Social and Emotional Literacy, Choice Theory and our Catholic Identity** and complies with the requirements of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. This Code can be found on our school website:

www.doxabendigo.catholic.edu.au

As a central tenant of our Child Safety Code of Conduct, it is important to note that Doxa School Bendigo is committed to the safety of all children and has 'zero tolerance' for child abuse. We also recognise the importance of embedding a child safe culture across our organisation and are committed to ensuring that we comply with the requirements of Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards.

1. Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct has a specific focus on promoting child safety at Doxa School Bendigo and safeguarding children and young people against all forms of abuse as defined under Ministerial Order 870. Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) as including:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or a grooming offence under section 49m(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- the infliction of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm
- the serious neglect of a child

A child is defined by the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) as a person who is under the age of 18 years.

The purpose of this Child Safety Code of Conduct is to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviour with children in our school environment. The objective is to guide all Doxa School Bendigo staff in identifying and regulating their own behaviour and the behaviour of other staff, and to protect children from abuse in the school environment.

It should be read and considered in conjunction with the Doxa School Bendigo Commitment Statement to Child Safety and other child safety policies and procedures.

It is also intended to complement Ministerial Order 870, child protection legislation, mandatory reporting and other reporting requirements and the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Codes of Conduct as these apply to staff and personnel.

2. Scope

This Code applies to all Doxa School Bendigo staff who are:

- directly engaged with, or employed by, Doxa School Bendigo (including Board, Committees, and other School Advisory Council members)
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider
- a minister of religion (clergy), and religious personnel

It applies to all aspects of a staff member's engagement with Doxa School Bendigo students, including those students aged 18 and over.

This Code applies regardless of:

- the location of where an interaction occurs, whether during or outside school grounds or during or outside school hours
- whether the interaction occurs in person or online
- a student's age
- a student's consent
- the consent of parents/guardians and families
- circumstances in which a student initiates an interaction or relationship between the staff member and the student

3. Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Acceptable Behaviours

All staff are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to and upholding Doxa School Bendigo's Commitment Statement to Child Safety and other child safety policies and procedures at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the Doxa School Bendigo community 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, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, 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 linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring that one-to-one support of a child is undertaken professionally and in a safe and open environment and as far as practicable in the visibility of others
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal, or the Child Safety Officer, and in accordance with the requirements of the 'Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures'
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and also reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- reporting any child safety concerns to Doxa School Bendigo's leadership or the Child Safety Officer
- being vigilant and taking all reasonable steps to protect students in Doxa School Bendigo's care from abuse or harm
- abiding by professional boundaries, acknowledging that interactions with students by their very nature are open to scrutiny

- reporting any suspected breach of this Code by any other staff to the Principal or another member of the school leadership team
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the students are safe, in accordance with the Doxa School Bendigo policies and procedures
- respecting the confidentiality and privacy of students and acting in accordance with the Doxa School Bendigo 'Privacy Policy'
- only interacting with students online using Doxa School Bendigo technology systems and only in connection with their role at school
- immediately notifying the Principal if they become the subject of any child safety investigation or become charged with any offence related to child safety
- complying with their professional and employment obligations, including any other relevant professional or occupational code of conduct such as the VIT Code of Conduct
- developing and exercising prudent judgment and sensitivity regarding appropriate physical interactions and only engaging in physical interactions with students where it is necessary, is a required part of the educative process and beneficial/supportive
- complying with any lawful and reasonable direction by Doxa School Bendigo
- cooperating with any child safety investigation by Doxa School Bendigo, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd., or any regulatory authority

Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff must not:

- engage in any form of child abuse, including behaviour that constitutes grooming
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism, including but not limited to:
 - the offering of gifts or special treatment for a specific student
 - attending parties or socialising with students outside organised Doxa School Bendigo events without the knowledge of the Principal
 - sharing personal details about their private life with students
 - meeting with students outside of school hours without Principal permission
- exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, sitting on laps or massages)

- put students at risk of abuse (for example, by unnecessarily locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with a student or do things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of students (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of students
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students
- have contact with a student or their family outside of school without Doxa School Bendigo knowledge and/or consent (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate
- have any online contact with a student (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary for work purposes e.g. by providing families with e-news letters or assisting students with their school work); become 'friends' with, follow or add a student on any social media platform
- exchange personal contact details with a student such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a student without the consent of the parent or guardians
- engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a student that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including because of the student's or another person's race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or disability
- share or request any photographs, videos, recordings or personal information about students without Doxa School Bendigo's Principal consent, including on any of their own social media platforms
- work with a student while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children

Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language

- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- do not violate or compromise the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship students

Wellbeing Staff

In their dealings with students, school wellbeing staff should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice guidelines to which they are bound.

4. Policy Compliance

All staff at Doxa School Bendigo receive a copy of this Code when they are appointed to the school. They are expected to read and be familiar with its content. This Code will be included in the Induction program for new staff and all staff will be briefed on the content at the beginning of each school year, and periodically during staff meetings across the year.

A hard copy of the Code will be provided for all staff members at the beginning of each school year, and it will also be available for download via the school website at any time.

Breach of this Code

Staff that breach this Code may be subject to disciplinary action, including and up to termination of their employment or engagement.

Individuals that are aware of a suspected breach of this Code should refer to the 'Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure', and can make a report to the Principal, Doxa School Bendigo, or an appropriate member of the Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd. Executive Leadership Team. All reports will be treated confidentiality.

The appropriate member of the CES Ltd Executive Leadership Team or the Principal, Doxa School Bendigo, is also required to report to the VIT any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct and will abide by it.

Signed: _____

Date: _____