



Alkira
Secondary College

Personalised learning for all. Respect for the individual learner.

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Monitoring and Evaluation of Child-Connected Work POLICY

Rationale:

To maintain professional and legal obligations, the College will undertake ongoing monitoring and evaluation of staff involved in child-connected work.

Aims:

Schools need to ensure that all school staff and people working in a child connected capacity have knowledge of children's rights and their moral and legal responsibilities. The safety and wellbeing of our students form a central and fundamental responsibility of our College and compliments our vision and values of: Respect, Integrity, Care and Excellence.

We are committed to zero tolerance of child abuse; including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. It is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, family or social background have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Implementation:

The following principles are those recommended and endorsed by VRQA (as acceptable and unacceptable) and will guide all adult behaviour when interacting with or undertaking child-connected work at Alkira SC

Acceptable Behaviours

All staff, parents, contractors, visitors and volunteers are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct at all times; taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect;
- Vigilantly supervising students in all school environments;
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are disclosing 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;
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;

- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children living in Out-of-Home Care;
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child;
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership team (Wellbeing Co-ordinator/Child Safety Officer, Principal, Assistant Principals)
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*;
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership (Wellbeing Co-ordinator/Child Safety Officer, Principal, Assistant Principals)
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe; and
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching 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.

Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, parents, contractors, visitors and volunteers must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps) or initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- Put children at risk of abuse;
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- Discriminate against any child due to age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity, physical appearance, or disability;
- Have any on-line contact with a child other than for school-related necessities. This includes social media, instant messaging, photo sharing technologies and / or provision of personal contact details (phone / personal email address details).

(Samples adapted from VRQA website and A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation- Commission for Children and Young People)

Monitoring and Evaluation

- All school staff members have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under their care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. The question of what constitutes "reasonable steps" will depend on the individual circumstances of each case.
- Staff may breach their duty of care towards a student if they fail to act in the way a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation. In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include:
 - Acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable;
 - Seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or agencies when the school staff member is unsure of what steps to take;

- Reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities such as Victoria Police and DHHS Child Protection;
- Arranging counselling and/or other appropriate welfare support for the child;
- Providing ongoing support to the child – this may include attending DHHS Child Protection Case Planning meetings, and convening regular Student Support Group meetings;
- Sharing information with other school based staff who will also be responsible for monitoring and providing ongoing support to the child.

Alkira SC staff need to liaise with the Child Safety Officer in all cases of suspicion or reasonable belief that child abuse has occurred, is occurred or is at risk of occurring.

Professional obligations of staff- Issues and processes relating to staff complaints

Depending on the issue, the College leader who is dealing with a staff complaint **may** contact the Conduct and Ethics Branch of DET for advice (Ph.- 9636 2595); however, if the College wishes to pursue an issue relating to unsatisfactory performance and / or misconduct, then Conduct and Ethics **must** be contacted.

**** Discussions with the Principal should occur prior to calling / emailing Conduct and Ethics ****

The College has a duty-of-care obligation where occurrences of unacceptable or inappropriate staff behaviour have occurred and to take all '*... reasonable preventative strategies and precautions*' to prevent the behaviour from being repeated.

Ministerial Orders (part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006) govern all members of the teaching service- Principal Class, Teacher Class, ES members and para-professionals. Different sections of the Ministerial Orders stipulate professional expectations-

11.2.3- The duty of every employee at a school is to:

- Carry out the duties as required by the Principal of the school.
- Perform their official duties with reasonable skill care and diligence.
- Give full co-operation and assistance to the Principal and all other employees of the school ... in the performance of their respective duties.
- Observe safe working practices so as to not endanger themselves or others.
- Carry out such duties as assigned by the Principal, whether by means of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Public Administration Ac 2004, other relevant legislation, any regulations and ministerial orders made from time to time under those Acts and any instructions, directions or policies issued by the Secretary or any person authorised by the Secretary or the Principal.

**** For all cases of a substantive complaint, there is a school-based investigation. The staff member is informed (and depending on the circumstance) written statements are taken from all stakeholders. After critiquing all areas-written and verbal, the investigating delegate will provide a recommendation to the Principal.**

When an incident occurs involving inappropriate behaviour by both parties (two staff members or staff member - parent or staff member - student), then all parties are dealt with separately.

**** Investigation and resolution of staff complaints are (in the majority) are handled through the school and usually involve a formal discussion with the staff member, breaking down all specific areas to ensure all '*... reasonable preventative strategies and precautions*' are taken into account to prevent the behaviour from being repeated.**

** Depending on specific inappropriate behaviour, its repetition or concern of the allegation, the College Principal may undertake a higher level and more formal approach in their dealings with the staff member. Formal allegations are presented to the staff member in written form, requesting a written response. After receiving the response, the Principal will either substantiate or dismiss the complaint/s. Such judgements are made on the balance of probabilities.

Staff Misconduct

If further actions occur by the same staff member, despite previous discussions, implemented strategies and listed expectations then the school may view the current complaint (having regard to previous matters) as **misconduct**. In this circumstance, the process is different and Conduct and Ethics must be involved. The Principal (or the Principal's delegate) will liaise with Conduct and Ethics in these circumstances.

Division 10- (part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006)

This area covers Misconduct; which is one of several grounds upon which the Secretary of Education, after investigation, may take action against an employee.

- (A) Conducts themselves in a disgraceful manner, improper or unbecoming manner in an official capacity.
- (D) Is negligent or incompetent in the discharge of their duties.
- (E) Contravenes a provision of this Act or a Ministerial Order.
- (G) Without lawful excuse, contravenes or fails to comply with a lawful direction by a person with authority to give the direction.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **October 2016**