



CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

Bittern Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Bittern Primary School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Bittern Primary School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

DET Code of Conduct for the Public Sector

The Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees is binding on all public sector employees, which includes employees in the Victorian Public Service and the Government Teaching Service. The Code is designed to help public sector employees understand their obligations to behave in accordance with the high standards the community expects. It describes the behaviours that promote the values contained in the Public Administration Act 2004, and it provides employees with guidance if they are faced with an ethical dilemma or a conflict of interest in their work.

The Code was reissued on 1 June 2015 and it has been revised to clarify existing requirements, particularly in key areas such as conflicts of interest and gifts and benefits. There are no new obligations. All the changes are set out in the Table of Changes to the Code of Conduct document under Policies and Guidelines below.

Copies of the Code can be obtained by contacting the Employee Conduct Branch on (03) 7022 0005 or by email to: employee.conduct@edumail.vic.gov.au.

The Code may also be accessed online (HTML) or by downloading the PDF available from the Victorian Public Sector Commission link under Policies and Guidelines below.

<https://vpssc.vic.gov.au/html-resources/code-of-conduct-for-victorian-public-sector-employees/>

VIT Code of Conduct for Victorian Teachers

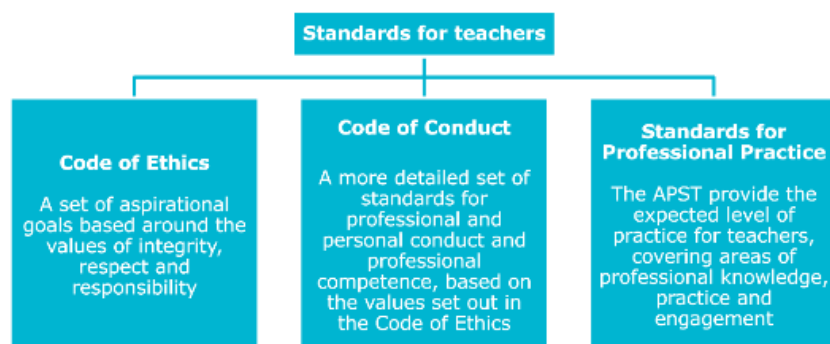
<https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/professional-responsibilities/conduct-and-ethics>

Under s2.6.3 of the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) (the Act), the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) must develop, maintain and promote a Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics for the teaching profession.

The Codes apply to everyone currently registered with VIT, whether they are currently working as a teacher or not.

The Codes are public statements developed for and by the teaching profession to

- reflect shared principles about practice, conduct and ethics to be applied to promote the highest standards of professional practice
- enable registered teachers to reflect on their ethical decisions
- establish the quality of behaviour that reflects the expectations of the profession and the community
- provide a clear statement to the community about these expectations.



The Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct supports all teachers to understand the expectations of the teaching profession and the community in relation to their professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence.

The VIT has an overarching function of providing for child safety and wellbeing, and this underpins the principles set out in the Code of Conduct.

As part of a registered profession and a profession of high public trust and accountability, teachers must be aware of and reflect the expectations and standards expected of them – the Code of Conduct can assist teachers to guide their professional and personal conduct.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and the schools child safe policy.
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, 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 students.
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of vulnerable students.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or the Child Safe Officer.
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts).
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context.
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes.¹
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy² or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

REFERENCES

¹ SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/photoandfilm.aspx> · The policy says the school should get consent before taking and publishing photos of a student. This applies every time a photo is taken. The same policy applies for excursions and school activities.

² SPAG: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/alcohol.aspx>. The policy says the school must obtain school council approval before alcohol can be consumed on school grounds or at a school activity. The policy says staff members should not consume alcohol during camps and excursions. It is silent on whether they can consume alcohol at other school events where students are present, this is a matter that the school needs to decide upon – draft text is provided in the guidance fact sheet

REVIEW PROCESS:

DATE IMPLEMENTED	1 st March 2021
AUTHOR	Margaret Dolan and Kellie Christie
APPROVED BY	Margaret Dolan
APPROVAL AUTHORITY (SIGNATURE AND DATE)	
ENDORSED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT (SIGNATURE AND DATE)	
DATE FOR REVIEW	Term 1 2022
RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEW	Margaret Dolan