

### **Rationale**

Park Ridge Primary School (PRPS) has a strong commitment to child safety. We believe that each child has the right to feel happy, safe and valued. We continually strive to ensure that every child is safe from harm including all forms of abuse and therefore we have a zero tolerance to abuse.

### **Aim**

- To promote child safety in the school environment.
- To set standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with students.
- To take into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff such as registered teachers) and the needs of all students.
- To be consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

### **Implementation**

- This policy should be read in conjunction with a school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures.
- This advice does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the school, in particular the *Victorian Public Sector Commission Code of Conduct*.
- This policy is supported by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics* that provides clarity regarding professional behaviour expected of teachers at all times. The code specifies behaviour unacceptable for a professional relationship between a teacher and a student. The VIT code provides a useful guide to appropriate behaviour for all school staff.
- Principles that guide an adult's behaviour when undertaking child-connected work:
  - the adult/child relationship should be professional at all times,
  - an adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child, and
  - an adult should not be alone with a child unless it is in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.

## Professional Conduct

- Relationships with students:
  - Teachers provide opportunities for all students to learn.
  - Teachers treat their students with courtesy and dignity.
  - Teachers work within the limits of their professional expertise.
  - Teachers maintain objectivity in their relationships with students.
  - Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students, whether at school or not.
- Relationships with parents/carers, families and communities:
  - Teachers maintain a professional relationship with parents/carers.
  - Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.
- Relationships with colleagues:
  - Collegiality is an integral part of the work of teachers.
- Acceptable behaviours - All staff, volunteers and parents are responsible for supporting the safety of students by:
  - adhering to the school's Child Safe Policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;
  - taking all reasonable steps to protect students from abuse;
  - treating everyone in the school community with respect;
  - 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 (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification);
  - promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance for discrimination);
  - promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
  - ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child except in accordance with their roles and responsibilities;

- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership (or Assistant Principal (Wellbeing));
  - 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;
  - if an allegation of child abuse is made, the school will follow appropriate school policies and protocols.
- Unacceptable behaviours - Staff and volunteers must not:
    - ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
    - develop any 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students);
    - exhibit behaviours with students, which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps);
    - put students at risk of abuse;
    - initiate unnecessary physical contact with students or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
    - use inappropriate language in the presence of students;
    - express personal discriminatory views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students;
    - discriminate against any child, including but not limited to age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability;
    - have contact with a child or their family that is inconsistent with school policies and procedures (for example, *Child Safety Policy* or *Digital Technologies - Internet, Social Media and Digital Devices Policy*);
    - have personal online contact with a child (including by social media, personal email, instant messaging etc.) unless school related;
    - exchange personal contact details with a child, such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses;
    - photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians;
    - upload photos onto social media without the consent of parents or guardians;
    - work with students whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

### Personal Conduct

- The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and the profession as a whole.

### Professional Competence

- Teachers value their professionalism, and set and maintain high standards of competence
- Teachers are aware of the legal requirements that pertain to their profession. In particular, they are cognisant of their legal responsibilities.

### Review

This policy was last updated in August 2024 and is scheduled for review in August 2027. This policy will also be updated if significant changes are made to the staff code of conduct that require a revision of PRPS's Code of Conduct Policy.

|                         |                 |                                      |                                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Policy:</b>          | Code of Conduct |                                      |                                 |
| <b>Date Approved:</b>   | August, 2024    | <b>Person Responsible:</b>           | Principal / Education Committee |
| <b>Date for Review:</b> | August, 2027    | <b>Date Updated on Policy Index:</b> | August, 2024                    |