



ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG

# Online Learning: Staff Code of Conduct



COMPASSION INNOVATION INTEGRITY



## ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE GEELONG

### ONLINE LEARNING: CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

#### Rationale

St Joseph's College is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people in its care. This commitment extends to online learning environments prompted by COVID-19. The school has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse, including any abusive behaviour that occurs online.

This Online Learning Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and expectations held by the school for all employees and volunteers within the school community.

It aims to provide workers with a clear set of expectations when engaging with students online.

#### 2. Scope

This Online Code applies to all employees, contractors and volunteers (together referred to as '**workers**').

It applies when workers are engaging with students online or using technology for the purpose of providing education related services (whether at school, working from home or elsewhere), including but not limited to:

- (a) providing lessons to or interacting with students online (whether live or pre-recorded, with or without video) through platforms including but not limited to Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google G-Suite including Classroom and Hangouts Meet, Echo and Simon.
- (b) messaging, interacting or communicating with students via online platforms including but not limited to the school's intranet, Microsoft Teams, G Suite, Zoom, Office 365.
- (c) calling students over the phone (refer to sections 4.2 and 4.4) or any other web-based platform; and
- (d) emailing students.

#### 3. Interaction with other obligations

This Online Code does **not** apply to online communication with students outside of an educative environment. Workers are expected to only communicate with students via technology for educational or co-curricular purposes.

All workers must continue to comply with the expectations set out in all other school policies, procedures and codes of conduct, including:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct;



- EREA Code of Conduct;
- St Joseph's College Geelong Child Safety Policy
- Social Media Policy.

All workers, especially teachers, must continue to comply with their professional obligations, duty of care and legal obligations.

#### 4. Interaction with students

This section sets out standards of behaviour and expectations when engaging with students through Online Learning.

##### 4.1 General principles

When workers are working from home or engaging with students online, it is important that workers continue to maintain a professional and educative environment.

At all times when engaging with students online, workers must:

- only use school approved online platforms;
- act professionally and in accordance with relevant school policy;
- endeavour to only communicate with students during school hours;
- reinforce professional boundaries with students who begin personal communication;
- continue to be alert to any red flags or warning signs of child abuse or harm and make reports as needed in accordance with their legal obligations;
- be mindful of the collection, storage and disclosure of student's personal information and comply with the school's Privacy Policy;
- notify a Child Safety Officer if there are any breaches of this Online Code or any other child safety policy, procedure or code of conduct; and
- intervene when students are disruptive or breach school policy and act in accordance with the school's Behaviour Support Plan.

##### 4.2 Prohibited conduct

At all times when engaging with students online, workers must **not**:

- share personal details about their private life with a student, including exchanging personal pictures;
- socialise with a student online in a private or personal context;
- connect, follow, add or communicate with a student on social media unless it has been explicitly approved by the school whereby it will be registered.



- (d) post any personal information, image or video of a student on their own social media;
- (e) provide a student with their personal contact details such as personal email address or phone number;
- (f) contact a student on their personal email or phone number (unless parent / carer consent has been provided and the school has approved this contact);
- (g) expose a student to inappropriate or sexual material online (excluding for school approved educative purposes such as sex education);
- (h) take or publish screenshots or photos, videos or recordings of a student without school authority; and
- (i) engage in any behaviour that may constitute grooming.

### **4.3 Online lessons**

When delivering lessons online through video, pre-recorded lessons or voice-over, all workers must:

- (a) only deliver lessons online during teaching hours and in accordance with school schedule;
- (b) provide students with clear instructions regarding appropriate online behaviour in accordance with the Online Learning Student Code of Conduct;
- (c) take the attendance of students and report any absences in accordance with school policy;
- (d) limit the disclosure of personal information regarding workers or students;
- (e) be mindful of background noise and not expose students to inappropriate language or noise;
- (f) not record the lesson unless prior permission has been provided by the school;
- (g) not share the link to the lesson or invite into the lesson any individual that is not a student enrolled in the class or other authorised individual; and
- (h) if there is video recording or ability to view the worker, the worker must:
  - (i) wear appropriate and professional clothing in accordance with relevant school policy;
  - (ii) be in an appropriate setting, including having an appropriate backdrop (e.g. workers should not be in their bedrooms);
  - (iii) blur their background where this feature is possible;
  - (iv) avoid depicting other individuals in the video such as a family member; and



- (v) take care to turn off the video after the lesson.

#### **4.4 One-on-one contact**

One-on-one contact with students online, other than through email, should be avoided where possible. However, in unique situations such as moving to online learning across the school, this may be necessary.

If workers engage in one-on-one contact with students through online platforms other than email, workers should:

- (a) Gain approval from the Deputy Principal Staff and Student Wellbeing;
- (b) only do so via school approved online platforms;
- (c) only do so during school hours or if necessary, either side of school hours (e.g. between 7:30am – 7:30pm);
- (d) where possible, engage in such communication in writing; and
- (e) if one-on-one contact occurs through a voice call or video conference, workers must:
  - (i) only do so during school hours;
  - (ii) comply with this Online Code and all other school policies, procedures and codes of conduct at all times; and
  - (iii) document and keep a record of the time and date of the conversation and the general nature of the topics discussed.
  - (iv) send this documentation to the Deputy Principal Staff and Student Wellbeing to be added to the school's one to one register.

#### **4.5 Counselling and pastoral care**

Workers authorised to provide counselling and / or pastoral care to students should only do so using technology if it has been authorised by the school.

If counselling or pastoral care is provided online or using technology, workers must:

- (a) only use School Platforms specifically authorised by the school for counselling or pastoral care purposes;
- (b) only conduct sessions during school hours; unless tragic circumstance require emergency contact.
- (c) ensure the online platform is secure and complies with the school's Privacy Policy;
- (d) ensure the student understands that the session is occurring online and any relevant implications;
- (e) be in an appropriate location that ensures professionalism;



- (f) ensure that they protect the student's confidentiality and privacy (e.g. workers must ensure that the conversation cannot be overheard);
- (g) not record or video the conversation;
- (h) continue to take notes as they would if they were conducting a session on school premises and store these notes in accordance with normal policy; and
- (i) comply with school policy and procedure in relation to conducting counselling or pastoral care sessions with the student where applicable.

## 5. Reporting concerns

Workers must be alert to any warning signs that may indicate that a student is suffering harm. This is particularly so if students are not attending school and all or the majority of interaction with students is occurring online.

In particular, workers should be cognisant of:

- (a) repeated unexplained absences of a student;
- (b) any signs of physical abuse such as bruising or scarring on a student;
- (c) any signs of depression, significant anxiety or emotional distress by a student;
- (d) background noise when interacting with a student online that may indicate violence such as yelling or loud noises; and
- (e) any cyberbullying or inappropriate behaviour between students or by another worker towards a student online.

Workers should raise any child safety concerns in accordance with school procedure and their legal obligations.

## 6. Consequences of a breach

Workers that breach this Online Code may be subject to disciplinary action, including and up to termination of their engagement with the school.

All workers must cooperate with any investigation by the school or any regulatory authority, including providing any requested documents or evidence. Workers must not destroy any records or documents that may be relevant to an investigation.

