

# Thomastown Meadows Primary School

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Thomastown Meadows Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. Our school community recognises the importance and the responsibility of ensuring our school is a safe and supportive environment. This Code of Conduct aims to promote child safety by reducing any opportunity for child abuse or harm to occur. It is intended to complement existing school policies, procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics and is to be read in conjunction with the Victorian Institute of Teaching's *The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Ethics*.

All staff, volunteers, contractors and members of the school community involved in child related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct which outlines both the acceptable and unacceptable forms of behaviour for working with children. This Code of Conduct applies in all school situations including excursions, incursions, camps and social media.

### Acceptable Behaviours

All staff and those involved in child related work at Thomastown Meadows Primary School, individually are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of all children by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- Taking reasonable steps to protect the child from abuse
- Treating students and families in the school community with respect both within and outside the school
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are disclosing that they or another student has been abused and/or are concerned for the safety of another student
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example having zero tolerance of discrimination)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability or vulnerable children (for example during personal care activities)
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership and/or safety worker
- Ensuring as far as possible that adults are not left alone with a child
- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosing 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
- Encouraging children to have a say and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

### Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff and volunteers, contractors and members of the school community involved in child related work 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 (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)
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear overly familiar or inappropriate
- Put children at risk of abuse (locking doors)
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child is able to do for themselves such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example personal social activities)
- 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 because of race, culture, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or their family outside of school without school's leadership knowledge and/or consent or the school's governing authority approval (for example unauthorised tutoring or coaching lessons). Accidental contact such as seeing people in the street is appropriate
- Have any online contact with the child or their family unless necessary (eg: providing families with notices or school work related contact)
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including social media, instant messaging, texting) except where communication is reasonable in all circumstances, related to school work or where the students safety is of concern or an urgent matter
- Photograph or video a child in the school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes and with parental consent
- Work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Consume alcohol or use illegal drugs at school or at school events in the presence of children.

**I have read and acknowledge this code of conduct and will abide by it at all times. I also acknowledge my responsibility to report any breaches of this code to leadership and the Child Safety Officer.**

**Name** .....

**Signature** .....

**Date** .....

**This document has been endorsed by School Council in August 2016 and will be reviewed yearly**

August 2017