

## Headstart aeas CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

### Introduction

The protection of children and young persons is the responsibility of everyone working at Headstart AEAS Education Center, including all staff and parents. We all share responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children and must behave appropriately towards them when they are in our actual or virtual presence.

### Purpose

The purpose of this code of conduct is to:

- promote child safety in the Headstart AEAS Education Center environment
- set standards about the ways in which individuals working in the Headstart AEAS Education Center environment are expected to behave and conduct themselves when interacting with our students
- outline the possible consequences should this code of conduct be breached.

### Scope

All individuals who are working in the Headstart AEAS Education Center environment are required to comply with this code of conduct at all times. Such individuals include those who are directly engaged or employed by Headstart AEAS Education Center, such as its teachers and non-teaching staff.

The Headstart AEAS Education Center environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Headstart AEAS Education Center for use by a child during or outside School hours, and includes our main campus at 530 Little Collins Street, Melbourne and 1 Princess Street, Kew, and our online School environments.

### Overarching Principles

- the adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- an adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstances should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child.

## **Standards of conduct**

### **(a) All persons working in the Headstart AEAS Education Center environment will:**

- respect the privacy of children and the language and customs of a child's family
- protect children from violence, abuse, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect, and protect them from child abuse
- treat everyone with respect and maintain a duty of care towards children
- avoid covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with children
- maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in their interactions with children
- refrain from possessing or using illegal drugs or alcohol when working with children
- behave as positive role models
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/safety of another child
- promote the culture of safety, participation and empowerment of all children, regardless of age, gender, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or ability
- report immediately to the Principal or Principal's delegate if they have a reasonable belief or suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) is (are) safe
- alert the Principal or another Executive member if a breach of this code is observed.

### **(b) The Principal or Principal's delegate will:**

- report 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

**(c) All persons working in the Headstart AEAS Education Center environment will not:**

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- behave in a discriminatory way towards children
- engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a child that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance because of the child's or another person's race, culture, religion, sex or disability
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- engage in prejudicial, oppressive or threatening behaviour towards a child
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- use offensive, profane, discriminatory or abusive language towards or in the presence of a child
- communicate privately with children outside the context of their professional or volunteer relationship
- be in the presence of a child in the Headstart AEAS Education Center environment when under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as offering favouritism (for example, offering or receiving gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family (unless necessary for a legitimate School purpose, eg by providing families with School information or assisting students with their school work)

**(d) Teachers**

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the *Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct* published by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect

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- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation and harm
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

### **Breaches of this code**

Employees of Headstart AEAS Education Center who breach this code of conduct will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the School's disciplinary policies. Such disciplinary action may include counseling, receiving a written warning, loss of privileges, suspension from duties or the termination of their employment.

In appropriate cases, a breach may be referred to the Victoria Police and/or a regulatory body, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

### **Related Documents**

- Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process
- Empowerment and Participation of Children

### **Policy review**

Date of approval by Board:	January 2018
Policy version:	Version 1
Date of next review:	January 2019