



**ARMSTRONG  
CREEK  
SCHOOL**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

### **Child Safe 08/2019**

#### **Rationale**

Armstrong Creek 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.

#### **Aims**

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.

#### **Implementation**

The Principal and school leaders of Armstrong Creek School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly school and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Armstrong Creek School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively. The Code of Conduct are underpinned by our school values of Care, Collaboration and Commitment.

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.

### **All students have the rights to:**

- Take part in learning programs that meet their individual needs,
- Feel secure and safe in a caring and supportive environment,
- Learn and play without interference in an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation,
- Receive respect, kindness and courtesy and to be treated with fairness,
- Have learning continued without disruption in a supportive environment,
- Be valued for their individuality including; race, gender, cultural, physical or intellectual diversity,
- Expect the school rules are fair, implemented and respect the rights of all involved,
- To be safe in every aspect of daily life at school, including camps and excursions.

### **All students have a responsibility to:**

- Care and value themselves, others, teachers and the school community.
- Be safety conscious in relation themselves and others.
- Treat others with respect and good manners.
- Keep the guidelines of the schools expectations, modelling and supporting school values.
- Develop a sense of accountability for their own actions.
- Work to achieve their personal best whilst allowing others to do the same.
- Allow for others to learn and to respect the rights of others.
- Explore their potential their learning.

### **Strategies to promote child empowerment and participation**

- The school authority must develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about:
  - standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
  - healthy and respectful relationships,
  - resilience;and
  - child abuse awareness and prevention.
- The school must promote the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user friendly to children.

## **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 adhering to the school's 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
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or the child safety 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<sup>1</sup>
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy <sup>2</sup> or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

*This Code of Conduct was endorsed/approved by the Armstrong Creek School Council on 3 September 2019 for review.*

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

# Professional Code of Conduct

## **Rationale**

The Code of Conduct identifies a set of principles, which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of teachers and support staff by their colleagues and the community. It is based on the values set out in the accompanying Code of Ethics, namely

Integrity

Respect

Responsibility

## **Aims**

The Code of Conduct classifies what is already common practice within the education profession.

Its purpose is to:

- state the value that guides our practice and conduct
- promote adherence to the values teachers and support staff see as underpinning their profession
- provide a set of principles which will guide teachers and support staff in their everyday conduct
- enable us as Armstrong Creek School to affirm our public accountability
- promote the school communities' confidence in Armstrong Creek School
- has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment
- sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children

The Code of Conduct is not a disciplinary tool and will not cover every situation.

## **Implementation**

As staff, we use our expert knowledge to provide experiences that inspire and facilitate student learning. We are a significant force in developing a knowledgeable, creative, productive and democratic society. The values that underpin our profession are integrity, respect and responsibility.

We hold a unique position of trust and influence, which we recognise in our relationships with students, parents/carers, colleagues and the community.

We demonstrate our responsibility by:

- providing quality teaching
- maintaining and developing our professional practice
- working cooperatively with colleagues in the best interest of our students.

We demonstrate our integrity by:

- acting in the best interest of all students at all times
- maintaining a professional relationship with students, parents, colleagues and the community
- behaving in ways that respect and advance the profession.

We demonstrate our respect by:

- acting with care and compassion
- treating students fairly and impartially
- holding our colleagues in high regard
- speak respectfully about students at all times
- acknowledging parents as partners in the education of their children.

## **Implementation:**

### **SECTION 1: PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Armstrong Creek School professional conduct is characterised by the quality of the relationships they have with their students, their students' parents (guardians and caregivers), families and communities and their colleagues.

### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS**

#### **PRINCIPLE 1.1: ACS (Armstrong Creek School) PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS TO LEARN**

The main focus of teaching is student learning. Teachers and support staff demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment
- accepting professional responsibility for the provision of quality teaching
- having high expectations of every student, recognising and developing each student's abilities, cultural differences, skills and talents

- considering all viewpoints fairly
- communicating well and appropriately with their students.

#### PRINCIPLE 1.2: ACS TREAT STUDENTS WITH COURTESY AND DIGNITY

Teachers and support staff:

- work to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- model and engage in respectful and impartial language
- protect students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation or harm
- enhance student autonomy and sense of self-worth and encourage students to develop and reflect on their own values
- respect a student's privacy in sensitive matters, such as health or family problems, and only reveal confidential matters when appropriate. That is:
  - if the student has consented to the information being used in a certain way
  - to prevent or lessen a serious threat to life, health, safety or welfare of a person (including the student)
  - as part of an investigation into unlawful activity
  - if the disclosure is required or mandated by law
  - to prevent a crime or enforce the law
- refrain from discussing students' personal problems in situations where the information will not be treated confidentially.

#### PRINCIPLE 1.2: ACS WORK WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

In fulfilling their role, staff carry out a wide range of responsibilities. They support students by knowing their strengths and the limits of their professional expertise. They:

- seek to ensure that they have the physical, mental and emotional capacity to carry out their professional responsibilities
- are aware of the role of other professionals and agencies and when students should be referred to them for assistance
- are truthful when making statements about their qualifications and competencies.

#### PRINCIPLE 1.4: ACS MAINTAIN OBJECTIVITY IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

In their professional role, teachers and support staff:

- interact with students without displaying bias or preference
- make decisions in students' best interests
- do not draw students into their personal agendas

- do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity and goals.

#### PRINCIPLE 1.5: ACS STAFF ARE ALWAYS IN A PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDENTS IN THEIR SCHOOL, WHETHER AT SCHOOL OR NOT

Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students. The following examples outline some of those limits.

- A professional relationship **will** be violated if a teacher:
  - has a sexual relationship with a student
  - uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students
  - touches a student without a valid reason
  - holds conversations of a personal nature or has contact with a student via written or electronic means including email,
  - letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context
- A professional relationship **may** be compromised if a teacher:
  - attends parties or socialises with students
  - invites a student or students back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present.

### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS/CARERS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

#### PRINCIPLE 1.6: ACS MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Teachers should be respectful of and courteous to parents. They should:

- consider parents'/carer's perspectives when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student
- communicate and consult with parents in a timely, understandable and sensitive manner
- take appropriate action when responding to parental concerns.

#### PRINCIPLE 1.7: ACS WORK IN COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS' FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Staff recognise that their students come from a diverse range of cultural contexts and seek to work collaboratively with students' families and communities within those contexts.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES**

### PRINCIPLE 1.8: COLLEGIALLY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE WORK OF TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

Teachers and support staff demonstrate collegiality by:

- treating each other with courtesy and respect
- valuing the input of their colleagues
- using appropriate forums for constructive debate on professional matters
- sharing expertise and knowledge in a variety of collaborative contexts
- respecting different approaches to teaching
- providing support for each other, particularly those new to the profession
- sharing information relating to the wellbeing of students.

## **SECTION 2: PERSONAL CONDUCT**

### PRINCIPLE 2.1: THE PERSONAL CONDUCT OF STAFF AT ACS WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE PROFESSIONAL STANDING OF THAT STAFF MEMBER AND ON THE PROFESSION AS A WHOLE

Although there is no definitive boundary between the personal and professional conduct of staff, it is expected that they will:

- be positive role models at school and in the community
- respect the rule of law and provide a positive example in the performance of civil obligations
- not exploit their position for personal or financial gain
- ensure that their personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of their duties
- act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues.

## **SECTION 3: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE**

### PRINCIPLE 3.1: ACS STAFF VALUE THEIR PROFESSIONALISM, AND SET AND MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS OF COMPETENCE

Teachers and support staff:

- are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise
- are committed to pursuing their own professional learning
- complete their duties in a responsible, thorough and timely way.

PRINCIPLE 3.2: ACS ARE AWARE OF THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS THAT PERTAIN TO THEIR PROFESSION. IN PARTICULAR, THEY ARE COGNISANT OF THEIR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO:

- discrimination, harassment and vilification
- negligence
- mandatory reporting
- privacy
- occupational health and safety
- teacher registration.

All staff must maintain and develop knowledge and understanding of their practice. They should continuously seek to improve work performance with an emphasis on improving student learning. They should endeavour to take full advantage of learning opportunities provided at Armstrong Creek School.

**ALIGNING THE CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT TO PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT**

Child Safe Code of Conduct – Key areas	Professional Code of Conduct - Teachers
1. Adhering to the school’s child safe policy	All
2. Protect children from abuse	1.2 Treat students with dignity 3.2: Legal requirements
3. Treat everyone in the school community with respect	1.2: Treat students with dignity 1.6: Professional relationship with parents 1.7: Collaborative relationships with students and families 1.8: Collegiality
4. Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children	1.2: Treat students with dignity
5. Promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability	1.2: Treat students with dignity
6. Reporting any allegations of child abuse and any safety concerns	1.2: Treat students with dignity 2.1: Personal conduct 3.1: Professionalism and competence 3.2: Legal requirements
7. Inappropriate relationships, language, communication or conduct regarding children	1.2 Treat students with dignity 3.2: Legal requirements
8. Inappropriate consumption of alcohol or drugs	1.5: Professional relationship with students at all times 2.1: Personal conduct 3.1: Professionalism and competence

**References:**

[https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/.../Code-of-Conduct-2016.pdf](https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/.../Code-of-Conduct-2016.pdf)

Protect Website:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx?Redirect=1>

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 3 September 2019