

SACCSS

Code of Conduct

1. Statement of Context and Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline the standards of conduct that are expected of all SACCSS staff.

An objective of this Code of Conduct is to promote child safety and child-friendly environment.

The principal responsibility of SACCSS staff is to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. SACCSS staff must ensure that the workplace is safe and free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence.

This Code of Conduct is intended to provide a guidance framework only and is not an exhaustive list of the required standards. This Code of Conduct supports and should be read in conjunction with applicable legal instruments.

2. Application

This Code applies to all SACCSS employees, volunteers and contractors (collectively referred to as **staff** throughout this code of conduct).

3. Reference Points / Background Papers

- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic);
- *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* (Vic);
- *Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014* (Vic);
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic);
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic);
- [DHS Child Safe Standards Toolkit: Resource 3 Code of Conduct](#);
- An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards;
- Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Procedure;
- Mandatory Reporting Policy;
- Privacy Policy;
- Social Media and Social Networking Policy; and
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

4. Definitions

Legal instrument means either legislation, an award, a collective enterprise agreement or contract of employment.

Child Safe Officer means the staff member of SACCSS appointed to fulfil this role as part of their duties.

Child means a person who is under the age of 18 years who attends an SACCSS event.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

5. Policies, Procedure and Laws

SACCSS personnel are required to observe and comply with all of SACCSS's policies and procedures and applicable legislative instruments at all times during the course of their employment or engagement (whichever the case may be) with SACCSS.

6. Professional and Personal Conduct and Child Safety

The personal and professional behaviour of SACCSS staff should conform with the standards that could reasonably be expected of persons who hold similar positions.

SACCSS staff are required to undertake their duties in a professional, responsible and ethical manner and to act in the best interests of SACCSS. They are expected to act professionally and honestly when performing their duties.

As part of the screening process, the following key event personnel must have and, if requested, provide appropriate evidence of a valid WWCC (or other state equivalent) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a school setting:

- All SACCSS staff and Committee members
- those paid by SACCSS for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
- volunteers;
- relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
- anyone else who SACCSS staff feel requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for SACCSS

Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be the responsibility of the individual.

Dealing with Children (including with respect to Child Safety)

SACCSS staff must ensure that they act within professional boundaries and according to legal requirements.

This Code of Conduct provides a set of principles and standards about how SACCSS staff should behave with children. All SACCSS staff are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and are expected to behave in accordance with this Code of Conduct. In particular, all SACCSS staff (and in particular, those engaged in child-connected work) must act lawfully at all times and:

- adhere to SACCSS's Child Safe Policy at all times and uphold the overarching values and principles set out therein;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse (including online abuse);
- treat everyone with respect;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- ensure all interactions with children involving IT and social media are appropriate, and reflect SACCSS's commitment to child safety;
- ensure as far as practicable that children are appropriately supervised when interacting with adults or other children through online forums without compromising the child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections or learning opportunities;

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning their self-identification and by recognising the importance of such student's relationships with their extended family and community, including Elders);
- promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by exhibiting zero tolerance of discrimination and by recognising the tendency of people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds/communities to mistrust authority figures);
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, in terms of level of supervision and care provided for such children);
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary or intersex (for example, by never questioning their self-identification and encouraging them to express themselves);
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children who are unable to live at home (e.g. children in and out of home care or custodial settings) (for example, by actively communicating and collaborating with the child's caseworker, carer or support agency and by implementing strategies to support school engagement and achievement).
- ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child, including through online / telephone forums. If this is not possible, SACCSS staff must ensure any one-on-one contact is clearly documented;
- encourage and recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers to help children feel safe and be less isolated;
- report any child safety concerns and/or any allegations of child abuse to SACCSS's Child Safe Officer in accordance with the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Procedure and in relation to the latter, ensure such allegations are reported to the police or child protection authority (NB The SACCSS staff member will also inform the students school via the supervising teacher on the day); *you may have an alternative procedure which has been devised*
- understand and comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child is safe;
- observe these standards and acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Code of Conduct to SACCSS's Child Safe Officer;
- welcome parents and care givers to participate in decisions about their child's safety;
- attend and participate in all compulsory training;
- take all reasonable steps to eliminate racism and to ensure that any instances of racism are identified, confronted and addressed with appropriate consequences;
- take all reasonable steps to actively support and facilitate the inclusion of, and participation by, Aboriginal children;
- facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns;
- SACCSS staff should also be aware of and observe recent amendments to the Crimes Act, which provide that:

- it is a criminal offence to communicate (including electronically) by words or conduct with a child with the intention of facilitating the child's engagement or involvement in a sexual offence with them or another adult (**Grooming Offence**); and
- it is a criminal offence for a person who, by reason of the position they occupy, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person and knows that there is a substantial risk that that person will commit a sexual offence against the child, negligently fails to reduce or remove the risk (**Failure to Protect Offence**). A person negligently fails to reduce or remove a risk if that failure involves a falling short of the standard of care that a reasonable person would exercise in the circumstances.

SACCSS staff should also be aware of their mandatory reporting obligations and their obligations in respect of the **Failure to Disclose Offence** under the Crimes Act.

SACCSS staff must not engage in unlawful conduct or:

- develop any 'special' relationships with students/children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- exhibit behaviours with students/children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical;
- interact with students/children through their personal telephones or social media accounts in an inappropriate manner and only when necessary;
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- engage in physical contact with a student during a sporting activity without explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission first;
- be in situations (where possible) where they are alone with a student such as in a change room, first aid room or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle;
- do things of a personal nature that a child can 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 or gestures in the presence of children;
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, age, vulnerability or disability;
- have contact (including online or telephone contact) with a child or his/her family outside of SACCSS dealings without consent from the family and SACCSS (for example, no babysitting, unauthorised sport coaching). Note that incidental or accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is not inappropriate;
- work with any young person while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs/substance;
- breach the content outlined in the Position Statement referring to Taking/Using images of children;

Dealing with other SACCSS staff

SACCSS staff must ensure that they treat each other with respect and courtesy. They must demonstrate their respect by holding other SACCSS staff in high regard and work cooperatively with others in the best interests of SACCSS.

7. Public Statements

SACCSS staff making written or oral comments on any matter relating to SACCSS and which might reasonably be expected to become public, must ensure that they hold proper authority and authorisation to do so. SACCSS staff must not make public comments that would damage the reputation of SACCSS.

SACCSS staff are not permitted to communicate directly with the media on behalf of SACCSS unless they have been directed to do so by SACCSS. If SACCSS staff are contacted by media representatives, they are not permitted to provide any comments other than to direct the media representative to the Executive Officer.

8. Confidential Information

SACCSS staff must respect the confidentiality of information received as SACCSS personnel. Confidential information received by SACCSS staff during their engagement remains the property of SACCSS and must not be disclosed.

9. Consequences for Breach of this Policy

SACCSS emphasises the need to fully comply with the requirements of this Code of Conduct. Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be treated seriously and dealt with appropriately.

9.1 At Committee Level

To properly implement this Code of Conduct, SACCSS must ensure:

- that this Code of Conduct is endorsed on an annual basis;
- that copies of this Code of Conduct are made available to all SACCSS staff;
- that this Code of Conduct is incorporated into the SACCSS's record of current policies;
- that this Code of Conduct is incorporated into SACCSS's induction program and any ongoing training, to ensure that all SACCSS staff are aware of the Code of Conduct, have read and understood the Code of Conduct, and acknowledge their commitment to comply with the Code of Conduct; and
- that periodic training and refresher sessions are administered to SACCSS staff in relation to this Code of Conduct.

9.2 At Other Levels

To properly implement this Code of Conduct, all SACCSS staff must ensure that they abide by this Code of Conduct and assist SACCSS in the implementation of this Code of Conduct.

I, _____, confirm I have been provided with a copy of the above Code of Conduct and will abide by it.

Signed: _____ Date: _____