


| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
|  | Child Safety Code of Conduct | Approval Date: 05/09/2024 |
| | | Review Date: 09/2026 |
| | | Version Number: 2.0 |
| Authorised by: | Prace Board | Version Date: 05/09/2024 |
| Responsible Person: | Chief Executive Officer | |

Purpose

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people at Prace.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct is one of many strategies Prace has in place to protect children and young people from abuse and enact our commitment to child safety and well-being, this being:

As Prace strives to develop dynamic, responsive and innovative educational programs, teaching and learning experiences, it will actively promote and protect the interests and safety of children, and provide an environment where all children and young people in its care are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

This will be achieved by:

- having a zero tolerance for child abuse or harm
- taking proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school, training and community centre environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.
- working to actively listen to and empower children
- promoting positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.
- having systems to protect children from abuse, and taking all allegations and concerns very seriously and responding to them consistently in line with its policies and procedures
- engaging only the most suitable people to work with children along with providing high quality supervision and professional development.

Scope

All Prace staff, volunteers, Board members (**Representatives**), contractors and any other adult involved at Prace in child-connected or child-related work, must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of business hours and in other locations provided by Prace for student or service user use (for example, a Prace College camp).

Representatives, contractors and any other adults involved at Prace in child-connected or child-related work are expected to comply with the Code as a condition of their engagement with Prace.

This Code applies regardless of:

- a child's age
- a child's consent
- the consent of parents and families
- circumstances in which a child initiates an interaction or relationship between the Representative and the child.

Definitions

Board means the board of the incorporated association Prace, and the Prace College governing authority.

Child or young person means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence
 - grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958
- b) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) the serious neglect of a child.

<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions>

Child connected work means work authorised by the Principal or Prace Board and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child-related work means work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child, irrespective of whether that contact is supervised or not, and in any of the child-related occupational fields listed in the Worker Screening Act 2020. The definition of direct contact includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact; and may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary).

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suitability-employment-checks/policy-and-guidelines/working-children>

A number of occupational fields are specifically mentioned, including

- state schools (all primary, secondary, technical and special state schools)
- non-government schools (all primary, secondary and special non-government schools)
- TAFE colleges and TAFE divisions of universities providing VCE and/or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) subjects
- some adult education providers offering VCE and/or VCAL subjects
- other institutions providing children's study or training programs

<https://www.vic.gov.au/do-i-need-check>

Parent/guardian/carer/informal carer (parent): In relation to a child means any person who has parental responsibility for ‘major long-term issues’ as defined in the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) or has been granted ‘guardianship’ for the child pursuant to the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) or other state welfare legislation.

An Informal Carer is a person who has responsibility for the day-to-day care of the student and with whom the student is residing. Where a student is not living with a parent/guardian but is living in an informal care arrangement with a relative or other person, the school may accept enrolment and other permission forms signed by the informal carer if the carer provides a signed Informal Carer’s Statutory Declaration to the school. This is a written declaration by the carer that sets out the care arrangements for the child — refer to: Informal Carer Statutory Declaration template. Generally, an informal carer who has provided the school with a completed Informal Carer Statutory Declaration may make school-based decisions for the child and may access school information ordinarily provided to a parent.

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/decision-making-responsibilities-students/policy>

Prace: means the incorporated association (A0032713Z) which includes the Registered Training Organisation (4036) & Prace College (2110).

Prace College: means the section of Prace that operates as an independent school from both the Merrilands and Mernda campuses under registration number 2110.

Prace managed site means Merrilands Community Centre, Reservoir and the Prace Mernda Campus.

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- a) A campus of the school
- b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)
- c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
 - (i) camps
 - (ii) approved homestay accommodation
 - (iii) delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school
 - (iv) sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf

The **Senior Management Team** is made up of the Prace Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Education & Business Operations Manager and any other staff member as appointed to the team by the CEO

Significant child safety incident means an incident, disclosure or allegation of child abuse.

Acceptable Behaviours

Prace Representatives, contractors and any other members of the Prace community involved in child-connected or child-related work, are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding Prace's commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - Treating children connected with our programs and services with respect while:
 - at any Prace managed or hired site
 - participating in any Prace authorised online environments, and
 - outside our program environment as part of normal social and community activities.
 - Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or young person has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or young person.
 - Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and young people
 - Promoting the participation and empowerment of children and young people: with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, with a disability, those who are unable to live at home, and those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+).
 - Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a child or young person. One-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
 - Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal of Prace College or the Prace CEO.
 - Understanding and complying with all professional development, reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our Child Safety Reporting Procedure and Critical Incidents Policy and Procedure, and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#).
 - If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/children or young person(s) are safe and protected from harm.
 - Abiding by professional boundaries, acknowledging that interactions with students by their very nature are open to scrutiny.
 - Exercising prudent judgment and intervention consistent with Prace's student management policies and procedures when students engage in bullying behaviour towards others or act in a humiliating, degrading, intimidating or vilifying way.
 - Encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.
 - Immediately notifying Prace if they become the subject of any child safety investigation or are charged with any offence related to child safety.
-

-
- Complying with their professional and employment obligations, including any other relevant professional or occupational codes of conduct such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct.
-

Unacceptable behaviours

Prace Representatives, contractors, and other members of the Prace community involved in child-connected or child-related work, must **not**:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm.
 - Develop a relationship with any child or young person that could be seen as favouritism or amounting to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts).
 - Display behaviours or engage with children or young people in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context.
 - Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person.
 - Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance.
 - Treat a child or young person unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
 - Communicate directly with a child or young person 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 schoolwork or extra-curricular activities, or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
 - Photograph or film a child or young person in a school environment, Prace-managed site, or in connection with a Prace program, activity or service except in accordance with the Prace Photographing, Filming and Recording Students Policy, or where required for duty of care purposes.
 - Consume alcohol against the Prace Staff, Volunteers and Contractors Code of Conduct or take illicit drugs in Prace workplace environments or at Prace events where children or young people are present.
 - Have contact with any child or young person connected with Prace outside of their Prace work hours except when needed to deliver the curriculum or provide professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.
 - Subject any child or student to any form of corporal punishment
 - Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or young people or do things of a personal nature that a student 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.
 - Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
 - Express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children that are discriminatory or fail to promote human rights and equal opportunity.
-

Breach Representatives and contractors that breach this Code may be subject to disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Prace Child Safety Reporting Procedure and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Prace Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Prace CEO:

Patrick McVeigh
paddy@prace.vic.edu.au
9462 6077

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the CEO, contact the Prace Education & Business Operations Manager, Libby Barker: libby@prace.vic.edu.au or 03 9462 6077

Review This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every two years, and after any significant child safety incident or complaint, or in response to significant emerging risks or further government mandates/requirements. The Prace Board is responsible for reviewing and approving this Code of Conduct.

Relevant Legislation/ Standards

- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety (Information Sharing) Regulations 2018 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) – Section 182: Mandatory Reporting Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)
- Family Violence Protection (Information Sharing and Risk Management) Regulations 2018 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Ministerial Order 1359
- Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

Related Policies and Procedures

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use of Digital Technologies Policy and Procedure
- Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure
- Child Safety Reporting Procedure

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
Critical Incidents Policy and Procedure
Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedure
Gender Identity Policy and Procedure
Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Policy and Procedure
Photographing, Filming and Recording Students Policy
Prace College Information Sharing Schemes Procedure
Prace College Student Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure
Prace College Student Welfare and Duty of Care Policy and Procedure
Risk Management Policy and Procedure
Social Media Policy
Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Staff Professional Learning and Development Policy and Procedure
Staff Supervision Policy and Procedure
Volunteer Policy and Procedure
Whistleblower Policy and Procedure

Related Documents

Prace Staff, Volunteers and Contractors Code of Conduct

Consultation

Prace College Staff
Play Learn Connect teaching staff
Prace College Subcommittee
Senior Management Team
Compliance Manager
