

## Child Safe Code of Conduct

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Responsible person	Michelle Sheehan	Scheduled review date	3 September 2027

## Commitment to Child Safety

ACS believes that all children and young people have the right to feel and be safe and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. We aim to create a child safe environment where young people can thrive, learn and reach their potential. This statement demonstrates the commitment that every person involved in the ACS has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she/they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. We have a zero-tolerance policy approach to child abuse, and harm.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Child Safe Code of Conduct (Code) is to establish a clear standard of behaviour which is expected of all employees, volunteers, coaches, umpires, referees, officials, board members, students on placement, and contractors (collectively, personnel) and partner organisations.

This Code has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at all ACS events and activities against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It 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, ACS Member School policies, procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to ACS personnel.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

- provide guidelines about professional behaviours, expectations, and obligations
- outline appropriate and inappropriate behaviours
- protect children and young people from abuse by having organisational policies and practices in place to prevent, remove or reduce potential risks of child abuse
- outline the consequences of inappropriate conduct.

ACS expects all personnel to create and maintain professional boundaries with the children and young people we engage with. All personnel must also uphold child safety reporting processes as stipulated by ACS.

## Scope

All personnel are required to sign the Code and, in doing so, agree to be bound by the standards set out within.

It is expected that our personnel read and understand our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safe Reporting Procedure in conjunction with the Code. Definitions of child abuse can be found in Appendix 1.

Personnel will abide by the Code in all dealings with children and young people. This includes interacting directly with children and young people and/or being made aware of issues concerning children and young people. The scope extends to personnel beyond ACS's standard work hours and includes physical, and online environments.

## Standards of Behaviour

Personnel have a Duty of Care and legal obligation to keep children and young people safe from harm and abuse. The principal responsibility of ACS personnel is to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. ACS personnel must ensure that the workplace is safe and free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence.

ACS personnel are expected to actively contribute to a school sporting association culture that respects the dignity of its members. They are required to always act lawfully and to undertake their duties in a professional, responsible and ethical manner that could reasonably be expected of persons who hold similar positions.

All personnel must follow our standards of behaviour as set out below.

I Will	I Will Not
Uphold ACS' child safety policies and procedures at all times.	<p>Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour towards children and young people – this includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect or sexual misconduct.</p> <p>Sexual misconduct includes sexual activity (touching, fondling, oral, anal, or vaginal penetration, kissing, cuddling, voyeurism, exhibitionism), exploitation, inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, making sexually suggestive comments, and grooming.</p>
Hold a current Working with Children Check and advise immediately of any circumstances which would impact on these checks.	Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason).
Actively support and contribute to our child safeguarding culture.	Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm.
Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they have stated that they or another child have been abused/harmed and or are worried about their	Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.



safety or the safety of another child.	
Treat everyone with dignity and respect.	<p>Use hurtful or offensive behaviour or language with children and young people. This includes language, which is abusive, harassing, sexual, shameful, demeaning, culturally inappropriate, discriminating, racist or sexist, or intended to threaten or be harmful.</p> <p>Some examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child</li> <li>yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where the child's safety may be in danger</li> <li>dealing with a child while the adult is angry with the child</li> <li>using hurtful sarcasm.</li> </ul>
Act as a positive role model for children and young people.	Shame, criticise and/or denigrate a child.
Uphold the rights and best interests of children and young people in decision making.	Exploit, abuse, corrupt or manipulate a child.
Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal children.	Fail to report information to police if I know a child has been abused.
Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background including directly addressing racism.	Touch children in a way that is unnecessary or unsuitable and falls outside what is reasonable to engage in ACS activities.
Promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of children with a disability, neurodivergent children and children who identify as LGBTIQ+.	Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships.
Help create an open, safe and inclusive environment for all children and young people.	Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes, other drugs, pornography, child abuse materials.
	Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child.
Use positive language and tone of voice that boosts confidence, encourages and affirms and is not harmful.	Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children e.g. engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves such as changing clothes.
Respect the privacy of children, young people and parents and carers by only disclosing personal information when necessary.	Develop any 'special' relationships with children that may seem like favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour including through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
Create an environment that mitigates child safety risks.	Ignore behaviours by adults towards children and young people if they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.
Ensure children are safe and protected from harm where child abuse/risk of harm is suspected.	Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media, by phone or any other means.
Take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from child safety risks, including identifying and reporting any concerns, disclosures, complaints or allegations in accordance with our child safety policies and processes.	Ask a child or young person to keep online communication a secret from their parents or carers or ACS personnel.
Report any allegations of child abuse to the ACS Executive Officer and Child Safety Officer and ensure that any allegation is reported to the required authorities, Police and/or DFFH Child Protection Services.	Take photographs, recordings, screenshots or share images of children and/or young people involved in activities that are not authorised by ACS or do not have consent from the child's parents/guardians.



Report any breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct to your manager or Child Safe Officer.	Use your personal phone, or other personal device to take images or recordings of children or young people.
Understand and comply with all reporting and or disclosure obligations, including mandatory reporting and reportable conduct.	Be alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.
Encourage children and young people to have a say and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.	Take a child home or encourage meetings outside program activities.
Speak with my Director/Head or Child Safe Officer if I have any Child safeguarding questions.	Transport a child, other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen.
Complete all required child safety induction and training.	Be naked in the presence of a child.
Always aim to avoid working alone with a child or young person and be within the line of sight and sound of other adults.	Sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag or room with a child.
Uphold supervision ratios.	Engage in discussion of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children or young people. This includes discussing topics of an adult or sexualised nature, including telling adult jokes.
Fully cooperate with any misconduct or reportable conduct investigation, if required.	Discriminate against any child including on the basis of age, gender identity, sexuality, race, religion, culture, indigenous status, language, disability or neurodiversity.
<b>Call 000 if there is an immediate concern about the safety of a child.</b>	Have any contact (Including online or via telephone) with a child or their family outside of our organisation without the knowledge or consent of ACS' Executive Officer or Child Safety Officer.
	Become 'friends' or 'follow' a child or young person on social media platforms.  Exception: If preexisting relationships exist before engagement with ACS, personnel must notify their Director/Head and seek approval.
	Show children or young people pictures, animations, images or websites of an inappropriate or adult nature e.g. magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.
	Confide in or share overly personal information with a child or young person (for example, sharing financial or relationship problems).

### How do I meet the expectations of the Code?

If you are unsure about something you can:

- Seek advice from a Director/Head of Sport or Child Safe Officer
- Consider if you can easily defend your choices
- Ask yourself if the decision/action is safe and in the best interests of the child
- Ask yourself if the decision/action upholds ACS' Commitment to Child Safety

## Reporting Abuse, harm and breaches

If personnel become aware of misconduct, a crime or a breach of this Code committed by another

member of personnel, they are required to report it to a Manager, Director, Head, Child Safe Officer or Executive Officer. Personnel must also report abuse, harm and risk of harm to children or young people to a Manager, Director, Head, Child Safe Officer.

Management will report any allegations or child related misconduct as per legislative requirements. All personnel will remove or reduce any risks of abuse and harm to children and young people. Victoria has criminal offences for failing to report organisational child abuse or failing to protect children and young people and personnel who do not meet these obligations may face a term of imprisonment.

## Confidentiality

### Disclosing information to employees, directors, volunteers and contractors

When children and young people are having a written or verbal interaction with personnel of the ACS, that interaction is confidential to the organisation. Where possible the privacy of the child should be respected at all times. When considering breaching their privacy, who and how many people are told should be based on what is believed to be in the best interests of the child.

### Disclosing information to people external to the organisation

Personnel should not discuss confidential matters about children with people outside the organisation in a way that identifies that child except when they have the express permission of the child or it complies with the Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing policy, or Child Safe Reporting Procedure. In circumstances where personnel believe there is not enough knowledge within the organisation to provide the best possible assistance to a child, they are able to seek expertise external to the ACS. When communicating with people outside the ACS the child's identity should be protected.

## Breaching the Code of Conduct

Personnel are required to report any breaches of this Code to a Manager, Director, Head, Child Safe Officer or Executive Officer.

As per our legislative obligations and Child Safe Reporting Procedure, ACS takes all concerns seriously and will conduct an internal investigation and will report serious instances of child abuse to the police and/or Child Protection and/or Reportable Conduct Schemes.

The consequences of breaching this Code may result in disciplinary action, as per our Disciplinary Procedure. This may include but is not limited to:

- Performance management
- Additional training
- Increased supervision
- Restriction of duties
- A formal warning



- Being given an alternative role
- Suspension (with or without pay)
- Termination of employment
- Reporting to authorities including the Police and/or Reportable Conduct Schemes

If I suspect that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in the organisation:

**I WILL:**

- act to prioritise the best interests of the child
- promptly take actions to ensure the child/children are safe
- report the incident or concerns to a Child Safe Officer or the Executive Officer
- maintain the privacy of those involved, following ACS record keeping, privacy and information sharing guidelines.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Code of Conduct to ACS' Executive Officer and Child Safety Officer.

**If you believe a child is at an immediate risk of abuse, call 000.**

## Personnel Acknowledgement

Please list any ACS Event where you will have interactions with students from the ACS's 8 member colleges:

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All personnel must comply with the ACS Child Safe Code of Conduct. I acknowledge that I have read the following documents and agree to abide by them:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Reporting Procedure

I understand that I am responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of all children and young people involved with ACS.

I understand that breaches of the Code may lead to disciplinary action, termination of my engagement with ACS and/or reporting to authorities.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## Related Documents

The Code should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Reporting Procedure
- Personnel Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

### **Acknowledgement**

This Code was developed with reference to the:

- Codes of Conduct: a guide to developing child safe Codes of Conduct [Codes of Conduct - a guide to developing child safe Codes of Conduct](#)
- Steps to develop or update your Code of Conduct [CCYP | Resources and support for the Child Safe Standards](#)

## Appendix 1: Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</b>	Includes all First Nations communities. ACS believes it is important to be respectful of how individual children, their families, carers and community refer to themselves, and use appropriate language when referring to individuals or communities.
<b>ACS Committee of Principals</b>	Means the Committee having management of the business of the Association.
<b>ACS Environments</b>	Means any physical or virtual environments made available or authorised by the ACS' governing authority for use by a child, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Online ACS Environments (including email, portals and intranet systems); and</li> <li>(b) Other locations provided by ACS for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for sports competitions).</li> </ul>
<b>Child</b>	Means a person under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child. Collective term for "child" is "children".
<b>Child Abuse</b>	An act or omission that endangers a Child's physical or emotional health, well-being or development and can occur as a single incident or multiple incidents over time. Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i> as including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sexual offence; or</li> <li>• An offence under section 49M(1) of the <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> (Grooming);</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) The infliction, on a child, of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical violence; or</li> <li>• Serious emotional or psychological harm;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(c) Serious neglect of a child.</li> </ul>
<b>Child Protection</b>	The body legislated to receive and investigate instances of Child Abuse. In Victoria this is the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).
<b>Child Safe</b>	Refers to an organisational environment that has an open and aware culture, understands child harm, is supported by robust child safe policies, promotes the empowerment and participation of children, identifies and manages child safety risks, and expects all stakeholders to report any allegations, disclosures or concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children. A child safe environment

	ensures that children and young people are culturally safe.
<b>Child Safe Code of Conduct</b>	<p>The document that sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate and inappropriate behaviours between adults and children and young people in our physical and online environments.</p> <p>ACS take steps so that children and young people also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from our personnel and how to raise concerns if they have them.</p>
<b>CSO</b>	<p>Child Safety Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Executive Officer of the ACS</li> <li>• Current ACS President</li> </ul>
<b>Child Safe Standards</b>	<p>Means the standards made under section 17(1) of the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic), to ensure that in the operation of relevant entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The safety of children is promoted;</li> <li>(b) Child abuse is prevented; and</li> <li>(c) Allegations of child abuse are properly responded to.</li> </ul>
<b>Contractor</b>	A person or organisation that undertakes a contract to provide materials, tasks or labour to do a service or job.
<b>Cultural Safety</b>	Promotes the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. A culturally safe environment is socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children. It is underpinned by shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, and living and working together with dignity and truly listening. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Disclosure</b>	<p>Refers to a child telling someone (through words, drawings or actions) that they feel unsafe or have been harmed.</p> <p>Several types of disclosure have been identified, including purposeful telling (i.e., direct verbal means), accidental telling (i.e., third-party detection), elicited/ prompted telling (i.e., response to inquiry by a helping person), behavioural telling (i.e., behavioural, nonverbal communication; indirect verbal hints), telling purposely withheld (i.e., choice not to tell, denials) and triggered telling (i.e., in response to delayed memories).<sup>2</sup></p>
<b>Duty of Care</b>	Organisations that facilitate work with children and young people have an obligation to ensure processes are in place to avoid acts or omissions that place children in circumstances that may lead to harm. If a child is abused/caused harm by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable

<sup>1</sup> Revised from An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards (November 2015) – State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services and A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (Version 2.0 December 2015) - Commission for Children and Young People.

<sup>2</sup> [1.-NC-Language-Guide FINAL.pdf](#)

	precautions' to prevent the abuse in question.
<b>Directors/Heads of Sport</b>	For the purposes of this document, Directors/Heads of Sport will refer to any employee whose role means they hold leadership responsibility for key organisational functions including recruitment, selection, supervision, program planning, risk management and program delivery.
<b>Mandatory Reporter</b>	Any adult who is legally required to ensure a report has been made when a concern, allegation and /or disclosure of child harm arises. A mandatory reporter may be a person who holds a particular occupation <b>or</b> falls under specific legislation.  ACS requires <b>all</b> personnel to report <b>all</b> child safety concerns, allegations and disclosures.
<b>Reasonable Belief</b>	A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A 'reasonable belief' might be formed when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a child states that they have been harmed</li> <li>• a child states that they know someone who has been harmed (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)</li> <li>• someone who knows a child states that the child has been harmed</li> <li>• professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a person to form a belief that the child has been harmed</li> <li>• signs of harm lead to a belief that the child has been harmed.</li> </ul>
<b>Reportable Conduct Scheme</b>	The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires reports made to the scheme if ACS becomes aware of an allegation of child abuse, child harm, risk of harm, serious neglect, or child related misconduct being made against a member of personnel.  After police clearance, Reportable Conduct cases will be investigated by ACS. ACS may also seek advice from the Police, Scheme and Child Protection regarding appointing an external investigator.  Reportable Conduct Schemes and their prescribed processes do not replace the need to report concerns, allegations, and disclosures to the Police when there are indicators that a crime may have been committed, and/or to child protection authorities where there are protective concerns for children and young people.
<b>Personnel</b>	All personnel, committee members, volunteers, officials, coaches, umpires and referees, students on placement and contractors.
<b>Young Person</b>	For this policy a young person is aged between 12 and 18.
<b>Zero tolerance</b>	ACS does not accept or condone under any circumstances any form of Child Abuse or harm.