

## Wyndham Community and Education Centre Inc Code

Policy name	<b>Child Safety &amp; Wellbeing Code of Conduct</b>
Responsible person	Board of Governance, CEO, School Principal
Staff involved	All staff and volunteers
Review dates	Approved: 13 Sept 2024 Review Date: 2026

### Context

The Victorian government has mandated that organisations working with children adhere to a set of standards to promote child safety, prevent child abuse and properly respond to allegations of child abuse. As part of embedding a culture of child safety across the organisation, Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) has developed a suite of resources and documents to effectively implement such a culture.

A child safe organisation has policies and practices that promote the safety and wellbeing of children at all levels of the organisation and encourage working together to prevent, respond to and report allegations of child abuse and harm.

Wyndham CEC will review its practices and policies regularly to ensure best practice. One practice recommended is that ongoing employees and volunteers sign a statement to agree to abide by a Child Safety Code of Conduct that outlines principles across the organisation and reinforces the importance of a whole of centre approach.

Management, Staff and volunteers at Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC), are required to abide by this ***Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct***.

The ***Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct*** has been developed to ensure a working environment where all staff and volunteers feel valued and respected and all students and clients feel welcome and safe. All children have the right to feel welcome and be safe.

All staff and volunteers will be asked to re-familiarise themselves with this ***Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct*** and sign it annually. By signing it staff and volunteers acknowledge they have read it, understand it, and agree to abide by it.

Child safe behaviour and community-wide understanding of the risks of child abuse and its impacts is critical to keeping children safe.

### Code

The ***Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct*** applies to all staff working at Wyndham CEC and includes all staff, including school staff - full time, part time, sessional, casual staff, contractors and volunteers.

As directed by the CEO, management will:

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- be responsible for embedding an organisational culture and commitment to child safety and wellbeing across Wyndham CEC
- the School Principal will implement this at the Julia Gillard Community College, the school operated by Wyndham CEC
- appoint a Child Safety Officer to provide information and support to staff, volunteers, young people, and their carers regarding child protection matters
- promote a confidential reporting culture
- build responsibility to a child safe organisation into job descriptions and recruitment processes
- review and improve policies and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing
- implement a Student Reference Group to provide feedback to staff and empower young people
- provide professional development to staff
- publicly communicate our stance as an organisation on child safety and wellbeing
- commit to respecting and valuing aboriginal and CALD children and young people
- adopt a zero tolerance to racism position
- help everyone in the organisation acknowledge the strengths and cultures of First Nations people
- ensure complaint handling mechanisms are current and easily accessible to children and young people
- set out expectations in job descriptions
- include child safety in the induction process

### **Child Safe Principles and Expectations**

Wyndham CEC has a no-tolerance approach to child abuse and to racism. All staff, volunteers and Board members of Wyndham CEC (including school staff, council members) are required to observe child safe principles and maintain appropriate and positive behaviour towards and in the company of children.

This *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct* requires all personnel to:

- operate within Wyndham CEC's policies and procedures
- take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and young people and take appropriate action as required (see policies and procedures)
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and young people (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child/young person's self-identification)
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex children and young people
- be professional in all actions and act as a positive role model in the presence of children and young people

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- 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
- respect the privacy of young people, their families, teachers and only disclose information to people who have a need to know
- report any allegations of child abuse to Wyndham CEC’s CEO, a senior manager or the Child Safety Officer
- report such allegations to the police or child protection (follow Mandatory Reporting and Failure to Disclose Policy & Procedure; Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (including Statement of Commitment)
- contact police if a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse by phoning **000**
- report and act on any observed breaches regarding this Code
- treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic and social origin, culture, property, disability or other status
- involve families and communities in efforts to keep children and young people safe
- support and empower children and young people to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- undertake training as required in child safety and see training as an ongoing obligation
- prioritise the needs and concerns of children and young people and share ways to keep children and young people safe

Under this *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct* **no person** will:

- Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or young person
- Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them
- Initiate unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do themselves (for example, excludes appropriate first aid treatment or appropriate contact during organised sporting activities)
- Be alone with a child/young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time
- Develop a ‘special’ relationship with a child or young person for their own needs
- Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation’s programs and activities
- Photograph or video a child/young person without the consent of the person or their parents/guardians
- Work with a children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children or young people
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse (can be criminal offence)
- Contravene Wyndham CEC’s policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct

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## **Related Documents**

**Legislation:** Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), Disability Act 2006 (Vic), Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic), Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic) *Ministerial Order 1359* Child Safe Standards -Managing the risk of child abuse in schools, Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017 (Cth), Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic), Health Records Act 2001 (Vic), Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018, Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018, Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic),

**Policies & Procedures:** Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy including Statement of Commitment; Child Safety Reporting Procedure; Mandatory Reporting & Failure to Disclose Policy & Procedure; Staff Recruitment Onboarding and Offboarding Policy & Procedure; Volunteer Recruitment Policy and Procedure, National Police Check, Working with Children Check, VIT Registration Policy & Procedure, Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure; Board of Wyndham CEC Conflict of Interest Policy & Procedure; Access and Equity Policy & Procedure; Social Media Policy & Procedure; Computers, Email and Internet Policy & Procedure; Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy & Procedure; Privacy (Staff and Volunteers) Policy & Procedure; Discrimination, Victimisation and Anti-bullying Policy and Procedure, OHS Policy & Procedure, Responding to Disclosures of Family Violence Policy & Procedure, Staff & Volunteers Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting and Failure to Disclose Policy & Procedure; Disciplinary Action and Termination of Employment Policy & Procedure, Recruitment of Board Members Policy & Procedure, Risk Identification & Management Policy & Procedure, Critical Incident & Emergency Management Policy & Procedure, Disciplinary Action and Termination of Employment Policy & Procedure.

**Other:** Child Safe Standards, Under 18s Register, Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST, Employee Information Booklet, Volunteer Information Booklet, Course Handbook (if applicable), Rules of Association, Strategic Plan, Code of Ethics, Board & Staff Codes of Conduct; Industrial Awards, Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics, Discipline Guide - Jobs Australia 2012(3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), AMEP Service Provider Code of Conduct; SEE Service Provider Code of Conduct; DSS Code of Conduct, Skills First Quality Charter, VIT Code of Conduct, e-safety Commissioner at <https://www.esafety.gov.au>, Child Wise at <https://www.childwise.org.au>, Decision guide organisations MARAM framework, DET Community VCAL (CVCAL) Contract, DET VETDSS Contract, Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF) 2018,

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## Breaching the Code

If you breach this *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct* you will face disciplinary action, including and the possibility of termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation.

Any criminal activity will be dealt with as required by the relevant legislation including reporting to police.

By signing this *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct* you acknowledge that you have read it, understand it, and agree to support it.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_