



10 Laceys Rd, PO Box 140, Cottles Bridge VIC 3099 Phone: 9718 1481
info@learningcooperative.vic.edu.au www.learningcooperative.vic.edu.au

Child Safe Code of Conduct

All staff, parents, board directors, visiting allied health professionals, volunteers and contractors engaged in child-related and child-connected work at the Learning Co-operative are responsible for supporting the safety and wellbeing of children. As a member of the Learning Co-operative and or staff member, you are required to acknowledge your commitment to the Learning Co-operative Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and adhere to this Code of Conduct. Please confirm your understanding by signing the adherence agreement at the end of this document.

The Human Resource Manager and or administrative support staff are responsible for ensuring that records are fully maintained on an annual basis.

Purpose

The Learning Co-operative is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. Our school community recognises the importance of, and has responsibility for ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment for all children. We all share in the responsibility to model healthy and respectful relationships. Collectively, we can give the children certainty about their safety and wellbeing, and enable them to thrive in their learning and development.

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 and better understand risky behaviors and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, comply with Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Ministerial Order 870 Child Safe Standards, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes of ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Learning Co-operative Board, general members, Principal and staff are required to provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

Accountability

Any breach of this Code of Conduct should be reported to the Principal or Child Safety Officer regardless of the severity of the concern. Reportable Conduct allegations must be referred to the Board Chair.



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The school must enact all policies and procedures related to Child Safety and Wellbeing.

- ❖ Report any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Principal and or the nominated Child Safety Officer
- ❖ Understand and comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting obligations under the amendments to the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*, including the *grooming offence* as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- ❖ Report any conduct, which if proven, would be criminal, to the School Principal and or Child Safety Officer.
- ❖ Report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for material or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher/principal, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher/principal.

Staffs, parents, board of directors, visiting allied health professionals, volunteers and contractors are responsible for:

- ❖ adhering to the Learning Co-operative's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and upholding the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times
- ❖ treating students and families in the school community with respect, both in and outside of 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.
- ❖ ensuring a child/ren is/are made safe if an allegation of abuse is made and respond in a timely manner
- ❖ taking all reasonable steps to protect children from child abuse and or harm.
- ❖ ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child, in line with our **duty of care** obligations
- ❖ Encouraging children to have a say and participate in all relevant school activities, on and off site, where possible, including things that they have identified in their own Child Safe Code of Conduct.



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- ❖ promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- ❖ Taking a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination based on a child's background, including students from linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- ❖ Promoting the safety, participation of children and their families that identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Queer and or questioning and Intersex (LGBTQI+)
- ❖ Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability (for example with personal care activities).

Concerning behaviors include:

- ❖ Wearing inappropriate clothing around young children, including sexually explicit images or clothes that expose personal body parts.
- ❖ Disciplining or correcting a child in an unreasonable manner.
- ❖ Making excessive and/or degrading demands of a child or young person.
- ❖ Taking photographs or video of a child who is in care of our school, outside of official duties.
- ❖ providing gifts or favors to a child/young person
- ❖ Repeatedly visiting a child or family in their home for no professional reasons. This excludes social situations where a colleague/family has been invited to a social function/event, as is often the case in a members-based Co-operative and community.

Misconduct allegations include:

- ❖ developing a relationship with any student that could be seen as favoritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- ❖ exhibiting behaviors or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ❖ Exhibiting behaviors with children that may be construed as unnecessary physical, like inappropriate sitting on laps. If an adult needs to guide the child with sports



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activities, for example, holding an archery bow and or arrow, physical contact should be provided for that sole purpose only

- ❖ creating situations to be alone with a child
- ❖ disrespecting the privacy of children or young people when using the bathroom or changing for example at a school camp or excursion.
- ❖ Initiating unnecessary physical contact. (e.g., that may be of a personal nature, that child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes)
- ❖ showering or dressing with the door open on excursions or camps
- ❖ placing a child at risk of abuse, by locking them behind doors
- ❖ ignoring behaviors by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate

Misconduct allegations include:

- ❖ discussing content of an intimate nature, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- ❖ sharing details of one's own sexual experiences with a child or young person
- ❖ making written or verbal sexual advances
- ❖ using inappropriate sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- ❖ engaging in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children during personal social activities
- ❖ treating a child unfavorably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- ❖ having unauthorized contact with a child or their family outside the school's activities for example, unauthorized after hours tutoring, private instrumental, other lessons or sports coaching unless approved by the school Principal and or Parent Meeting
- ❖ sharing phone numbers with a child or young person except as allowed by the school's policies and procedures



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- ❖ asking children to keep a relationship secret
- ❖ consuming alcohol, contrary to school policy, in the school environment or at other school events where students are present and
- ❖ Taking illicit drugs under any circumstances.

Examples of conduct, which if proven would be criminal may include, but not limited to:

- ❖ intentionally or recklessly applying physical force against a young child or young person
- ❖ ignoring or disregarding any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse for a mandatory reporter or organization
- ❖ obscene exposure
- ❖ having, attempting to have or facilitating any kind of sexual contact with a youngchild or young person
- ❖ possessing, creating or exposing children to pornography
- ❖ giving goods, money, attention or affection in exchange for images
- ❖ sexting
- ❖ grooming offences and defined in Victoria under the amendments to the Crimes Act¹
1958 (Vic)
- ❖ Trafficking, possession, supply, or use of a prohibitive drug.
- ❖ Manufacture or cultivation of a prohibited drug.

School Community Orders

From June 2022, in accordance of the amended [*Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)*](#) the principal, in communication with the School Board, will issue **School Community Safety Orders** as required to provide greater protection for staff, students and members of the school community from harmful, threatening or abusive behaviour from violent or aggressive parents, prohibiting people from:

- entering or remaining on school premises
- engaging in inappropriate conduct



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- engaging in threatening or abusive communication with staff members, including through social media and other channels.

This not only applies to school premises, but also extends to any place where school activity is taking place (e.g. on school camp, at swimming carnival) and any area within 25 metres of that place.

Evaluation

This Code of Conduct was ratified by the School Board on: **11/10/2021**

This document will be reviewed every two years as part of the ongoing overall policy and managing risk processes.

Learning Co-operative Chair signature:

(MYRA THEISZ)

Date signed: 23 March 2022

Review date: October 2023

By observing the Child Safe Code of Conduct you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Learning Co-operative School Principal and or the nominated Child Safe Officer.

I adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date: