Staff Code of Practice
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PREAMBLE

All policy, protocols and procedures flow from the St Andrews Christian College Mission Statement:

“To educate our students so that they are well skilled, understand life on the basis of biblical truth, and are motivated to walk with God and serve Him in their lives, so that they will be a positive Christian influence in the world.”

POLICY DOCUMENT INFORMATION

TITLE: Staff Code of Practice
AUTHOR: Catriona Wansbrough
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Baptist Union of Victoria Safe Church
PURPOSE: To provide policy and direction for all the College Community.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:
Child Safety Policy including Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting
Employment Policy
Working With Children Check Policy

KEY DATES

ISSUE DATE: June 2016
REVIEW DATE: 2020
1. RATIONALE

As staff we recognise that children are made in God’s image (Genesis 1:27), and the Bible warns us of the dire consequences of causing a to child stumble (Matthew 18:6).

St Andrews Christian College is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for the whole College community, especially for our students.

We affirm that our primary responsibility is to assist students to grow in all of the facets of life (Ephesians 4: 12-13). In order to maximise children’s nurture and growth we therefore need to provide a loving, supporting and safe environment. All actions of staff towards children must always be motivated by a desire for the welfare of the child. “Love always protects” - 1 Corinthians 13:7.

2. EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF

St Andrews Christian College expects that Christ will be the centre of staff members’ lives, their teaching and work at the College. Staff respond to God’s call on their lives and acknowledge, that through their specific role in the College, they actively contribute to the achievement of St Andrews mission. As such, staff need to uphold and maintain a Christian life style and display the following:

• Be committed Christians, acknowledging Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
• Regularly attend a Christian church / fellowship.
• Be positive role models for students, parents, each other and the wider community by promoting and adhering to a Christian life style, demonstrating this in all aspects of life including relationships and marriage (Use Matthew 7:12 and Galatians 5:16-26 as a model of behaviour).
• Treat every person in the school community with respect.
• Be nurturing and caring of children, taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse. St Andrews Christian College is committed to a culture of child safety and has zero tolerance of child abuse.
• Promote child safety within the school environment and adhering to the College’s Child Safety Policy including Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting.
• Uphold the College’s statement of commitment to child safety at all times.
• Understand and uphold culturally safe behaviour and relationships with students including Aboriginal children and children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
• Understand and uphold safe behaviour and relationships with children with a disability and those with high support needs.
• Always use appropriate language and refrain from telling jokes and stories that could be considered rude. Swearing is not acceptable language.
• Dress professionally on school days when students and / or parents are in attendance.
• Be dedicated and professional - implying ethics, commitment, expertise, accountability, striving for excellence in all aspects of teaching / duties, self-evaluation.
• Be good team members - put others before themselves - see the needs of the whole school - willing to contribute to all aspects of College life - see themselves as part of a community - adopt the servant role model of work.
• Be teachable.
• Be enthusiastic about Christian Education.
• Meet all the commitments required by the College (e.g. devotions, staff meetings, staff retreats, parent meetings, appraisals, professional development, programming, testing / reporting, curriculum development, other duties, etc.).
• Staff are required to be conversant and comply with relevant Child Protection Legislation as well as all current College policies and guidelines. They are required to read policies annually, and sign off to confirm they have read and will uphold them.
• Teachers are to uphold and comply with the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.
• Graciously accept the fact that the needs of the school (in allotment, timetabling, policies etc.) may need to take precedence over their own individual needs.
• Acknowledge the College’s right to intellectual property produced by staff during their employment.
• Deal openly, honestly and appropriately with difficulties (such as illness, frustration, stress, inadequacy).
• Accept the authority of and be loyal to the College Executive.
• Be accountable through their respective Co-ordinator, Head of Section and to the Principal. The Principal is accountable to the College Board.

3. GENERAL GUIDELINES

St Andrews Christian College is committed to providing a Christ-centred education in a learning community of love and respect. The care and protection of all, but particularly our students, is our highest priority.

The following guidelines are to be adopted for the care and protection of students and staff.

3.1 Recognising Needs

Understanding and recognising the needs of students is vital, as it overarches the conduct required for supervision, relationship, discipline and communication with students. It also plays a significant role in the standards required to keep children safe.

Cultural safety1 is 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. It is an environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

Children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused compared with children without a disability. A number of factors may contribute to the risk of abuse including physical impairments or difficulties with speech and communication, memory, literacy, vision and hearing impairments, and reliance on caregivers. People with a disability often receive less sexual education than their peers. These factors may also contribute to poor recognition of abuse of children with a disability.2

The College recognises that these attributes / identifying factors do not reduce the child’s right to be safe or the College’s responsibility to protect children from harm.

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3.2 Supervision of Students

- Staff must take all reasonable care to ensure that no student is exposed to any unnecessary risk or injury. Staff are to remember that they are in loco parentis “in the place of a parent” and have a legal responsibility and to take on some of the functions and responsibilities of a parent - the standard of care required is that of a skilled professional.

- Staff are to listen and respond to views and concerns of children, particularly if they are discussing anything regarding child safety or child abuse.

- Staff are responsible to ensure that students are appropriately supervised at all times. Duty of care obligations means that staff need to be punctual to class and allocated supervision.

- Playground supervision is an integral part of the responsibility of staff. It must take precedence over other activities. It is unacceptable to be late. Staff should actively supervise their designated area, being vigilant and constantly moving around.

- Ill or injured students should be attended to by the supervising staff member. Should additional assistance be required contact should be made with Reception.

- Staff should remain with students at after-school activities until all students have been collected. In the event that a student is not collected, staff should remain with the student or ensure that arrangements are in place for the supervision of the student, until collected or returned to the College.

- Staff should be alert to bullying or any other form of discriminatory behaviour, actively dealing with it in accordance with the Anti Bullying Policy. If appropriate, incidences should be reported to the appropriate staff member. Staff are not to discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.

- Staff are to be familiar with and adhere strictly to the College’s current evacuation and lockdown procedures.

- Staff should ensure that they are familiar with and adhere to the College’s protocols in regard to the storage and administration of medical products for students.

3.3 Relationships with Students

- Ensuring a safe emotional and spiritual environment is fundamentally about putting other people’s needs above our own agenda to ensure that a program runs successfully, respecting personhood, their backgrounds, their personality, their hopes, dreams and fears. It is about staying close to the good news message that Jesus came to bring life, not, as he warned about, “to put heavy burdens onto people”.

Impartiality

- All students are treated equally and fairly. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children / children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
  - Promoting the safety of children with a disability.

- Be careful not to consistently give privileges or extra attention to certain students.

- Staff must always treat students with respect and without favouritism. Care should be taken especially when in situations relating to discipline of students. Put-downs or sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments must not be used to demean students.
Being Alone with Students

- Staff should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student. Where staff are left with the responsibility of a single student they should ensure that this is in an open space in view of others. Where this is not possible or practical it should be discussed with the immediate supervisor / executive staff member.

- It is recognised that some support staff, chaplains, counsellors and music tutors will work with students alone in enclosed rooms / studios. External monitoring is made possible through a window, or by having the door open, or through a small window in the door.

- When staff wish to conduct a private conversation with a student they should consider the time and venue carefully to avoid placing themselves in a vulnerable situation. ‘One-on-One’ meetings with students should be held in a room with an open door or open area in view of other people. The staff member should not locate themselves between the student and the door.

- Staff may as part of their pastoral care role engage in private discussion with students. This is entirely acceptable in appropriate circumstances, with the knowledge of supervising staff and in open / visible spaces as stated above. Staff must be cautious of making personal comments about a student or asking questions that probe their own or a student’s sexuality or relationships.

- Staff should never drive a student alone in their car unless they have specific permission from their supervisor to do so and permission from the student’s parent / guardian. Appropriate forms / permission must be obtained before using private vehicles on excursions. In the event of an emergency, staff should exercise discretion but then report the matter to the appropriate supervisor.

Online and Media

- Staff are not to connect with students online, on Facebook or through other social media, without the consent of an executive staff member. Emails should be confined to educational matters only and using school address. Copy all emails to Section Heads. Images of students are not to be posted on / from personal social media accounts.

- Any photos taken of students are only to be taken for educational purposes.

- Staff are encouraged to use the school camera. If photos are taken on a personal device, they must be instantly uploaded to the ‘I drive’, and then deleted from the personal device.

- Staff who communicate with students electronically must abide by the terms of the school’s Computer / Internet protocols. Transmission of messages or files which are sexually explicit or offensive are totally inappropriate. If staff receive or come across an inappropriate email/pornography from staff or a student, they must not send it on to anyone. It is illegal to pass on any suggestive / offensive / sexual images and emails sent to you by other people. If such material is accessed / opened, immediately inform the Principal.

Social Interactions and Moral Conduct

- Staff members should be aware that young people becoming sexually aware may be confused by actions of a staff member. Staff members may not promote nor engage in any romantic relationship with students enrolled at the school. Appropriate professional relationships between teachers and students must be encouraged at all times. Teachers are always to be in a professional relationship with students in the College, whether at school or not.²

² The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct (Principle 1.5) - Victorian Institute of Teaching

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• Staff may **not** have conversations with students or in their presence, that are of a lewd, sexually suggestive or explicit, mature or adult nature. Comments or actions of this nature to any student must be avoided. Staff are **not** to facilitate access to lewd or sexually suggestive material.

• Sometimes during the course of their work, staff may be in receipt of a gift from a student. In such circumstances where the receipt of a gift could be considered outside of usual custom or accepted norms, staff are to inform their immediate supervisor.

• Staff are **not** to tutor / coach students from the school for monetary return. All ‘out-of-school’ hours coaching / tutoring must be given with the permission of the student’s parents / guardian and of a supervising Executive Staff member.

• Social interactions between staff and students outside the school can sometimes be problematic. Staff should refrain from visiting students at their home without the parents present, unless they have the expressed permission of an Executive Staff member and parents of the student. Where friendship relationships exist between families and staff, then staff must ensure that they are mindful of the possible risks involved. Staff must be alert at all times to the risk involved in social relations with students and be conscious that their position places extra obligations on them.

• Staff should **not** supply or condone the use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs for any student in their care.

**Physical Interaction**

• When physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching / learning experience, staff must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable. Staff should seek reassurance from the student by asking for a volunteer to demonstrate a particular activity. Generally, staff should only touch students on the shoulder, upper arms or head. Staff must never touch students on thighs, buttocks, genitalia or breasts except in cases where not doing so would threaten the safety of the student.

• When congratulating a student, a handshake or pat on the shoulder is acceptable as long as the student is comfortable with this action and it is done publically. Kissing of students is not acceptable.

• Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching. Always advise the student of what you intend doing and seek their consent. This includes first-aid treatment.

• Attention to the toileting / bathing needs of young children should be done with extreme caution. It may be appropriate to have the door open. In respect to students with a disability the management of toileting needs should be included in the student’s individual management plan. Students are expected to change their own clothes if needed. If this is not possible, our duty of care is to look after the child’s needs. In the event that assistance is required, inform parents of the situation and record incident.

• Sometimes in ensuring duty of care, staff may be required to restrain a student from harming himself / herself or others using reasonable force. Any such strategy must be within the bounds of what is acceptable and reasonable in order to safely restrain the student(s).

### 3.4 Discipline of Students

• All staff should be familiar with and adhere to the College’s Nurture and Discipline Policy and provide an environment both inside and outside of the classroom which is safe and free from harm by:
  - Keeping classes controlled at all times.
  - Carefully preparing lessons.
  - Supervising classes effectively at all times including arriving promptly to class / duties.
  - Making sure students are aware of teacher expectations.
  - Employing effective classroom management strategies.
  - Informing Staff OH&S Representative of occupational, health and safety issues.
- Implementing OH&S Policy and Procedures into school practice and carefully preparing and following risk assessments, making sure these are adhered to and monitored.
- Giving students adequate time to attend to personal needs if on detention at lunchtime.
- Keeping staff first aid certificates up to date.
- Maintaining appropriate first aid facilities.

- During class time, students should not be out of class alone, other than for personal hygiene or administrative matters. No student should be sent from a class and left unsupervised for more than a few minutes. In cases where a student must be excluded from a class or activity, they must be with another teacher/staff member.

- Staff are not to exasperate children (Ephesians 6:4) and are to treat all students with procedural fairness by:
  - Assisting students, bearing in mind varying personal backgrounds, personalities and individual differences.
  - Providing work which is not too difficult / easy.
  - Implementing the College discipline policy especially acting in fairness to a child by allowing them to state their case.
  - Making sure discipline is appropriate to the age and temperament of the child.
  - Speaking to students in an acceptable way – no swearing or shouting.
  - Reminding students of school rules as outlined in the College Code of Conduct
  - Maintaining appropriate confidentiality (especially in matters of child protection investigations).

3.5 Communication Issues

- Staff are required to respect and adhere to the established lines of communication within the College, consistent with the College’s Communications protocols.

- Staff should be familiar with the College’s Privacy Policy and be mindful of these when in discussion with parents. Staff can never guarantee confidentiality if the matter under discussion requires mandatory reporting. Staff are to understand and adhere to their requirements in relation to all laws concerning child safety and child protection and must report on any concerns of child abuse to authorities.

- Staff should consider students / families from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds in their communications.

- Staff should not give personal opinions nor speak inappropriately about another staff member to students, staff or parents. Staff are not to put their frustrations about the College onto any form of social media / Facebook.

- Staff should present a courteous professional manner to students, parents, visitors and other staff members. Confrontation and criticism in public is to be avoided at all times.

- All matters discussed in staff meetings and staff memos are to be treated confidentially and not discussed with students.

- No contact with the media, including giving any statements / interviews, is allowed without the expressed permission of the Principal.

3.6 Excursions and Camps

- In the case of activities involving overnight accommodation of boys and girls, both male and female staff must be represented in the group of supervisors.
• No staff member is to share a bed with a student. If there is an emergency and a student needs to share a bedroom with a staff member, the door must be open at all times. Parents must be alerted to the situation and give their permission.

• Excursion and / or camp information must be communicated to parents in writing, using the appropriate forms. Staff must follow the College’s procedures in relation to risk assessments of all excursions and camps and monitor these risks whilst on the excursion / camp.

• A mobile or satellite phone must be taken on all excursions and camps. The teacher-in-charge must always have a list of contact numbers with them as well as medical forms. Prior to the excursion / camp, staff must understand the individual needs and medical needs of all students / staff in their care, so that they are able to provide for needs appropriately.

• If billeting is required, a co-ordinator will be appointed to oversee the billeting arrangements. The co-ordinator will ensure that lines of communication and expectations are known to all students, their parents and host families.

• Students being billeted should have access to supervising staff. The overriding principle is ‘to act in the best interests of the child’. If the child expresses discomfort, or unease the child should be removed from the situation immediately.

• Parents of students to be billeted must complete consent forms and medical information forms. Host families must not be prohibited persons under Australian Child Safety laws and must possess a Working with Children Check. The coordinating staff member is to oversee this.

3.7 Duty to Disclose
• Staff are required under Child Protection Legislation to report immediately to the Principal any concern, suspicion or allegation of reportable conduct / child abuse; physical, emotional, psychological abuse or neglect, in accordance with the College’s Child Safety Policy including Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting and child safety laws. It is not an individual staff member’s responsibility to investigate.

• Staff must understand and comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958.

• If staff identify any child safety risks, they are to refer to the Child Safety Policy including Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting. Firstly, they are to ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe. They must speak to their Section Head about the issue. This could include risks that adults may pose to children, or that children may pose to each other. It also includes any conduct that is not consistent with any applicable legislation or code.

• Staff who are the subject of a Reportable Conviction or an Apprehended Violence Order are required to immediately inform the Principal.

• Staff aware of any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher, must report to the Principal who will report to VIT.

3.8 Supervision of Visitors
• Staff are responsible for volunteers who work with them, under their supervision or who volunteer at their request.

• Staff are to ensure these volunteers hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC).
4. **Unacceptable Behaviour**

- Smoking is not permitted on the College premises. Furthermore smoking is not permitted at any College function or activity whether these functions / activities are on the school premises or not.
- Alcohol should not be brought onto the school premises and is not to be consumed on the College premises or at school camps or excursions. The only exceptions will be those occasions deemed appropriate by the Principal, but in any case will not include occasions where students are in attendance.

Staff are not to:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be constituted as unnecessarily physical (e.g. Inappropriate sitting on laps).
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Put children at risk of abuse (e.g. Locking doors).
- Consume alcohol or drugs at school events in the presence of children.
- Staff are not to work with children under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

5. **Consequences**

Staff that breach this Code of Conduct or demonstrate unacceptable behaviour will be reprimanded for their actions. Disciplinary action could be in the form of a warning, loss of privileges, responsibility or dismissal or cessation of involvement with the College. Consequences will be at the discretion of the Principal and / or College Board.

If there is an alleged incident, the staff member may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

6. **Review**

The development, review and implementation of this code will be overseen by the Principal.