



## Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

### 1 Purpose

Cabra Dominican College is committed to protecting its students from all aspects of harm and has established strategies, practises, policies and procedures to uphold its public commitment to student safety and wellbeing. The College supports a proactive role in the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people, the provision of child safe environments and intervention procedures for responding to abuse and neglect.

### 2 Statement

Cabra Dominican College takes a zero-tolerance approach to any behaviours that jeopardise student safety and wellbeing: this includes not only child abuse and grooming, but any type of behaviour by a staff member that crosses professional boundaries with a student.

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviours, along with acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. The focus is on safeguarding children and young people and reflects that children and young people deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.

### 3 Definitions

A schedule of 'Professional Boundaries' are set out in Appendix 1 to this Code of Conduct.

### 4 Scope

Cabra Dominican College places the highest priority on the care, wellbeing and protection of children and young people and it is the shared responsibility of everyone employed or volunteering at Cabra Dominican College.

For the purpose of this document the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct the term 'Staff' refers to the following people: teaching and non-teaching staff, members of the College Board, parent/caregiver volunteers, tutors, clergy/religious, pre-service teachers on placement, third party contractors, external education providers and visitors to the College.

The application of this Code of Conduct is not limited to the College grounds and operating hours. This Code of Conduct also extends to situations when Staff are:

- (a) At any school-related activities and events (including speech nights, parent-teacher interviews, camps, events held by or in connection with Cabra).
- (b) Representing Cabra, including when off-campus or in a digital environment.
- (c) Travelling to and from Cabra, as well as to and from off-site activities or events.
- (d) Wearing Cabra logos or uniform (including staff name badges).
- (e) Upholding Cabra's or a Teacher's legal duty of care owed to students.

- (f) Interacting with students.

Otherwise engaging in behaviour which in the reasonable opinion of Cabra may adversely affect student health and safety, student relationships, staff health and safety, staff-student relationships, perceptions regarding a staff member's professionalism, a staff member's relationships with other members of the College community, or the reputation of Cabra.

In some cases, this Code of Conduct will apply to staff interactions with former students.

## 5 Responsibilities

### 5.1 Acceptable Behaviours

Cabra Dominican College has the following responsibilities and expectations for all Staff interacting with students in our community:

- (a) Act in accordance and always uphold Cabra's Safeguarding Children's Policy and all policy and procedures to do with Child Protection and Student Wellbeing.
- (b) Promote models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration.
- (c) Provide a physically and psychologically safe environment where the dignity, respect and wellbeing of all children and young people (inclusive of disability, culture, race, sexuality or ethnicity) is nurtured and upheld.
- (d) Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all students, inclusive of all abilities, genders, sexuality and religious or cultural backgrounds.
- (e) Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- (f) Act with propriety, provide a duty of care and protect children and young people in your care.
- (g) Assist children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse.
- (h) Teach children and young people skills and assist them to develop an understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety and wellbeing.
- (i) Ensure, where practicable, meetings of an individual student or small groups of children or young people occur in the College meeting rooms, open spaces or classrooms with clear visibility. In this context, conversations need to be focused on the educational and wellbeing needs of the child or young person.
- (j) Follow the legislative and internal school processes by notifying the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78 or make an online report, [Reporting Child Abuse](#) if, in the course of your work, you suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected.
- (k) Report any breaches of this Code of Conduct or child safety concerns to the College Executive Leadership Team.
- (l) Call the Police if you have concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger.



- (m) Ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children and young people and respect the privacy of students and their families, only disclosing information to the necessary people who have a need to know.
- (n) Refrain from negativity, gossip, spreading rumours or making inappropriate comments about children and young people through any form of communication, including electronic communication.
- (o) Undertake regular training and education in order to understand individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people.

## 5.2 Unacceptable Behaviours

- (a) Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.
- (b) Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- (c) Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.
- (d) Engage in conduct that shows, or that can be interpreted as showing, a personal rather than a professional interest in a student.
- (e) Encourage, develop or maintain any 'special' relationships with children or young person that could be seen as favouritism. (for example, giving gifts or other benefits (whether monetary or non-monetary) to students)
- (f) Hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature, for example where they disclose information about themselves, without a valid professional context (e.g. counselling).
- (g) Invite students to their home or visit students at their home.
- (h) Attend parties or socialise with students.
- (i) Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members based on age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- (j) Be alone for extended periods of time with a child or young person unnecessarily, where the focus is not on their academic or wellbeing needs.
- (k) Arrange personal contact or engage in, inappropriate personal communication, including any electronic online medium, with children or young person for a purpose unrelated to Cabra sanctioned activities.
- (l) Disclose, publish or upload personal or sensitive information about a child or young person, including still/moving images, documents or audio recordings of a child or young person to any location, without parental permission or the permission of the College Principal.
- (m) Create or use private online chat groups with children and young people.
- (n) Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.
- (o) Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.

## 6 Related Documents and References

- [Catholic Professional Standards, Ltd, National Catholic Safeguarding Standards](#)
- [Child and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(SA\)](#)
- [Department for Education, Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum](#)
- [Department for Education, Managing allegations of sexual misconduct in SA education and care settings \(2019\)](#)
- [Department for Education, Catholic Education South Australia, and Association of Independent Schools of South Australia, Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People: Guidelines for staff in education and care settings \(3<sup>rd</sup> edition, revised 2019\)](#)
- [Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people: Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education or care settings \(3<sup>rd</sup> edition, revised March 2022\)](#)
- [Department of Human Services, Child Safe Environments Principles of Good Practice \(2012, Updated 2019\)](#)
- [SACCS, Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People \(2011\)](#)
- [SACCS, Reporting Harm of Children and Young People Procedure \(2020\)](#)

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## 7 Schedule: Professional Boundaries

### What are professional boundaries?

- 7.1 Staff must act professionally, including by maintaining professional boundaries, at all times when interacting with students.
- 7.2 The relationship between a staff member and a student is not equal. Teachers in particular are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students, which means that there is always an inherent power imbalance between a Teacher and the School's students.
- 7.3 There is no definitive source on where professional boundaries are in relation to interactions between staff and students. Behaviour may cross professional boundaries because:
- (a) It constitutes an actual abuse of a staff member's position of trust and authority over a student (e.g. child abuse and grooming).
  - (b) It involves the creation or perception of a personal or 'special' relationship between a staff member and a student (e.g. giving gifts or providing preferential treatment).
  - (c) It creates a situation whereby a student is more susceptible to inappropriate behaviour by others (e.g. asking students to keep secrets).
  - (d) It was unnecessary as part of a staff member's professional duties.
  - (e) It was contrary to the College's codes of conduct, policies, procedures and rules.
  - (f) It was contrary to community standards.
- 7.4 In this regard, staff need to understand that behaviour may cross professional boundaries even if there is no romantic or sexual element to it.
- 7.5 Some conduct (e.g. child abuse and grooming) is obviously unacceptable. In other cases, staff must take personal responsibility (and will be held accountable) for exercising professional judgment to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained with students, and that all interactions have a valid professional context. At all times, staff must err on the side of caution in deciding whether certain behaviour may cross professional boundaries.
- 7.6 This means that staff must:
- (a) exercise good judgment;
  - (b) consider carefully the implications and potential consequences and risks of certain actions; and
  - (c) prioritise a student's own needs (including education, safety and welfare).
- 7.7 There may be limited circumstances where behaviours discouraged in this code of conduct may be undertaken for legitimate and laudable reasons. For example, a staff member may wish to provide money to buy groceries for a disadvantaged student. However, a key theme of professional boundaries is ensuring that any behaviour which may raise questions takes place in a manner which is as transparent as possible (eg with Principal (or delegate) approval).

