



Code of conduct in relation to child safety standards

All staff, volunteers and board members of Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten has a zero tolerance towards child abuse. All personnel of Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Always adhering to Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten child safe policy.
- Upholding Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten statement of commitment to child safety.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification).
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination).
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
- Working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work that you are doing with children.
- Complying with the school and kindergartens guidelines on physical contact with children.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten Child Safety Officer Svantje Mertens, a member of the College of Teachers or the Head of School, Eric Hopf.
- Ensure any allegation of child abuse is reported to the police or child protection.
- Reporting any child safety concerns to Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten Child Safety Officer Svantje Mertens or a member of the College of Teachers.

Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting within our school community. We expect adults to:

- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be vigilant and proactive about student safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.
- Use positive and affirming language toward students.

- Encourage students to have a say and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact and socialise.
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a way that humiliates or vilifies others.
- Report any breaches of this child safety code of conduct and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.
- Call the police on 000 if you have an immediate concern for a student's safety.

Adults must not:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- See to use children in any way to meet the needs of an adult.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities).
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors).
- No staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child on social media.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area).
- Engage in physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Have contact with a child, or with a child through their family, outside of the school or kindergarten community activities without Svantje Mertens as the child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate, as is attending children's parties or special celebrations.
- For staff, committee members or volunteers, that are also parents, appropriate family socialising is acceptable.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Exchange personal contact details such a phone number, social networking site or email addresses with students.
- Take or publish, including online, photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten Child Safety Officer Svantje Mertens, a member of the College of Teachers or the Head of School, Eric Hopf.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report on institutional responses to child abuse, new criminal offences have been introduced to protect children, which significantly impact on the reporting duties of **all staff** employed within the school.

The Victorian Government has amended the Crimes Act 1958 to include three new offences; grooming a child under the age of 16 years, failing to report a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age and when a person in authority fails to protect a child from criminal sexual abuse.

We need your support to ensure that we are compliant with these new changes of law.

Failure to Disclose Offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is regarded as a community-wide responsibility. The new sections in the Crimes Act impose a clear legal duty upon all adults to report information about child sexual abuse to police. Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age has an obligation to report that information to police. This obligation is different to mandatory reporting obligations under child protection laws and applies to all adults, not just the professionals currently subject to mandatory reporting (i.e., registered teachers, principals and nurses).

Penalty of imprisonment is up to three years.

Grooming Offence

The offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child and applies to offenders who are 18 years of age or over. It is relevant to note that the grooming offence does not apply to communication between persons who are both under 18 years of age or to communication by a person of 18 years of age or over with a 16 or 17-year-old child.

Penalty of imprisonment is up to ten years.

Failure to Protect Offence.

If a person in authority knows that someone within their organisation poses a risk of committing a sexual offence against a child and they fail to remove that person who poses the risk, they themselves will be guilty of a criminal offence. As soon as a person in authority becomes aware of a risk of child sexual abuse, they will be under a duty to take steps to remove or reduce that risk.

Penalty of imprisonment is up to five years.

It is imperative to understand that these new laws do not supersede the mandatory reporting requirements of registered teachers, those with permission to teach, or nurses.

We ask that everyone who works here at the school or kindergarten completes the following e-learning module on the new laws.

<http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/external>

The username is education and the password is external.

The module will take you approximately one hour to undertake and it is a compulsory part of your employment conditions here at the school. You are welcome to complete it during your working hours if you choose. The computers in the staff room are available for your use.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of the College who will be able to assist you.



I agree to adhere to Ballarat Steiner School's Code of Conduct in relation to Child Safety Standards:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

College of Teachers
Committee of Management Ratified 2017