

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Child Safety Code of Conduct



**Date**           **April 2024**

**Review**       **April 2026**

### **1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:**

Lauriston Girls' School is a child safe organisation which welcomes children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing an environment where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

### **2. Purpose:**

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Lauriston Girls' School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use.

### 3. Compliance with the Code of Conduct:

All Lauriston Girls' School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must be familiar with and comply with this Code.

All Lauriston Girls' School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work staff members must:

- Conduct themselves in a professional manner that upholds the Mission, Vision and Values of the School;
- Comply with the School's policies and procedures;
- Act ethically and responsibly; and
- Be accountable for their actions and decisions.

### 4. Expectations of Employees:

Employees must read and understand the School's policies and procedures, particularly those that apply to their work. Policies and procedures are made available online or in a printed document for those employees without computer access.

If members of staff are uncertain about the scope or content of a policy with which they must comply, they should seek clarification from the Principal, Deputy Principal/Head of Senior School, Head of Junior School and Director of the Lauriston Institute.

School employees are expected to:

- Ensure that their professional conduct is consistent with the Mission, Vision and Values of the School and does not damage the reputation of the School;
- Act honestly and in good faith in fulfilling their duties;
- Carry out their duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner, while seeking suitable opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, including through participation in relevant professional learning;
- Adhere to the School's Child Safe policy at all times, upholding the Lauriston Girls' School statement of commitment to child safety and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;
- Perform their duties to the best of their ability and be accountable for their performance;

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- Be collaborative, courteous and responsive in dealing with their colleagues, students, parents and members of the public; and
- Follow reasonable instructions given by the supervisor or their delegate and work collaboratively with their colleagues.

### 5. Breaches of the School Code of Conduct:

School employees hold a position of trust and are accountable for their actions.

The consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of this Code will depend on the nature of the breach.

Prior to the formal reporting of any observed or suspected breach, employees should have a discussion with their supervisor or the Principal. If the possible breach is by their supervisor then it should be reported to the Principal.

Factors the School may consider when deciding what action to take may include:

- The seriousness of the breach;
- The likelihood of the breach occurring again;
- Whether the employee has committed the breach more than once;
- The risk the breach poses to employees, students or any others; and
- Whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

Actions that may be taken by the School in respect of a breach of the Code include management or remedial action, training or disciplinary action ranging from a warning to termination of employment. The School will reserve the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme policy and may be subject to referral to the Victorian Institute of Teaching and to Victoria Police.

### 6. Required Reporting:

Employees of the School are required to report to the Principal if they:

- Are charged with or convicted of a serious offence (those punishable by 12 month or more in jail);
- Are the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order;
- Become aware of a serious crime committed by another employee.

In addition, employees of the School must report to the Principal:

- Any concerns they may have about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person;
- Any concerns they may have about the inappropriate actions of any other employee, contractor or volunteer that involves children or young people;

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- Any concerns they may have about any other employee, contractor or volunteer engaging in 'reportable conduct' or any allegation of 'reportable conduct' that has been made to them; and
- If a staff member becomes aware that an employee, contractor or volunteer has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to conviction) involving 'reportable conduct'; and
- If they become the subject of allegations of 'reportable conduct' whether or not they relate to their employment in the School.

Staff should refer to the School's Child Protection Policy (Mandatory Reporting) for further information.

Please note under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, professionals including registered teachers, principals and nurses are required to act in the best interests of the child which includes reporting to Child Protection all allegations or disclosures of physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and reporting to Child Protection when a belief is formed that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed. Staff should refer to the School's Child Protection Policy (Mandatory Reporting) for further information.

### **7. Respect for People:**

The School expects staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work to treat each other with respect and courtesy. Our daily interaction with others reflects on the School's reputation. Therefore, all staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work are expected to be approachable and courteous in dealing with other people, including students, parents, other employees and members of the community, and respond in a reasonable time frame when matters are raised. Staff members should refer to the school's Respectful Relationships policy, the Workplace Bullying policy and the Anti-Discrimination policy.

Staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work who have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Modelling effective leadership and respect during interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development.

Staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work should listen and respond to the views and concerns of our students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused and are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student.

Staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work should promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students.

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Similarly, it is important to treat colleagues, other employees, contractors, students and parents with respect. Rude or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening, intimidating or derogatory language and physical abuse or intimidation towards other employees, contractors, students and parents is unacceptable. Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work must not use information and communication technologies, such as email, mobile phones, text or instant messaging, blogs, social media sites and other websites to engage in this type of behaviour. Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work should refer to the School's Staff Social Media policy and the Use of Technologies policy.

Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work must not discriminate against, or harass for any unlawful reason, or bully for any reason any employee, contractor, student or parent. Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work must not express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students and should consider the sensitivities of their colleagues. Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work obligations in this regard are set out in the School's Harassment and Workplace Bullying Policy and the Anti-Discrimination Policy.

The School takes reports of unlawful discrimination and harassment or bullying seriously and will consider appropriate action if such conduct is found to have occurred. Many incidents can be addressed effectively if reported early.

### **8. Duty of Care and Work Health and Safety:**

School employees have a duty of care to students in their charge to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably foreseen.

The duty encompasses a wide range of matters, including, but not limited to:

- The provision of adequate supervision;
- Ensuring grounds, premises and equipment are safe for students' use during school hours;
- Implementing strategies to prevent bullying or any form of abuse from occurring in School or in a School environment; and
- Providing medical assistance (if competent to do so) or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a student who is injured or becomes sick at School.

#### **Duty of Care:**

As employees of the School, staff members have a duty of care to students in their charge. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted. For example, risks from known hazards and from foreseeable risk situations against which preventative measures can be taken. The standard of care that is required, for example the degree of supervision, needs to be commensurate with the students' maturity and ability.

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Duty of care to students applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by the School. The risks associated with any activity need to be assessed and managed before the activity is undertaken.

Staff should ensure that they are aware of the School's procedures relating to Duty of Care, Excursions, Camps, Sport and Exchange Programs.

### **Work Health and Safety:**

Employees have a responsibility under work health and safety legislation to take care of their own health and safety at work. It is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that their activities do not place at risk the health and safety of their co-workers, students or other persons they may come into contact with at work.

Considerations of safety relate to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.

The School has a number of Occupational Health and Safety policies and employees should refer to these for further information and guidance.

### **Supervision of Students:**

Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no student is exposed to any unnecessary risk of injury.

Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work should be familiar with and comply with the School's evacuation procedures.

Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work should arrive punctually to class and to any allocated supervision.

Classes should not be left unsupervised in the classroom or outside. For smaller group activities where students may be working in multiple areas, teachers will undertake regular supervision of groups to ensure their safety.

Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work should remain with students at after school activities until all students have been collected. In the event that a student is not collected a teacher should remain with the student until collected or return to school with the student, or put in place other measures which are prudent and necessary.

Yard supervision is an integral part of the responsibility of teachers and they must be punctual. It must take precedence over other activities. Teachers should actively supervise their designated area, be vigilant and constantly move around.

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Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work should be alert to bullying or any other form of discriminatory behaviour, and report incidents to the appropriate staff member. Staff, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work should refer to the Respectful Relationships Policy for further information relating to incidents of bullying.

Ill or injured students should be attended to by the supervising staff member. Additional support can be provided by the School Nurses.

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 their supervisor and/or the Principal.

When teachers wish to conduct a private conversation with a student they should consider the time and venue carefully to avoid placing yourself in a vulnerable situation. It is preferable to leave the door open. The teacher should not locate themselves between the student and the door.

When confiscating personal items, such as mobile phones or jewellery, students should be asked to hand the items to the teachers who will leave the item either in Senior School Student Services or with the Junior School Executive Assistant.

Teachers should never drive a student in their car unless they have specific permission from their supervisor and/or the Principal to do so. Where possible, permission from a parent or caregiver should be sought. In the event of an emergency staff should exercise discretion but then report the matter to the appropriate supervisor. The driver must have a current driver's licence and third party insurance.

### **9. Professional Relationships between Employees and Students:**

As an employee of the School, staff members are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people. Staff must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people, and to support those who have been harmed. While not all employees are required to manage and supervise students, it is important for all School employees to understand and observe the School's Child Protection Policy.

Staff must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual or heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers.

Staff must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student. An overly familiar relationship with any student (including any adult student) that person is responsible for teaching, tutoring, advising, assessing, or for whom the staff member provides pastoral or welfare support raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence, dependency and or equality of treatment. Such relationships may also have a negative impact on the teaching



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and learning environment for other students and colleagues, and may carry a serious reputational risk for the School.

If a staff member considers that a student is being overly familiar, and is seeking to establish a personal relationship with them, they should report such concerns to their supervisor and/or the Principal as soon as possible so that a plan can be developed to manage the situation effectively and sensitively.

At all times when speaking with students, care must be taken to use appropriate language. Staff must always treat students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.

Staff may, as part of your pastoral role, engage in discussion with students. This is entirely appropriate. However, staff must be cautious about making personal comments regarding a student or asking questions that probe their own or a student's sexuality or relationship. Staff must not hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature where they disclose information about themselves.

Social relations between staff and students outside the school can be problematic. Staff should refrain from visiting students at their home unless they have the express permission of the Principal and/or parents or caregivers. Staff must be alert to the risk involved in social relations with students and be conscious that their position places extra obligations on them. In the case of Kindergarten teachers, they may undertake home visits from time to time as part of their professional work and they do so with the permission of the Principal and parents or caregivers.

Staff must not engage in tutoring students from the School. Refer to the Private Tutoring Policy.

Staff must not invite students to join his/her personal electronic social networking site or accept students' invitations to join their social networking site. Refer to the Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technologies Policy and the Social Media Policy for Staff.

Sometimes during the course of their work a staff member may be in receipt of a gift from a student. In such circumstances where the receipt of the gift could be considered outside of usual custom the staff member needs to inform their supervisor. In respect of gifts all staff members should refer to the Acceptance of Gifts, Meals and Entertainment policy.

Staff should be aware of, and sensitive to, children with culturally diverse or indigenous background and cultural practices that may influence the interpretation of the behaviour of that staff member.

### **Physical contact with students:**

Staff must not impose physical punishment on a student in the course of their professional duties.



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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.

When teachers are required to attend to the toileting needs of young children, it must be done with caution. It may be appropriate to have the door open. In respect of students with a disability the management of toileting needs should be included in the student's individual management plan.

When congratulating a student, a handshake, pat on the shoulder or brief hug are acceptable as long as the student is comfortable with this action. Kissing of students is not acceptable.

Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching the student. A staff member should always advise the student of what they intend to do and seek their consent.

Kindergarten or Prep children who are distressed may require comforting and it is reasonable for the teacher or co-educator to have a reasonable level of physical contact with the child in order to calm them.

Sometimes in ensuring duty of care staff may be required to restrain a student from harming him or herself or others using reasonable force. Any such strategy must be in keeping with the School's behaviour management practices or individual student management plan. Staff should report and document any such incidents.

### **10. Appropriate Use of Electronic Communication and Social Networking**

#### **Sites:**

The School provides electronic communication facilities for its students and employees for educational or administrative purposes. It monitors and views data stored or transmitted using the School's facilities. By its nature, electronic communication is a fast and informal way of communicating. However, once a document or image has been sent there is no way to recall it and it exists forever.

Staff members must comply with the School's Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Technologies Policy and the Social Media Policy for Staff. Compliance includes:

- Exercising good judgement when using electronic mail, following the principles of ethical behaviour;
- Using appropriate and professional language in electronic mail messages;
- Being aware that if an issue addressed in an email becomes the subject of a legal dispute, then those emails would be discoverable: that is, the court and all parties to the dispute would be entitled to see them;
- Not sending messages that are harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, threatening, abusive or obscene;
- Not inviting students into your personal social networking site or accept an invitation to theirs unless this is for an educational purpose and has been organised with the agreement of parents;

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- Not using social networking sites to email or contact students unless this is for an educational purpose and has been organised with the agreement of parents;
- Not using Instagram or similar site for the posting of images which are not directly related to an educational purpose;
- Remembering transmission, storage, promotion or display of offensive, defamatory, or harassing material is not acceptable; and
- Reporting any situations where you become aware of the inappropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites.

Staff must never use the School's networks to view, upload, download or circulate any of the following materials:

- Sexually related or pornographic messages or material;
- Violent or hate-related messages or material;
- Racist or other offensive messages aimed at a particular group or individual;
- Malicious, libellous or slanderous messages or material; or
- Subversive or other messages or material related to illegal activities.

### 11. Confidential Information:

As School employees, staff must only use confidential information for the work-related purpose it was intended.

Unless authorised to do so by legislation, staff must not disclose or use any confidential information without the permission of the Principal.

Staff must make sure that confidential information, in any form, cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.

### 12. Privacy:

Sensitive and personal information should only be provided to other people, either within or outside the School, who are authorised to have access to it.

Staff should always exercise caution and sound judgement in discussing personal information of students, parents, staff and other people with other School employees. Normally information should be limited to those who need to know in order to conduct their duties, or to those who can assist in carrying out the School's work because of their expertise.

### 13. Record Keeping:

All School employees have a responsibility to create and maintain accurate and honest records of their communications with parents and students. Such records can be stored on the school's database, through

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Synergetic Notes, or as a written note to be kept in the Student's File which is kept in the Principal's office. The School Psychologists and School Nurses maintain records, both on the School's database and in hard copy student files for their professional use and these are not accessible by other members of staff.

Staff must not destroy or remove records without appropriate authority.

Staff members responsible for assessing and recording grades and comments for students' work must do so accurately, fairly and in a manner consistent with the relevant policies and procedures of the School.

Staff members must maintain the confidentiality of all official documentation and information which are not publicly available or which have not been published.