

Policy Name	Child Safety Code of Conduct
Date Last Reviewed	February 2023
Scheduled Review Date	January 2024
Approved By	Board of Directors

Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct (the "Code") sets out the expected behaviour of all adults towards children and young people at Skyline Education Foundation Australia. If you are a non-English speaker and require assistance in understanding this Code, please contact info@skylinefoundation.org.au or call 03 9917 3738.

All adults within the Skyline environment must comply with the Code at all times, including the Board of Directors, Board Committee members, staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers undertaking child-related work, visitors, and families. A copy of the Code is provided to all Skyline staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers undertaking child-related work, and Board members before commencement, and is publicly available at www.skylinefoundation.org.au/childsafety.

Skyline is committed to providing a safe environment for all children where child abuse and harm are not tolerated. Child safety is a top priority, and the prevention and reporting of abuse is strongly encouraged. All staff, volunteers, and contractors are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children. Skyline recognises that discrimination can harm children and treats all children and young people with dignity and respect. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards racism, child abuse and homophobia and expect staff and volunteers to act on incidents of concern. We support students in expressing their culture and identity.

The term "Skyline environment" refers to any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Skyline for use by a student during or outside of hours, as well as any time when engaging with a student or their family. This includes online learning environments, email and intranet systems, and other locations provided by Skyline for student use, including locations used for camps, tours, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events. The Code of Conduct pays particular attention to balancing the need to identify and mitigate risks in both physical and online environments while ensuring that student rights to privacy, access to information, social connections, and learning opportunities are not compromised.

The Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviour between adults and students to keep children safe in the Skyline environment. It considers the needs of all children and students and ensures that students know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults at Skyline. The Code promotes child safety and wellbeing within the Skyline environment and provides guidelines on expected standards of behaviour consistent with our strategies, policies, and procedures.

All Skyline staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers undertaking child-related work, and Board members must always follow the standards of behaviour set out in this Code in the Skyline environment. The Code spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour, expected standards of behaviour, and acceptable and unacceptable relationships to promote and maintain child safety and wellbeing at Skyline.

All Skyline visitors, families, and other members of the Skyline community must follow the standards of behaviour set out in this Code as appropriate. For example, the requirement to report any conflicts of interest they have (such as an outside relationship with a student or family member) that may affect their ability to perform their role would not apply to visitors, families, and other Skyline community members. Some behaviours on their own may not be a serious breach of the Code of Conduct but together may indicate a concerning pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children.

This Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour, including a breach of the Code.

We hold our staff, contractors, volunteers, and service providers undertaking child-related work accountable for complying with this Code. For example, where a staff member breaches the Code of Conduct, Skyline may take disciplinary action, including summary dismissal in the case of serious breaches.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to the following:

- Staff
- Board of Directors and Committee members.
- Students
- Families
- Visitors, volunteers, contractors, and service providers undertaking child-related work.

The Code of Conduct applies to all Skyline physical and online environments used by students during and outside of hours, including locations used for camps, tours, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events.

To ensure that everyone is supported in embedding the Code of Conduct into their daily behaviour, we:

- Make sure all staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers engaged in child-related work and Board of Directors and Committee members are aware of the Code of Conduct and how it applies to them
- Discuss the Code of Conduct in staff inductions
- Raise awareness of the Code of Conduct by:
 - Discussing it at staff meetings
 - Informing about it through Skyline communications
 - Displaying the Code of Conduct in common areas
- Ensure our supervision and people management practices include regular reviews to check whether staff are following the Code of Conduct and other child safe policies
- Inform families, visitors, and other people associated with Skyline of expected behaviours
- Report all suspected or identified breaches of the Code of Conduct via Skyline's reporting procedures
- Reference the Code of Conduct in Skyline employment advertisements and service contracts
- Communicate the Code of Conduct to students in an age-appropriate way.

Where staff, volunteers, and contractors at Skyline have codes of conduct that regulate their profession or occupation, these codes of conduct must also be complied with. Where that person considers there is a conflict between a relevant professional or occupational code of conduct and this Code of Conduct, they must seek advice from the relevant professional or occupational body and must advise the CEO of their proposed course of action.

Acceptable behaviours

All Skyline staff, volunteers, contractors, and service providers who undertake child-related work, as well as the Board of Directors and Board Committee members, and visitors, families, and other members of the Skyline community as appropriate, are required to follow these standards of behavior and must:

- Uphold Skyline's commitment to child safety at all times and adhere to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Take disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child seriously
- Report any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns
- Understand and comply with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting where applicable) in line with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations

Policy and Procedures

- Ensure that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm if child abuse is suspected
- Raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified and report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct
- Participate in all compulsory training and professional development, including training on child safety and wellbeing
- Treat all children and young people in the Skyline community with respect inside and outside the Skyline environment as part of normal social and community activities, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability, or other characteristics
- Consider the different needs of all students at Skyline, support them to participate fully in programs, and help them and their families feel included
- Make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families feel included and welcome at Skyline and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- Never be racist towards anyone at Skyline and report any instances of racism they become aware of
- Help Skyline be a place where people of all cultures feel safe and included
- Listen to students and respond to them if they feel unsafe, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- Value students' ideas and opinions
- Promote friendships and encourage students to support their peers
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, vulnerable students, students who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) students
- Involve students in decisions about the activities they participate in at Skyline and welcome the participation of parents and carers in these decisions
- Report any conflicts of interest they have (such as an outside relationship with a student) that may affect their ability to perform their role
- Respect the privacy of students and their families, including keeping all personal information confidential unless required by law to share it
- Inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct (such as driving a student to a performance or competition or undertaking one-on-one training sessions)
- Ensure breaches of this Code are reported to our Child Safety Champions immediately
- Comply with all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and our child safe policies and procedures
- Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.

Unacceptable Behaviours

All Skyline staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers undertaking child-related work, the Board of Directors, and Board Committee members, as well as visitors, families, and other members of the Skyline community as appropriate, are required to follow these standards of behavior and must not:

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive, or harmful behaviour towards children. This includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect, or sexual misconduct
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse or harm

- Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Use hurtful or offensive behaviour or language with children
- Fail to report information to the police if aware that a child has been abused
- Touch children in a way that is unnecessary or unsuitable and falls outside what is reasonable, or otherwise engage in the activities of Skyline
- Persistently criticise and/or denigrate a student
- Treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, or ethnicity
- Deliberately prevent a student from forming friendships
- Verbally assault a student or create a climate of fear
- Offer a student alcohol, cigarettes, or other drugs
- Show a student pornographic images
- Share details of sexual experiences with a student
- Discuss intimate topics, use sexual language or gestures in the presence of a student except if needed to deliver the curriculum or professional guidance
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a student or do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as changing clothes
- Enter changing facilities without first knocking
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific students or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or unnecessary or unsuitable attention or engage in 'grooming' type behaviour
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting, etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- Take photographs, screenshots, or share images of children involved in activities that are not authorised by Skyline
- Be alone with a student when there is no professional reason for doing so
- Have contact with any student outside of hours except when needed to deliver the curriculum or professional guidance and parental/carer permission has been sought
- Engage in babysitting, mentoring, and/or tutoring a student out of work hours (without managerial approval for this kind of secondary employment).

The above behaviours are not exhaustive. For example, some behaviours may depend upon the student's age, developmental stage, or special needs.

Skyline's Child Safety Program also includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy that provides detailed guidance for all adults on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults.

Breach

Any person who suspects a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred must:

- act to prioritise the best interests of the student
- promptly take actions to ensure the safety of the student(s)
- report the incident or concerns using the Skyline complaints process as soon as possible
- maintain the privacy of those involved, following Skyline's record-keeping, privacy, and information sharing guidelines.

Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported in accordance with Skyline's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures to Bridget Sutherland, CEO, who can be contacted at info@skylinefoundation.org.au or by calling 0403 436 474.

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to the Victorian Police or to the Commission for Children and Young People under the reportable conduct scheme that applies under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic). Our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations

Policy and Procedures provide more information about our reporting obligations to external authorities, as well as describing protections and confidentiality provisions for anyone making a report. The Policy and Procedures can be found by requesting it at info@skylinefoundation.org.au or by calling 0403 436 474. It is also available at www.skylinefoundation.org.au/childsafety.

Skyline staff, volunteers, contractors, and service providers undertaking child-related work who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code, or terms of engagement.

This includes (but is not limited to) the following actions, depending on the nature of the relationship and the breach:

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of the employment, contract, or engagement.

PLEASE NOTE:

If any person in a position of authority within Skyline becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child may become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with Skyline (for example, an employee, contractor or volunteer), and they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, then they must take all reasonable steps to do so. A person in authority who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk may be charged with the criminal offence of 'failing to protect' and may face a term of imprisonment.

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence.

Compliance monitoring

Compliance with the Code of Conduct will be monitored by the Child Safety Officers, and this may include independent audits and reviews. We check that the Code of Conduct is fully implemented and being followed by everyone. This includes monitoring compliance by contractors and service providers undertaking child-related work.

It also includes making sure our leaders champion and model compliance by taking a proactive, outspoken approach on the importance of child safety and wellbeing. They must 'walk the talk' in taking child safety matters seriously, respond promptly and thoroughly, and help to embed child safety practices throughout Skyline.

Review

Skyline is committed to continuously improving our Child Safety Program. We have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child-safe policies, procedures, and practices for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety-related laws, regulations, and standards:

- The CEO is responsible for reviewing and updating the Code of Conduct at least every two years or after any significant child safety incident or significant breaches of policy (such as the Code of Conduct) and seeking feedback from staff, volunteers, students, families and the Skyline community
- We use best practices and input from regular stakeholder consultations on child safety to

- inform the development of our policies and procedures, involving those relevant at Skyline
- We record and analyse all complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement. Where any flaws or failings are identified in our policies, procedures, and practices, improvements are made to prevent the problem from occurring again
- We act with transparency and share reports on the findings of relevant reviews with staff, volunteers, families, students, and the Skyline community.

Definitions

The following terms in the Code of Conduct have specific definitions (and are consistent with Victorian law where indicated):

Child	Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.
Child abuse	Child abuse includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a sexual offence ○ grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 ○ the infliction, on a child, of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm ○ the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects.
Child-connected work	Child-connected work means work authorised by the governing authority and performed by an adult in a learning environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
Child-related work	Child-related work means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work at or for a service, body or place, or that involves a specified activity; and • that usually involves direct contact with a child.
Child safety	Child safety includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.
Direct contact	Direct contact in relation to child-related work, means any contact between a person and a child that involves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical contact; or • face to face contact; or • contact by post or other written communication; or • contact by telephone or other oral communication; or • contact by email, SMS or other electronic communication.
Vulnerable students	Vulnerable students may include but are not limited to those who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, or assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home • are identified as vulnerable as a result of a referral from a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service; or mental health or other health service • self-identify or are identified by staff as a member of a vulnerable cohort.

Review

Skyline is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety Program. We have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety related laws, regulations, and standards:

- The CEO is responsible for reviewing and updating the **Code of Conduct** every year or after any significant child safety incident, or legislative changes including seeking input from students, parents, and carers and the Skyline community.
- We record and analyse all complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement.
- We act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with Skyline staff and our community.
- Any proposed changes to the **Code of Conduct** must be approved by the Board before they can be implemented.

Policy and procedure linkages

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Privacy Policy.

Related legislation

The following legislation, standards and regulations apply, and this policy aligns with these mandated requirements:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).