



Our Child Protection Code of Conduct

A Child Protection Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. For more detailed guidance refer to the College's [Staff and Student Professional Boundaries](#) policy (refer to Annex A).

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children.

When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the College environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Protection Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

College environments include both physical and online environments, as well as those outside the College's grounds when College-related activities are occurring .

This Code applies to:

- all staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff;
- Volunteers;
- students;
- parents and carers;
- Third Party Contractors and service providers (including External Education Providers);
- teaching students on placement at the College; and
- visitors.

The Code is made available via our public website and the staff intranet.

The MSA Regional Director has approved and endorsed this Child Protection Code of Conduct.

A PDF version of our Child Protection Code of Conduct **is available on the College website.**

In addition to our broad expectations for child safe behaviour in all College environments, the College has developed a comprehensive [Staff and Student Professional Boundaries](#) policy (refer to Annex A).

[St Gregory's College's Child Protection Code of Conduct](#)

This Child Protection Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, St Gregory's College Campbelltown may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal. The College revises the Code annually.

St Gregory's College Campbelltown has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students within our College community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, MSA Representatives, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers and parents/carers.

The MSA Regional Director has approved and endorsed this Child Protection Code of Conduct.

DO:

- Uphold St Gregory's College's Child Protection Policy at all times.
- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for students.
- Comply with guidelines published by the College with respect to child protection, specifically the College's Child Protection Policy (refer to the College website) and our Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy (refer to Annex A).
- 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 towards 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 humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report any breaches of this Child Protection Code of Conduct.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the College's Child Protection Officers 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.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

DO NOT:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- 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.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of 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.

- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Our Child Protection Program includes a [Staff and Student Professional Boundaries](#) policy (refer to Annex A) that provides detailed guidance for all staff and Volunteers on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at St Gregory's College Campbelltown.

[Disciplinary Procedures](#)

Where a staff member breaches the Code, St Gregory's College Campbelltown may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal.

Where any other member of the College community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within our Child Protection Code of Conduct, St Gregory's College Campbelltown will take appropriate action.

[Report Any Child Protection Concerns](#)

All breaches and suspected breaches of the St Gregory's College Campbelltown's Child Protection Code of Conduct must be reported to the Head of School or the MSA Association Council in its capacity as St Gregory's College Campbelltown's governing body.

Our Child Protection Program also includes information for staff members, MSA Representatives and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of the College's Child Protection Officers.

It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Indirect Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College's [Child Protection Officers](#) (refer to our Child Protection Policy on the College website).

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

Annex A

[Staff and Student Professional Boundaries](#)

This policy applies to all teaching staff, boarding staff, non-teaching staff, Marist Schools Australia Representatives, Volunteers (direct and indirect), Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers (together, known as "staff" for the purposes of this policy only).

St Gregory's College Campbelltown staff hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to students at the College. As such, it is their duty, at all times, to maintain professional boundaries with students.

The following policy and guidelines are designed to raise awareness of situations where professional boundary violations may occur and some strategies to minimise the risk of boundary violations.

The practice of protective behaviours at all times will also reduce the possibility of vexatious claims being brought against staff.

[St Gregory's College Campbelltown's Policy](#)

St Gregory's College Campbelltown is committed to providing a safe physical and emotional environment where all of our students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner where the risk of child abuse is minimised, and a safe and supportive child-safe environment is maintained.

It is our policy that:

- staff exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with students at all times;
- staff identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student;
- staff interaction with students is professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours;
- conflict of interest issues must be reported to the Head of School as soon as practicable;
- equal learning opportunities are given to each student without discrimination; and
- appropriate consequences will be applied to staff who breach professional boundaries.

[What are Professional Boundaries?](#)

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person (a student) entrusts their welfare and safety to another person (a staff member), in circumstances where a power imbalance exists.

The fact that College staff are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students means that there is always an inherent power imbalance that exists between them. It also means that professional boundaries must be established, maintained and respected at all times.

In most cases this power imbalance is clear, however sometimes it may be more difficult to recognise especially for younger staff members who may only be a few years older than their students.

The following guidelines are not exhaustive, and, given that sometimes “grey areas” may occur, it is expected that all staff (no matter their age or experience) use their own good judgment, think very carefully about the implications and potential consequences of engaging in certain behaviours with students, and always err on the side of caution.

When unsure about whether professional boundaries are being, or have been, breached, ask yourself:

- Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?
- How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting?
- Am I sharing information for the student's benefit, or for my benefit?
- Am I dealing with this student differently from others in similar circumstances?
- Is my language or demeanour different from normal when dealing with this particular student?

Intimate Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be misinterpreted as having a romantic or sexual, rather than professional basis. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents/carers.

Such relationships have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of students and colleagues and may carry a serious reputational risk for the staff member and, in turn, the College.

The professional relationship of staff and students may be breached by:

- flirtatious behaviour or dating;
- development of an intimate personal relationship;
- sexual relations;
- the use of sexual innuendo, inappropriate language and/or material with students;
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- unwarranted and inappropriate filming or photography;
- deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others (e.g. pornography);
- having intimate contact without a valid context via written or electronic means (e.g. email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms);
- going out, whether alone or in company, to social events such as the movies or dinner; and
- exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship.

Staff should also be aware that developing or encouraging romantic or sexual relationships with recent former students (over 18 years of age) may violate professional boundaries and are strongly discouraged from doing so.

The imbalance of power and authority that exists in the staff/student relationship does not suddenly disappear after the student finishes their schooling. Staff should not assume that they will

be protected from disciplinary action by claiming that a relationship began only after the student left the College as there may be a reasonable belief that the emotional intimacy of the relationship developed while the staff/student relationship existed.

Personal Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be perceived or misinterpreted as having a personal rather than professional element. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents or carers.

It is the student's perception of staff behaviour and not the intention of the staff member that is important.

An established and expected professional relationship between staff and students may be compromised by staff:

- attending parties or socialising with students outside of organised College events (without parental/carer permission);
- sharing personal details about their private lives with students; or
- meeting with students outside of school hours without permission from the College.

Staff must recognise at all times that their role is not to be a “friend” or “parent” to a student.

Fair Learning Opportunities

The main focus of teaching is effective student learning and as such, teachers are expected to support their students with their professional expertise so as to offer them the best education in their individual circumstances. The quality of teaching and learning between teachers and students characterises their relationship.

Teachers should demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect;
- recognising and developing each student’s abilities, skills and talents by catering to their individual abilities and respecting their individual differences;
- encouraging students to develop and reflect on their own values;
- interacting with students without bias;
- not engaging in preferential treatment;
- not discriminating against any student on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, disability or religious or political conviction; and
- always making decisions in students’ best interests.

Electronic Communications between Staff & Students

It is expected that all staff at the College will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all use of technology should be for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular activities;
- all email communication between staff and students should be via the College email system and reflect a professional staff/student relationship;
- staff should not communicate with students via text message where it is not in a professional context;
- staff should not give out their personal telephone numbers or social media contact details;
- staff are not to accept or request students as 'friends' on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate in any way that is not condoned or approved by the College;
- staff should not exchange personal pictures with a student;
- teachers are not expected or encouraged to respond to concerns of parents/carers or students on holidays, weekends or in the evening; and
- any student personal contact numbers or other personal contact details made available to the College should only be used for College communications.

Physical Contact with Students

All staff should be aware that situations may arise that can be perceived in a manner that was not intended. For this reason, all staff at the College should adhere to the following guidelines for contact with students both in and outside of College grounds:

- staff should avoid unnecessary physical contact with students;
- minimal, non-lingering, non-gratuitous physical contact in the context of the situation is acceptable (e.g. congratulatory pat on the back or handshake); and
- contact for sport, drama and dance instruction is acceptable in a class situation but not in a 1:1 situation. If physical contact is required for specific technical instructions, it must be brief and only with the consent of the student. Note that a student may withdraw consent for this contact either verbally or gesturally and staff must remain vigilant whilst engaging in necessary contact situations. Once consent has been withdrawn no further contact can be or should be made.

Off-Campus Excursions and Camps

During off-campus excursions or camps, the same physical contact guidelines apply as well as the following:

- checking of sleeping arrangements, or supervising of students changing should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students' privacy and personal space;
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory; and
- ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict staff/student relationship is upheld and that inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student's bed, is not undertaken.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Where personal relationships with students such as family relationships and close friendship networks exist, questions of conflicts of interest may arise.

This may be more prevalent in close or rural communities where professional boundaries may be tested due to the nature and size of the community. In these circumstances, staff need to be far more diligent in developing and maintaining these boundaries.

Where a staff member feels that a conflict of interest may exist, they should notify the Head of School, or the Chair of the MSA if the conflict involves the Head of School and arrangements should be implemented to avoid the conflict situation if possible. For example, the teaching of students by a staff member with a conflict should be avoided.

Any significant decisions relating to these students in the College (such as the appointment of classes or selection in sports teams) should be referred to another staff member and endorsed by a supervisor.

Disclosure of Staff/Student Interactions

It is St Gregory's College's policy that all staff are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours. These interactions may include instances where the staff member is:

- related to the student;
- friends with the student's parents or family; or
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours and has notified the College.

St Gregory's College Campbelltown maintains records of all declarations made by staff members related to their interactions with students, or relationships with students, that exist outside of school hours or College premises.

These records are kept in electronic form indefinitely.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are to:

- follow the guidelines as set out in this policy;
- immediately report any conflicts of interest; and
- remove themselves from decision making where a conflict has been identified.

Where a staff member breaches this policy St Gregory's College Campbelltown may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, dismissal.

Implementation

These guidelines are implemented through a combination of:

- staff training and development in professional conduct;
- student and parent/carer education and information;
- effective management of teachers engaging in inappropriate relationships with students;
- effective management of conflicts of interest;
- effective communication and incident notification procedures;
- effective record keeping procedures; and
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.