



## Child Safe Code of Conduct

*"Empowering student's unique development in an inclusive, inquiry-focused environment, to thrive in the world."*

### Contents

Purpose .....	1
Scope .....	2
Child Safe Behaviour .....	2
Unsafe Behaviour .....	3
Reporting Concerns .....	4
Student Advocacy .....	4
Community Concerns .....	4
Staff Professional Boundaries .....	4
Professional Standards for Teachers in Western Australia .....	4
Professional boundary guidelines.....	5
Breaches.....	5
Compromising behaviours.....	6
Relationships with Former Students.....	6
Implementation .....	6
Consequences for Breaches of Code .....	7
Record Keeping.....	7
Policy and Program Review.....	7

### Purpose

ISWA's Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines expected behaviours from all staff members, and behaviours that are unacceptable, when interacting with children and young people.

All children and young people who come to ISWA have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. Each member of our community has a responsibility to understand the important individual and collective role they play in ensuring that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all decision making and action.

## Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff members, including non-teaching Staff, and temporary or casual Staff
- all Volunteers
- all Contractors
- External Education Providers
- teaching students on placement
- parents/carers and other adult family members of students
- visitors

This group is together referred to as our community for the purposes of this Code.

This Child Safe Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with our Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct, Inclusive Education, Behaviour and Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Policies.

## Child Safe Behaviour

All adults in our community are expected to:

- Be familiar with and act in accordance with ISWA's Child Protection Policy.
- Sign in at reception, unless regular staff members.
- Have all visitors to campus sign in at reception.
- Monitor the behaviour of visitors to campus and ensure that they are not alone with students.
- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision and duty of care for students.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- Support student advocacy and involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to ISWA's policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by ISWA's risk assessment and management policy.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with ISWA's policy and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with disability.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.
- Use positive and affirming language toward students.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.
- Intervene if students are engaging in inappropriate behaviour towards others, including teasing or bullying.
- Ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
- All email communication between Staff and students should be via the school email system and reflect a professional Staff/student relationship
- 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 school

- 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
- Report any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by Mandatory Reporting Legislation in Western Australia, following our Child Protection Policy and Critical Incident Procedures.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety.

## Unsafe Behaviour

The following behaviour is unacceptable from all adults at ISWA:

- Engaging in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.
- Engaging in any activity that is likely to harm a child physically, sexually or emotionally.
- Being alone with a child unnecessarily. Necessary individual meetings with children must be in open rooms with glass panels in doors.
- Arranging personal contact, including online contact, with students for a purpose unrelated to school activities.
- Disclosing personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless required to do so by ISWA's policy and procedure on reporting.
- Using inappropriate language in the presence of children or showing children inappropriate images or material.
- Working with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Disregarding any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.
- Discriminating against any student or their family based on culture, race, ethnicity or ability.
- Engaging in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engaging in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves.
- Touching students unnecessarily.
- Engaging in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Using physical means or any form of corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Developing 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engaging in activities with a student, outside of school hours and without permission from the student's parent/carer.
- Engaging in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Taking or publishing photos or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent. The Registrar will share a list of students whose parents have not given consent. Any photos of students taken for school purposes should be downloaded on the relevant school drive as soon as is practicable, and not kept on individual devices.
- Posting any identifying information online about a student without parent consent.

## Reporting Concerns

Objectively observable behaviour which is not permitted by this Child Safe Code of Conduct must be reported internally. Any breach of this Codes of Conduct that meets the threshold for external reporting must be reported to the relevant external authority.

Any person who, in good faith, makes a report alleging a breach of the Child Safe Codes of Conduct will be protected from adverse consequences.

Please see ISWA's Child Protection Policy for external reporting procedures.

Where any other member of the ISWA community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within our Child Safe Code of Conduct, ISWA will take appropriate action. This includes reporting to the relevant authorities and calling the Police.

## Student Advocacy

Students are educated about their rights and safety and encouraged to raise concerns using informal and formal ways, and external child safety organisations. Our Complaints Handling Policy is available on our website and on SEQTA.

## Community Concerns

Parents/Carers, or other community members who believe that there has been a breach of this Code of Conduct or have concerns that a child or young person associated with ISWA may be subject to abuse, grooming or harm, should contact the Principal or Counsellor immediately by phoning 9285 1144. If the concern relates to the Principal, the Board Chair should be contacted on BoardChair@iswa.wa.edu.au.

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.

## Staff Professional Boundaries

The fact that 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. This means that professional boundaries must be established, maintained, and respected at all times.

A breach of Staff and Student Professional Boundaries may in some circumstances be a criminal offence. The Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA) includes certain offences for persons, including teachers, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors, whose position places them in a position of care, supervision, or authority, with a student. For more information, refer to Offences Under the Criminal Code Act Compilation Act 1913 (WA).

The practice of protective behaviours at all times will increase both student and staff members' safety.

## Professional Standards for Teachers in Western Australia

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.

Information about professional boundaries in student-teacher relationships is contained in Teacher-Student Professional Boundaries – A Resource for WA Teachers, published by the Teachers Registration Board of

Western Australia (TRBWA). The information in the Resource is designed to assist registered teachers to meet the Professional Standards for Teachers in Western Australia.

Standard 4 of the Professional Standards requires that teachers create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments. The following criteria under Standard 4 are particularly relevant to maintaining professional boundaries:

- 4.4 Maintain student safety
- 4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically.

Standard 7 of the Professional Standards requires that teachers engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community. The following criteria under Standard 7 are particularly relevant to maintaining professional boundaries:

- 7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities
- 7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative, and organisational requirements.

## Professional boundary guidelines

The following guidelines are not exhaustive, and it is expected that all Staff 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?
- Should I discuss this matter with another colleague?
- How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting, to the Principal, to parents/carers or the TRBWA?
- 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 demeanor different from normal when dealing with this particular student?

## Breaches

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

- flirtatious behaviour
- development of an intimate personal relationship or 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)
- going out, whether alone or in company, to social events such as the movies or dinner
- exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship.

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

## Compromising behaviours

- attending parties or socialising with students outside of school events without parental/carer permission.
- giving a student money, credit for a mobile phone or a meal, unless it is for an emergency
- Offering advice to a student on personal matters other than in an authorised situation such as authorised pastoral care
- Asking a student questions about personal/sexual matters or not immediately stopping (respectfully) discussions of a personal/sexual nature that are not in keeping with the staff member's pastoral role
- speaking about a particular student constantly without a valid educational or pastoral reason
- Behaving as a "friend" or "parent" to a student.
- Consuming alcohol where students are present.

Any concern a staff member has about whether a situation may be breach professional boundaries should be disclosed to a supervisor or the Principal in advance, and an approved plan of action prepared and followed.

## Relationships with Former Students

If a staff member forms a relationship with a former student, they should disclose this relationship immediately to the Principal. A romantic/sexual relationship with a person who was previously a student may generate concerns that the staff member previously crossed professional boundaries while the former student was under the care of the staff member; in particular, grooming behaviour.

Staff should not assume that they will be protected from disciplinary action by claiming that a relationship began only after the student left school, as there may be a reasonable belief that the emotional intimacy of that relationship developed while the person was still a student and under the care of the staff member.

The school will investigate any complaint that a staff member has abused their position and acted unprofessionally by engaging in a relationship with a former student.

## Implementation

A copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct will be provided to all Staff, relevant Volunteers and relevant Contractors prior to them commencing work at ISWA. It is also communicated via refresher training at regular intervals for all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between ISWA and any Direct Contact and Regular Contractors. Therefore, all Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct upon signing the contract or upon commencing work at the school.

Implementation is through a combination of:

- staff training and development in professional conduct
- review and publication of policies
- effective communication and incident notification procedures
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

## Consequences for Breaches of Code

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary actions that could include

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

## Record Keeping

Documentation will be stored securely by the Principal, in accordance with The Management of Confidential Information in Schools. The Principal will keep written records of all communication with CPFS, WA Police, the Child Abuse Squad or any other external agencies as well as all observations, actions and strategies implemented by the school. If the school documents contain information relating to child sexual abuse, the identity of the reporter will not be recorded.

## Policy and Program Review

The Child Safe Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection and child safety related laws, regulations and standards. We are committed both to self-reflection and to seeking, actioning, and incorporating feedback into this Code, from students, families, and the wider community.

<b>Policy Category</b>	Governance
<b>Date Approved</b>	
<b>Frequency of review</b>	
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Principal or Board
<b>Amendment History</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Amendment</b>
February 2020	Review and Updated
November 2022	Review and Updated