

Child Safety – Code of Conduct

Ratification Date: RNS Board 01/09/2021 Update by RNS Principal 08/04/2022 and 30/06/2022 .	Next Review: By 1 July 2024 or after an event or changes to the minimum standards as advised by the VRQA	Availability: <table><tr><td>Web</td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>Office</td><td>X</td></tr><tr><td>On Request</td><td>X</td></tr></table>	Web	X	Office	X	On Request	X	Actions:
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SCHOOL CONTEXT

River Nile School (RNS) is a specialist reengagement senior-secondary school for young women who are Humanitarian refugees and new arrivals to Australia. In general, our School's students are highly vulnerable with backgrounds of complex trauma in their lives. Most RNS students live as independent young adults, and those with parents/carers commonly have parents/carers who are also new to Australia, with low levels of English oracy and literacy and which are not yet well informed about child safety expectations and obligations in Australia. Some RNS students have significant responsibilities as young parents or as guardians/carers of younger siblings.

1.0 PURPOSE

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our School. These standards of expected behaviour also apply to staff interactions with other staff.

All River Nile School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and model exemplary practice.

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 (for example, a school camp).

River Nile School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our School community recognises the importance of, and our responsibility for, ensuring our School is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect students and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department of Education and Training policy, River Nile School policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The RNS Principal, Assistant Principal, Nurse and Health Educator and School Leaders will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive, safe and orderly River Nile School and other learning environments. The River Nile School Principal and School Leaders will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the River Nile School community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all River Nile School situations and activities, including camps, counselling, first aid, bus travel and in the use of digital technology and social media.

2.0 ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As RNS staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding our School's commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety Policy.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and all in our community from abuse.
- Treating students, their families and all in our school community with respect both within our school environment and outside our school environment as part of everyday social and community activities; including listening to and valuing their ideas.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students and our school community members, particularly if they disclose that they or another child, student or person has been abused or they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student or person.
- Being welcoming and inclusive of all students, their families/carers and all in our school community.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students/people, students/people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students/people with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students/people.
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student. One-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in the line of sight of another adult.
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to our **Child Safe Champions: Principal, Lisa Wilson, or Nurse & Health Educator, Jacinta Bongiorno.**
- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and procedures and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#).
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/student(s)/person(s) are safe and protected from harm.
- Respecting the privacy of children/students, their families and our community members by only disclosing information to people who need to know.

3.0 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As RNS staff, volunteers, contractors and members of our school community involved in child-connected work, **we must not:**

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child/student abuse or harm.
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts).
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context.
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or student or do things of a personal nature they can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a child or student.
- Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance.
- Treat a child, student or anyone in our school community unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etcetera) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
- Photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy](#) or where required for duty of care purposes.
- Consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present.
- Have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and, if the student is under 18 years of age, parental permission has been sought.

4.0 BREACHES TO THE CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

All RNS staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety 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.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Commission For Children and Young People's Reportable Conduct Scheme guidelines and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the RNS Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal (or the Chair of the RNS Board if they involve the Principal).

5.0 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CODES

Staff are expected to adhere to ethical codes, legal requirements, conduct expectations and standards applicable to the profession in which they are qualified and employed by RNS. Of particular note are:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) – Code of Conduct for **Teachers**
[VIT Code of Conduct - for Teachers](#)
- National School Nursing's – Standards for Practice – **Registered Nurses**
[ANMF National School Nursing Standards for Practice](#)
- Australian Association of **Social Workers** (AASW) – Code of Ethics
[AASW Code of Ethics](#)
- **Youth Affairs** Council of Victoria Inc. – Code of Ethical Practice
[YACVIC - Code of Ethical Practice](#)

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Child Safety Policy
- Duty of Care Policy for the School Community
- Duty of Care Policy for Staff
- Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures
- [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy](#)
- Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures

RESOURCES

- [CCYP Tip Sheet - Child Safe Organisations](#)
- Child FIRST Reporting Flowchart - [Child FIRST Reporting Flowchart](#)
- [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#)

The River Nile School Inc.

ABN 20 382 591 724

Reg. Inc. Assoc. No. A0048482L

Endorsed Charity & Deductible Gift Recipient

Reg. School Number 2111

VCAA Provider 15457

DHS (Centrelink) Reg. School No. 32111

Level 1 - 117 Capel Street

North Melbourne VIC 3051

(03) 9329 8425

admin@rivernileschool.vic.edu.au

www.rivernileschool.vic.edu.au