

St Munchin's Catholic School



Code of Conduct

PURPOSE

To reflect Catholic Education Western Australia Executive Directive Code of Conduct, St Munchin's Code of Conduct is to describe minimum standards of conduct in all behaviour and decision making to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

APPLICATION

The Code applies to staff, students, volunteers, parents and guardians as applicable. The term 'parents' includes guardians.

INTRODUCTION

You acknowledge the inherent vulnerability of the students in your care.

You recognise that the safety and well-being of students depends upon your vigilance and diligence and the vigilance and diligence of all adults. The Code does not give you detailed professional advice on specific behaviour. Rather, it describes the minimum requirements expected of you. The Guidelines are illustrative and not an exhaustive list of the behaviours covered by the Code. If your behaviour varies from the standards described in this Code and Guidelines, you should be prepared to explain and justify your decisions and actions. While mandatory language such as 'must', 'shall' and 'will' is not used throughout the Code, there is a presumption the conduct described is mandatory and therefore not discretionary. The Principal expects you to conduct yourself personally and professionally in a way that maintains public trust and confidence in your school and the Church. You have a responsibility to students and their family, other members of the school community and the wider community to provide and support safe and competent education and care of students. You will do your best to support other members of the school community to comply with the Code. In cases of conflict between parts of the Code, between the Code and other Executive Directives and school policies, or in any decision-making choices, you give priority to the outcome that will be in the best interests of the safety and well-being of the child.

BREACHES

Breaches of the Code must be notified to the Principal and it is a breach of the Code not to do so. A breach of the Code may constitute a failure to follow a lawful direction from the Principal and therefore the Principal will have the discretion as to what action to take, which may include counselling, professional development or sanctions under any agreement between you and the Principal. If you are a parent, volunteer or visitor, the Principal may take such action as is appropriate in your circumstances to maintain the safety and well-being of students. The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code that was grooming behaviour: ie. deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a student, to lower the student's inhibitions in preparation for engaging in sexual activity with the student. Examples include:

- developing relationships that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students)

- being alone with a student in circumstances where you are unseen or unlikely to be randomly interrupted
- initiating unnecessary physical contact with students or doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engaging in personal disclosures (including personal contact details), or exchanges containing sexual content with or in the presence of a student
- organising contact with a student or their family outside of school without the Principal's knowledge and/or consent (e.g. tutoring, sport coaching).
- having any non-curriculum related online contact with a student (including via digital media) or their family
- using any personal digital media account to contact students or their family
- photographing or videoing a student without the consent of the parent
- being in the presence of a student whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs or offering either to a student

The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code of Conduct that was sexual abuse of a child: i.e. sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- the student is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
- the student has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

Conduct Statement 1: *You act safely and competently*

Guidelines

Members of the SMCS Community are expected to put the safety of students first, above everything else acting within the scope of their expertise and role within the school community. If a student requires care outside of your core competency, then you must refer the student to the appropriate expert.

Members of the SMCS Community are personally responsible, within the context of your position in the school community, for the provision of safe and competent student education. It is your responsibility to maintain the competence necessary to fulfil your role, this includes;

- participation in ongoing professional development
- ensuring you meet the necessary system and federal requirements such as Teacher Registration, Police Clearances and a ensuring you have a current Working With Children Check.
- Performing your role in the school within your professional or industry competency and per school policies and any standards or codes applicable to your profession or industry
- Performing your role in accordance with wider standards relating to safety and quality in education and student care and responsibility for a safe school, such as those relating to occupational health and safety, mandatory and critical incident reporting, and participation in incident analysis and formal open disclosure procedures.

Members of the SMCS Community recognise that the Principal, staff, parents and students assess your ability to act safely and competently based on your behaviour and decision making, and you do likewise in your assessment of them.

Members of the SMCS Community are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner, that suggests there is no speculation, doubt or ambiguity that you are always operating in the best interests of students.

Members of the SMCS Community must take reasonable steps to avoid situations where their decisions or behaviour could be interpreted as putting students at risk. You must also notify the Principal as soon as possible if you found yourself in such a position of ambiguity so that you can explain the circumstances.

Members of the SMCS Community recognise each student's and their parents' right to receive accurate information; be protected against foreseeable risk of harm; and be involved in and informed about decisions in relation to their education.

Members of the SMCS Community notify an appropriate person and the Leadership Team of any information relevant to maintaining student safety and well-being, or any observation of questionable, unethical or unlawful behaviour, including breaches of this Code, and intervene to safeguard the student if the circumstances require it.

Members of the SMCS Community ensure that any information you receive relevant to the safety and well-being of students is either acted upon by you in the best interests of the student if you are the relevant decision maker, or passed to the relevant decision maker for them to act.

Members of the SMCS Community perform your work in a safe and competent manner that is not compromised by personal health limitations, including the use of alcohol or other substances that may alter your capacity to act safely. If your health threatens your ability to work safely and competently, you have a responsibility to seek assistance to address your health needs. This may include making a confidential report to an appropriate authority.

Conduct statement 2

You give priority to students' safety and well-being in all your behaviour and decision making.

Guidelines

Members of the SMCS Community accept that all adults have individual and joint responsibility for the safety and well-being of students.

Members of the SMCS Community ensure the safety and well-being of students are the primary focus of all actions and decisions. These take precedence over any other considerations including the reputation of the school and your own needs. Members of the SMCS Community recognise the importance that students' education continues without interruption or disturbance

Members of the SMCS Community support and advocate for the safety, health and well-being of each student, promoting and supporting decisions and behaviour that contribute to the student's self-confidence, safety and well-being, above all other considerations, recognising that this is a joint responsibility for all adults working with the students.

Members of the SMCS Community do not behave in any way that risks creating ambiguity about whether you are acting in the best interests of a student.

Members of the SMCS Community respectfully communicate in plain language and in a way the student and those supporting their education can understand so they may fully participate in that education.

Members of the SMCS Community endeavour to ensure the voice of the student is heard as appropriate, considering age and circumstances.

Members of the SMCS Community look for opportunities to engage in formal and informal group and self-reflection and professional development about your own and others' decisions so that you and the school can learn and continuously improve. This includes welcoming feedback from Appraisals.

Members of the SMCS Community respectfully advocate for the safety and well-being of students above all other considerations, disclose to the Leadership Team, any information that a reasonable person would recognise may be relevant to the safety and well-being of students so that the Principal may make appropriate decisions to manage any risk to them. This includes any relationship with any person who may have been accused of harming children or acting unsafely towards them.

Members of the SMCS Community recognise that students and their parents are entitled to assume that the sole focus of your engagements with students is to educate them within a safe environment that puts their well-being above all else.

Conduct statement 3

You act in accordance with the values of the Gospel as defined in the Code of Ethical Conduct.

Guidelines

Members of the SMCS Community are mindful that their decisions and behaviour are opportunities for students and others to see Gospel values in action and how faith integrates with life.

Members of the SMCS Community acknowledge that as a member of a Catholic school community, you are required to strive to develop and live out your relationships with all people in a manner that is based on Gospel values as defined in the CECWA Code of Ethical Conduct.

Members of the SMCS Community accept that as a member of a Catholic school community, your conduct reflects on Catholic Education and the Church, and therefore you must strive to uphold the letter and spirit of the Code of Ethical Conduct.

Members of the SMCS Community are called upon by the Code of Ethical Conduct act in a manner that is:

- Based on Christian ethics
- Professional
- Timely
- Contextually appropriate

The Code of Ethical Conduct requires you to take an ethical approach based on the living out of Gospel values which find expression in:

- Respect for the dignity of each person
- Acknowledgment of the giftedness of each person
- Commitment to building positive relationships
- Confidentiality
- Accountability

Respecting dignity is based on:

- A conscious appreciation of the sacredness of the individual's creation
- A sensitivity to the fact that each individual has emotions, fears, hopes and an innate goodness which flows from creation in the image of God

Recognising the giftedness of others involves:

- Discerning these gifts
- Naming and acknowledging these gifts
- Empowering individuals and groups to use their gifts

Fostering positive relationships which flow from being:

- Welcoming and open
- Honest and loyal
- Trusting and trustworthy
- Willing to share knowledge, skills, resources and insights

Committing to appropriate confidentiality based on:

- Respect for others
- Professionalism

Committing to:

- The Mandate of the Bishops of Western Australia
- The acceptance of responsibility for any action or initiative at a personal and professional level.

Conduct statement 4

You conduct yourself in accordance with laws, agreements, policies, and standards relevant to your relationship with the school community.

Guidelines

Relationships: All members of the SMCS Community have a relationship with other members of the school community and is defined by whatever written or verbal agreement has given rise to that relationship.;

- If you are a member of staff, it is your employment agreement.
- If you are a parent or acting in a parental capacity, it is the student's enrolment agreement.
- If you are a member of the school board, it is your school board constitution.
- If you are a visitor, it is in accordance with the permission of the Principal to be on school grounds on condition that you act safely and competently.

If any members of the SMCS Community witnesses the unlawful or unsafe conduct of any other member of the school community, or breaches of procedure of this Code, whether in teaching, administration, school support services, or while engaging with students in person or via digital or other media, individuals have both a responsibility and an obligation to notify such conduct to the Leadership Team or an appropriate authority.

Members of the SMCS Community respect both the person and property of students and their families, and of other members of the school community, and the property and finances of the school.

Conduct statement 5

You respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of each member of the school community.

Guidelines

All members of the SMCS school community will respect both the person and the capacity of each member of the school community, treat them with dignity, show respect for their culture, values and beliefs

All members of the SMCS school community will not express racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist and other prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours toward any member of the school community. You take appropriate action when observing any such prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

You perform your duties and conduct your relations with students and members of the school community with fairness and justice. This includes;

- taking appropriate action to ensure the safety and quality of the education and care of students are not compromised because of harmful or prejudicial attitudes about culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, religion, disability, spirituality, political, social or health status.

In making professional judgements in relation to the interests and rights of a member of the school community, you do not contravene the law or breach the human rights of any person.

Conduct statement 6

You treat personal information about members of the school community as private and confidential.

Guidelines

All members of the SMCS school community use personal information in accordance with your school Privacy Policy having ethical and legal obligations to;

- protect the privacy of each member of the school community by treating personal information gained in your relationship with others as confidential
- restricting use and disclosure of any information to the purposes defined in the school Privacy Policy
- create and keep accurate records of conversations about significant decisions involving the safety and well-being of students
- seek advice if you identify a conflict between protecting personal information and any resulting risk to the safety and well-being of a student
- ensuring appropriate avenues of communication are be used. e.g. school email address appropriate, social media not appropriate. In order to ensure all relationships between staff and members of the wider community remain professional at all times.

All members of the SMCS school community have ethical and legal obligations to protect the privacy of each member of the school community by treating the information gained in the relationship as confidential, restricting its use and disclosure to the purposes defined in your school Privacy Procedure.

Conduct statement 7

You give and seek the best, honest and most accurate information about the education and care of students.

Guidelines

All members of the SMCS school community give and seek accurate advice relevant to the education, safety, and well-being of students, based on primary rather than secondary sources.

All members of the SMCS school community accurately represent the role they play in the education, safety, and well-being of students. Where the education, safety or well-being of a student requires expert knowledge or experience, individuals not qualified or competent in that area will seek out experts for the benefit of the student and not attempt to engage in a resolution.

All members of the SMCS school community seek out first hand sources of information directly from parents, colleagues and experts, or in documents and policies when making decisions or giving advice rather than relying on hearsay, opinion, rumour or assumptions.

Conduct Statement 8

You support all members of the school community in making informed decisions about students.

Guidelines

All members of the SMCS school community recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and equal partners in the education of students.

All members of the SMCS school community understand that each member of the school community has skills, experience and knowledge that may be a unique resource that can be directed to towards the safety and well-being of students.

All members of the SMCS school community actively share information about students with their parents and the Principal so that they may make informed decisions about students. You listen to everyone with courtesy and respect.

All members of the SMCS school community use plain language with appropriate style, tone and level in your written or verbal communication, particularly when expressing technical or expert advice, and you actively seek confirmation that you have been understood.

All members of the SMCS school community engage with all parents equally and fairly, regardless of their relationship status, mindful that, in the absence of court orders to the contrary, each parent has equal and joint parental responsibility for their child. Individuals do not allow their opinions about the behaviour of parents to prevent you from engaging openly and honestly with each of them about their child's education.

All Teachers, members of Leadership and the School Counsellor, will continue to inform and engage with parents about the education and well-being of their children on the assumption that it is in the student's best interests to do so, regardless of the parent's level of engagement with the primary educators or the child. SMCS primary educators respect any decision by a parent to disengage with you or their child, and you remain open to re-engage in the future.

All members of the SMCS school community do not use the behaviour of either parent as a reason for denying them or their child access to information or support from the school that are in the best interests of the student, unless doing so would place the student or school community at risk of harm.

Conduct Statement 9

You promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in your relationship with all members of the school community.

Guidelines

Members of the SMCS community will not engage in any behaviour with students or parents that could be interpreted by a reasonable person as being a friendship, including but not limited to engaging in communication via Social Media (e.g. Facebook), attending private functions (e.g. birthday parties), no favourites, spread time equally, high fives and fist pumps vs hugs, no private conversations in a room or socialising outside of school events.

Members of the SMCS community will not engage in any behaviour with a student that a reasonable person could interpret as creating an opportunity to engage in emotional, physical or sexual intimacy with a student.

Members of the SMCS community protect students who are vulnerable, including but not limited to students with disability, from exploitation and harm, by using an inclusive team approach involving the CEWA Disability Support Consultant, parents, the school leadership team and any outside agencies.

Members of the SMCS community understand that the power imbalance between adults and students may continue to influence students' choices beyond the date when they cease to be students at your school.

Members of the SMCS community do not knowingly mislead parents or make misrepresenting statements to them, or withhold information relevant to their ability to make informed decisions about their children unless required by law.

Members of the SMCS community recognise that there may be rare exceptions to full disclosure to parents. Such disclosure of information may compromise law enforcement or other risk management processes, or the privacy and reputation of those involved. SMSC community members seek legal or other expert advice in resolving such situations, recognising that parents have the right to know about any risk to their children.

Members of the SMCS community recognise that the power imbalance between adults and students means that the onus is on the adult to avoid any ambiguity or misunderstanding by a student or third party about intent in their behaviour towards them.

Conduct statement 10

You maintain and build on the community's trust and confidence in Catholic schools and the Church.

Guidelines

Members of the SMCS community must exemplify SMCS values of Prayer, Service and Truth and act as role models, leading by example at all times.

SMCS community members conduct, maintain and build on the public trust and confidence in Catholic schools and the church

SMCS Community members are aware that any unlawful and unethical actions in their personal life risk adversely affecting both their own and the school's reputation in the eyes of the public. (Choice of words, private views, open communication with families, pastoral listening, school meetings camps)

Conduct Statement 11

You act reflectively and ethically.

Guidelines

SMCS Community members engage with the school reflectively and ethically to ensure that they consciously put student safety and well-being at the forefront of their behaviour and decisions.

SMCS Community members develop and maintain appropriate and best practice advice, support and care for each student and their family by incorporating the Mission and Values Statements of our school.

SMCS Community members evaluate their conduct and competency according to this Code and the Teacher Reflective Practice Policy, the terms and conditions of your relationship with the school, and school policies.

SMCS Community members contribute to continuous improvement by supporting opportunities to record, assess and learn from incidents involving student safety and well-being. This includes abiding by school procedures such as filling out CCI incident forms, maintaining duty supervision and recording pastoral care notes using the schools preferred method (SEQTA).

SMCS Community members advise the Principal of any reduction in their capacity to act in the best interests of the safety and well-being of students due to health, social or other factors, while you seek ways of addressing the deficiency.

SMCS Community members take care of the safety and well-being of all members of the school community so that all persons may fully contribute and cooperate in providing for the safety and well-being of students.

Conduct Statement 12

You allow students to have a voice in their education, safety, and well-being.

Guidelines

SMCS Community members recognise that while all adults have responsibility for the safety and well-being of students, students have opinions and ideas about their education and well-being and offer them constructive feedback on their ideas and opinions.

Students decide on certain topics about education and wellbeing...(democratic process ie Big Day out, goal setting, class conduct Reflection time).

SMCS Community members allow age-appropriate opportunities and forums for students to reflect on and express their opinions and ideas and you treat those expressions with respect and care.

SMCS Community members encourage students to inform you or the Principal of any concerns they have about their own or other students' education, safety, or well-being.

SMCS Community members follow up those concerns and keep students informed of how they are resolved.

CODE OF CONDUCT for SMCS STAFF

STAFF DECLARATION

All Staff Role & Responsibilities:

- Understands that temporary contracts have an expiry date and when the full term of the contract is met, the staff member may need to reapply for the position.
- Understands that as an appointed member of staff at St Munchin's Catholic School the staff member will...
- ensure that all system and industrial protocol is followed. This includes; keeping their Working with Children Check up-to-date, ensuring they meet the requirements for TRBWA and pay the financial fees and keeping their accreditation current and active
- meet with the principal and mentor colleague on the specified dates and times
- abide by all school policies and practices
- abide and uphold the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- abide by the Catholic Ethos
- partake in all school based sacramental programs and other business, which is core to our identity as a Catholic, Faith based school.
- become active members of the SMCS professional learning community by attending all relevant (role related) – or requested by the Leadership Team staff meetings
- develop teaching and learning programs which are in line with the school's philosophy on education
- work collaboratively with our work colleagues
- embed the Gospel teachings across all facets of school life
- encourage parent participation and foster strong home-school links
- participate in whole school and individual professional development (where appropriate) to further their professional skills and abilities relevant to their position
- work with outside professionals (as required/or instructed to contribute to a child's development and academic achievement
- abide by the school's digital learning agreement and acceptable use of ICT and Digital Learning Policy

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- I acknowledge that I have read and understand, my roles and responsibilities as a staff member of St Munchin's Catholic School, Gosnells. I agree to abide by school procedures, practices, protocols and codes of conduct.***

Date: _____

NAME: _____

SCHOOL POSITION / JOB TITLE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILD SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Staff

- Included in staff procedures and at staff orientation
- Staff sign off on the Code of Conduct as part of their employment
- 20-30 mins will be set aside every school year to review the requirements of the Code of Conduct with staff (perhaps coupled with a Protective Behaviours session or Social and Emotional Wellness Program) e.g. added to our annual staff PDs
- Ensure all staff know the proper procedures for notifying the Principal or Leadership Team about breaches of the Code of Conduct

Students

- Ensure all students know the rules about visitors to the school eg they will be identified by their Visitors Badge
- Ensure all students know who to contact on duty during supervision times should an accident occur
- Ensure all students know how to access the School Counsellor should the need to
- Ensure all students are aware of the school rules
- Ensure all students are aware of the difference between safe boundaries and out of bounds within the school eg designated play areas

Visitors & Parents

- On school website
- Newsletter
- Presented to School Advisory Council (SAC) and P&F Association
- Code of Conduct quick reference sheet is prominently displayed
- All visitors to the school dealing with students (e.g. incursions, presenters, tradesman, workers, etc... are sent to the individuals in advance and asked to sign off)
- Include Code of Conduct in enrolment procedure and as a condition of enrolment

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHILD SAFETY QUICK REFERENCE SHEET

Individual Obligations

- All staff will abide by Catholic Education Western Australia policies and School procedures at all times, including supervision requirements, professional dress code, notifying the Principal of maintenance issues, etc...
- All staff will remember their professional capacity at all times, especially during the existence of dual relationships
- All staff will conduct themselves in a professional manner on Social Media, as per the school's position statement

Promotion of Safety & Conduct

- All staff will model SMCS values
- All staff will model the values associated with the Highway Heroes Program
- All staff will abide by pastoral care and duty of care protocols, this includes being on site by 8:10am at the latest and remaining onsite until 3:20pm (Unless previously arranged with the Leadership Team). Any child on school grounds outside these times, not in the care of teachers organising Clubs, become the responsibility of all staff members present
- No staff are to release a student without a signed exit slip from the office
- No staff are to accept a child into class late, without a late slip

Visitors to the School

- All visitors will report to front reception and sign in and out of the log book(iPad)
- All visitors must wear a visitor badge, this includes parent helpers
- Where possible, any visitors planned in advance (e.g. presenters, incursions, etc..) will be sent the Child Safety Code of Conduct before their visit. The SMCS staff member liaising with the visitor/s prior to their visit, must explain to the visitor/s that it is condition of entry that they abide by the Child Safety Code of Conduct and that it is their personal responsibility to read the Code and ask questions if they don't understand it.