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RELATED DOCUMENTS:	PPP083 Staff Code of Conduct PPP036 Statement of Intent – Child Protection and Safety PPP012 Child Safe Guidelines PPP052 Duty of Care of Students Guidelines PPP170 Responding to Abuse and Neglect Guidelines Board Directors only: Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations

1. Introduction

The Staff Code of Conduct sets standards for the way we work at South West TAFE. It provides a practical set of guiding principles to help employees to make decisions in their day to day work.

This addendum – *Code of Conduct – Child Safety* - has a specific focus on safeguarding children and young people at South West TAFE against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect. It is intended to complement other professional and/or occupational codes.

2. Scope

This *Code of Conduct - Child Safety* applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors and Board Directors of South West TAFE.

The *Code of Conduct - Child Safety* applies to employees, volunteers and Board Directors whenever they are identified as a representative of South West TAFE. In some circumstances, this will include times when you are outside your immediate workplace or working hours, for example, at work functions, out of hours work activities or when you are out in the community on behalf of South West TAFE.

The *Code of Conduct - Child Safety* applies to contractors whenever they are a South West TAFE site or whenever they are identified as a representative of South West TAFE.

3. Breaches of South West TAFE's Code of Conduct – Child Safety

Failure to comply with the intent of the *Code of Conduct - Child Safety* will be considered a serious breach of South West TAFE policy. Breaches of the *Code of Conduct - Child Safety* will be dealt with in accordance with South West TAFE's policies and procedures and will result in an appropriate consequence being applied.

4. Principles

South West TAFE's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

- ◆ All children have the right to be safe and their safety is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture
- ◆ Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
- ◆ The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount and their views and privacy must be respected.
- ◆ Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our organisation's community.
- ◆ Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our *Staff Code of Conduct* and *Student Code of Conduct*.
- ◆ Procedures are in place to screen all staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children.
- ◆ Child protection training is mandatory for all South West TAFE Board members, staff and volunteers.
- ◆ Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the organisation's community.
- ◆ Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
- ◆ Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

5. Child Safety Officer

South West TAFE has nominated the role of Manger – Student Services as the identified Child Safety Officer. The Child Safety Officer is the primary organisational contact acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of child safety and the nominated primary contact for external agencies such as Victoria Police and Department of Health and Human Services.

6. We adhere to South West TAFE's commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse and/or neglect

At South West TAFE we have a zero tolerance towards child abuse and/or neglect. We demonstrate this by observing child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children:

Acceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, external providers and contractors, and Board members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to our *Child Protection and Safety Guidelines* and upholding the organisation's Statement of Commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the organisation's community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child have been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promoting cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable and appropriate that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to South West TAFE's Child Safety Officer or an Executive Manager.
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
- reporting any child safety concerns to South West TAFE's Child Safety Officer or an Executive Manager.
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff, volunteers, external providers and contractors, and board members must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- put children at risk of abuse
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- without a valid context, have contact with a child or their family outside of class activities or South West TAFE events without informing and gaining the consent of the Child Safety Officer or Executive Manager (Education). For example, tutoring a student in a private setting. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is acceptable.
- without a valid context have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family (unless necessary for example; by providing families with e-newsletters or as their nominated preferred method of contact).
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- without a valid context exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

7. Further guidance

If you are unsure if a particular behaviour would be considered acceptable or unacceptable, speak with the Child Safety Officer.

UNDER REVIEW