



Guide to Child Safe Practices in Special Circumstances

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Purpose

The aim of this guide is to help staff, volunteers, contractors, and other professionals working in the College environment to meet the obligations of the Child Safety Code of Conduct while working in particular circumstances related to their responsibilities at the College.

For further guidance about child safe practices in special circumstances, please contact one of the following people:

- Deputy Principal Wellbeing
- College Child Safety Officer
- Risk and Compliance Team

1.0 Advice for specific roles

1.1 Teachers

Teachers are also required to abide by the principles relating to relationships with students as set out in the Victorian Teaching Profession's Code of Conduct published by the VIT. These principles include:

- knowing their students well, respecting their individual differences and catering for their individual abilities
- working to create an environment which promotes mutual respect
- modelling and engaging in respectful and impartial language
- protecting students from intimidation, embarrassment, humiliation, and harm
- respecting a student's privacy in sensitive matters
- interacting with students without displaying bias or preference
- not violating or compromising the unique position that a teacher holds of influence and trust in their relationship with students.

1.2 Psychologists and school counsellors

In their dealings with students, psychologists and school counsellors should also take into account their professional obligations as set out in a code of ethics or practice to which they are bound, including because of their membership of:

- the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
- the Australian Counselling Association
- Speech Pathology Australia

1.3 Sports and recreation

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training, or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing, or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be 'good sports'
- explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sporting or other recreational activity

- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

They should also consider the Sport Integrity Australia Child Safe Practices Do's and Don'ts advice (noting that the SFXC Child Safe Code of Conduct overrides this if there are conflicting statements)

2.0 Processes for specific circumstances

2.1 Processes for staff who are required to work alone with a child or young person

It is expected that staff to whom this relates will observe child safety principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children or young people. This may include (but is not limited to) College leadership, psychologists, counsellors, speech pathologists, learning inclusion leaders and music teachers.

Specific expectations for staff who, through the nature of their work, are required to work alone with a child or young person include:

- ensuring that the student is comfortable to work alone with the staff member, and make explicit the student's right to terminate the session or exit if they wish
- where possible, placing the student closest to the exit
- ensuring that relevant school staff (e.g., subject teachers) are aware of the student's whereabouts
- where a student is at risk and after hours contact details need to be provided to a parent or student, to only provide a school mobile phone number or a suitable contact number as advised by the student's Deputy Principal Head of Campus

2.2 Process for supervision of areas that require privacy (eg: Toilets or sleeping areas on camps)

It is expected that staff will be required to provide active supervision to areas that also require a level of privacy for students (eg: toilets or sleeping areas on camps).

At these times the following should be adhered to:

- checking of sleeping, changing or toilet/bathroom areas or supervising of such areas should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students' privacy and personal space
- checking of sleeping, changing or toilet/bathroom areas should be done (where possible) by staff of the same sex
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a sleeping, changing or toilet/bathroom area

The relevant College Deputy Principal and/or Activity Leader should be aware of both the reason for the check and the nature of the check.

2.3 Process for the Declarations of Staff/Student Interactions relating to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

It is St Francis Xavier College's expectation that all staff are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours (in person or online). These interactions may include instances where the staff member is:

- related to the student
- friends with the student's parents or family
- has a reason for knowing a student in another setting (eg: community sports or parish group)

It is St Francis Xavier College's expectation that all staff are to declare any conflict of interest they have with another employer or organisation.

St Francis Xavier College 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, as well as records of any conflict of interest. These records are kept indefinitely.

Forms for these declarations can be found on the Staff Resources Site (Child Safety and Wellbeing).

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from: Deputy Principal Wellbeing

Status of Procedure	
College Leader Responsible	Deputy Principal Wellbeing
Implementation Date / Last Reviewed	June 2024
Review Date [Commonly 1 – 2 Years]	June 2026
Local Governing Authority Approval	College Executive Team

Record of Review

Details of Amendments	By Whom	Date
New to align with updated Child Safety Code of Conduct	Deputy Principal Wellbeing	July 2022
- Removal of reference to home visits which are no longer a practice Addition of reference to the Sport Integrity Australia Child Safe Practices Do's and Don'ts	Deputy Principal Wellbeing	June 2024