



ESPERANCE

ANGLICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A school of the Anglican Schools Commission Inc

Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Policy Valid From	February 2018
Policy Due for Review	February 2021

This Code of Conduct is linked with the Anglican Schools Commission's *Child Safe* Policy.

All staff, volunteers and council members of Esperance Anglican Community School are required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards, and in the company of, children, as noted below. Although these principles and expectations are as comprehensive as possible they cannot cover every eventuality; however staff and volunteers are expected always to act in the best interests of the child in-line with the guidance in this code. It must always be remembered that Esperance Anglican Community School expressly prohibits any form of child abuse, corporal punishment and degrading treatment.

All personnel of Esperance Anglican Community School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to the Anglican Schools Commission *Child Safe* Policy at all times and upholding its commitment to child safety at all times
- Taking responsibility for their own actions and behaviour
- Acting in the best interests of the child
- Avoiding any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Treating everyone with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal, and ensuring any allegation is reported to the WA Police or Department for Child Protection and Family Support (DCPFS)
- For mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse, all allegations must be reported to the Mandatory Reporting Service of DCPFS, and the Principal should be informed as soon as is practicable
- Reporting any child safety concerns to the Principal

- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe

Staff and Volunteers must not:

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (e.g. the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment
- Exhibit behaviours with children which cross the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate interactions
- Put children at risk of abuse (e.g. by locking doors)
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Proselytise and promote personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- Act without due care, caution and consideration in any contact with a child or their family outside of the School; if in doubt about such contact the Principal must be contacted. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- Have any online contact using social media with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example, providing families with e-newsletters, using messaging to submit homework)
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Act without due care with the photography of activities, ensuring that students photographed are permitted by their parents to have such photographs taken (Reception can provide a list). Photos should not be posted on social media by individual teachers.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Principal.

Staff should exercise particular care in settings of the following nature

- social events
- the giving of gifts
- students in distress
- P.E., drama and other physical activities
- Showers and changing
- One-to-one situations
- Educational visits
- Home visits
- Bed times in the boarding house
- Transporting students
- Use of photography & other electronic media including ICT

Additional Guidance

Where no specific guidance exists about particular situations, or where staff are worried about how their actions might be interpreted, staff are advised that they should:

- Discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with the Principal or Deputy Principal. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted
- Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Principal or Deputy Principal
- Always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications – use SEQTA as appropriate

The School will exercise its responsibility to report to the DCPSF any person whose services it ceases to use because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

Some Advice on Abuse

Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Because we are in regular and frequent contact with children, school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse or unexplained changes in behaviour or performance which may indicate abuse, either at home or at school. It is also important to recognise that we are also in a privileged position with regard to students and we must be careful not to give grounds for any potential allegation of inappropriate conduct.

What is Child Abuse?

Four forms of abuse are enshrined in Western Australian law.

Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver. This manifests itself in situations where adults deliberately inflict injuries on a child or, knowingly, do not prevent them. It includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting. It also includes excessive force. Giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs or alcohol, and attempting to suffocate or drown a child are also examples of physical abuse. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Results: physical abuse can cause injuries including bruising, burns, fractures, internal injuries and brain damage. In extreme cases it can cause death.

Sexual abuse occurs in circumstances where the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence; and where the child has less power than another person in the behaviour; or where there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour. Such abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is fully aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. This may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Results: can be very damaging and long term. Sexually abused children may become abusers themselves, they may suffer long term feelings of guilt, they may find subsequent relationships difficult to handle.

Emotional abuse includes psychological abuse and being exposed to an act of family or domestic violence. It may be seen as the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill-treatment of a child although it may occur alone.

Results: emotional abuse damages children deeply - they feel unloved and unlovable and this can have serious effects on the child's personality, making it hard for him or her to form successful relationships.

Neglect includes a failure by a child's parents to provide, arrange or allow the provision of adequate care for the child; or effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child. It manifests as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child abuse can/does happen anywhere - in poor and in affluent homes; in rural, suburban or city areas - involving one or both parents, guardians or teachers.

Child abuse happens often. Many more events occur that are never reported.

Child abuse can also involve a fellow student or students abusing another. In such cases it is probable that pastoral staff will be in the best position to assess the situation e.g. boarding staff, Advisory Tutors, counsellors.

Signs of Abuse

“Possible signs and symptoms of child abuse – Young people (11+)”. (Gaynor Wingham MSc. CQSW)

You need to be alert to signs and symptoms that may indicate that a young person has suffered or is suffering abuse. It must be remembered that many of these may have an alternative explanation, but ALL are of some concern, whatever the possible cause. It is of greater concern if several of these occur or if they persist.

- Unexplained bruises and injuries.
- Bruises and injuries that appear inconsistent with the explanation.
- Untreated injuries.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Unwillingness to undress for PE or to have a medical.
- Attention seeking or over compliance.
- Attempted suicide / self-harm / self-mutilation.
- Aggression to others.
- Poor peer relationships
- Violent outbursts.
- Inappropriate sexual remarks and behaviour
- Presence of sexually transmitted diseases / recurrent infections.
- Pregnancy.
- Eating disorders.
- Depression / low self-esteem / self-deprecation.
- Alcohol / drug abuse.
- Lying / delinquency / stealing.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- History of “running away”.
- Inappropriate response to painful situations.
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Reluctance to go home.
- Fear of parents being contacted.

One of the most important things to do is to **LISTEN** to what a young person is telling you. He or she may want to tell you about abuse and your reaction to this is vital. Remain non-judgmental.

If a member of staff (or a student) has any worries or concerns share them immediately with the Principal or in his absence, the Deputy Principal. If you do not, you could be allowing the child to be put at further risk, and vital information may not come to light. We **MUST** not keep secrets or make promises to the student that other appropriate adults (e.g. social services or police) will not be involved. Even if a student later retracts their statement, DCPFS will still need to be informed.

Ensure that the student is in a safe place, for example in Reception or the Boarding House. Encourage the student to stay in School until all the information has been collected. Reception has procedures to follow regarding contact with parents and they should arrange this. NO contact should be made with the press

Points to Remember

- When initially talking to the child do not ask leading questions or “put words in their mouth”.
- Gather information on a “need to know” basis. You do not need the whole story, just sufficient to take the next step.
- Remember that the child is very vulnerable.
- Do not gossip about what you have been told either to colleagues or others.

Some Helpful Definitions

Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child’s caregiver.

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

Emotional abuse includes psychological abuse and being exposed to an act of family or domestic violence.

Neglect includes a failure by a child’s parents to provide, arrange or allow the provision of adequate care for the child; or effective medical, therapeutic or remedial treatment for the child.

Corporal Punishment

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. This would typically involve hitting a child with the hand or with an implement; it can also include forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm. This definition comes from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 15: CRC/C/GC/8, 2nd March 2007.

Degrading Punishment

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment, and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or

ridicules the child. This definition comes from UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006), paragraphs 11 and 16: CRC/C/GC/8, 2nd March 2007.

Grooming

The use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in order to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour, with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or prohibiting exposure.

Unlawful Discrimination

Discrimination in education as defined in the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (WA), *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cwth), *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cwth), *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwth) and the *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cwth).

Training

Staff will receive training in the interpretation and execution of this code of conduct on an annual basis.

Contact Numbers

Principal – Kerr 0499 159 950

Deputy Principal – Iain 0418 752 399

School Reception – (08) 9083 2444

Mandatory Reporting 1800 708 704

Non-Mandatory reporting 1800 273 889 (After hours 1800 199 008)