



Thomastown East Primary School

Child Safety Code of Conduct



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Thomastown East Primary School

PURPOSE

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Thomastown East Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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).

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As Thomastown East Primary School 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 Thomastown East Primary School commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety Policy.
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) students
- 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 line of sight of another adult.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the **Principal: Mr Jeremy Blaney**
- 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 student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

As Thomastown East Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors and member of our school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child 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
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- treat a child or student 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 etc) 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 parental permission has been sought.

THOMASTOWN EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT PRACTICES:

Making a professional judgement

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a member of School Leadership or Child Safe Leader
- Be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others
- Not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of an inappropriate nature.

Personal/living space

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and School Leadership or the home has been designated as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers

- Be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- Not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Gifts, rewards and favouritism

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Be aware of the school's and the Department of Education and Training's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared
- Gift giving to an individual as part of a reward system should be avoided, instead, be based on collective or team based positive reinforcement.
- Ensure that if operating reward/award systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

Infatuations

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Deal with infatuations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned
- Make sure their own behaviour is beyond reproach
- If they become aware of an infatuation developing or any indications that it may, record it and discuss it with a School Leadership member or the Child Safe Leader so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

Communication (including the use of technology)

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries this includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, and blogs.
- Not share any personal information with a child
- Not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role
- Not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless the need to do so is agreed with School Leadership and parents
- Only contact children for professional reasons and in accordance with school policy
- Only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible
- Not use internet, web-based or social media communication channels to send messages
- Use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the school's policy.

Social Contact

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Not have social contact with children unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with School Leadership
- Not have secret social contact with children and/or their parent(s);
- Always approve any planned social contact with children with School Leadership
- Advise School Leadership or Child Safe Leader of any social contact that has occurred which may raise concern
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing.

Sexual Contact

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Not engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity, to do so would be considered a criminal offence;
- Not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically
- Not discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children
- Ensure relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism
- Ensure language, attitudes and demeanor do not give rise to comment or speculation
- Be aware that consistently displaying special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as part of a grooming process, and as such will give rise to concerns about behaviour.

Physical Contact

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities, never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary
- Seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable;
- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort;
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with School Leadership and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan

- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Behaviour Management

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Not use any form of degrading treatment towards a child
- Not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments
- Ensure any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Never use corporal punishment
- Follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property
- When using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident
- Be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, i.e. bullying, changes in home circumstances

Note: the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

Personal/Intimate Care

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Adhere to the schools Code of Conduct
- Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- Explain to the child what is happening;
- Carefully and sensitively observe the emotional responses of the child, and record and report any concerns to School Leadership and parents, if appropriate
- Respect children's privacy at all times
- Avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, other than as part of an agreed care plan
- Not change in the same place as children
- Not shower or bathe with children
- Not assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves.

One to one situations/home visits

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Ensure that, when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed
- Avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas
- Always inform colleagues and/or parents about one to one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by

- Avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs, where ever possible, these create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- Carefully consider the need of the child when in one to one situation and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry towards you
- Gain approval from school leadership for any home visit ensuring it is integral part of your role
- Never put yourself into a one to one situation when little or no information is available about the child.

Transporting

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Ensure requirements specific to seat belts and car seats are adhered to
- Not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of school leadership and been agreed with parents
- Ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive
- Record details of the journey in accordance with agreed DET procedures
- Ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance
- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned.

Excursions and Camps

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities, unless otherwise agreed with by school leadership
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken
- Have parental consent to the activity
- Never share beds with children
- Not share bedrooms unless it is a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been agreed with a school leadership, parents and children.

Photography and Videos

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Be clear about the purpose of any activity involving photography and what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded
- Be able to justify the reason for having images of children in their possession
- Avoid making images in one to one situations or situations that may be construed as secretive or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by their school

- Immediately report any concerns if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found
- Have parental consent to take, display and/or distribute any images of children
- Not use images that may cause distress or offence

Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School will:

- Not access, make or store indecent images of children on the internet, to do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation
- Not make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment
- Follow their school’s guidance on the use of ICT equipment
- Ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through ICT
- Ensure that any materials shown to children are age appropriate
- Immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the school leadership and follow mandatory reporting policy.

Reporting and raising concerns

Adults at Thomastown East Primary School are accountable for:

- Reporting and raising concerns about staff/volunteer/contractor conduct and if unsure to consult with leadership who can guide them through the appropriate actions to take
- Failing to Protect and/or Disclose allegations or suspicions of child abuse, or offences against children

BREACHES TO THE CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

All Thomastown East Primary School 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 Department of Education’s Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Thomastown East Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal Mr Jeremy Blaney 94653032

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact North Western Victoria Region on 1300 333 231 or NWVR@education.vic.gov.au.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Policy last reviewed	2025
Consultation	Staff and School Council February 2026
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	2027