

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

PURPOSE

Melbourne Montessori School (MMS, the School) is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of care and behaviour for the educational environment that benefits our entire community.

This Code of Conduct sets out to clarify the actions, behaviours and conduct which are naturally expected of our MMS community being all employees, volunteers, board members and others acting on behalf of MMS in any capacity at all times. This way of behaving is outlined in the Staff Charter, Children's charter but need to also include families and care-givers, fellow MMS colleagues (staff and volunteers alike), regulatory bodies, and contractors.

What does this policy include?

- A. Vision and Mission**
- B. Scope**
- C. Values and Objectives - Quality**
- D. Responsibilities and expectations**
- E. Expectations looking after students in our care**
- F. Communication - all media**
- G. MMS property and confidentiality**
- H. Conflict of interest**
- I. Acceptance**

A. VISION AND MISSION

Vision – Inspiring our children to create a better world with their own two hands.

Mission – Our Mission is to:

- Provide excellence in Montessori education
- Provide an enriched and welcoming learning community that embodies the Montessori principals of respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment as well as respect for our country's freedoms and democratic principles
- Nurture, inspire and support each child's individual development
- Foster the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, personal and social responsibility
- Foster children's innate love of learning and to make their introduction to education a joyful and purposeful start to a journey of life-long learning.

B. SCOPE

All persons acting on behalf of MMS, which include staff, volunteers, visitors, and board members, are required to be familiar with this Code of Conduct and how it relates to the performance of their duties.

Staff members include casual, part time and full time employees. Volunteers and visitors include parent/guardians visiting their child or helping the school with a specific activity and any organised guest to the school such as student teacher placements.

This Code of Conduct needs to be addressed during induction and, where appropriate, integrated through MMS professional development programs and general learning opportunities. This Code of Conduct is seen as a reference document with which everyone should become familiar.

C. VALUES AND OBJECTIVE

Montessori Philosophy

The Blueprint, which was determined by staff and parents, is the document which guides the Melbourne Montessori ethos. The curriculum at Melbourne Montessori School is taken from the National Montessori Curriculum which was developed by Montessori Australia Foundation and ratified by ACARA in November 2011. We are also bound by AUSVELS, the Australian Curriculum, and Early Childhood Education and Care National Quality Framework (NQF).

Staff and parents are expected to reflect on Montessori philosophy over time and staff need to be familiar with all the policies and procedures as outlined in their contract and Staff Handbook.

Values

MMS values underpin how we act, reflect and behave as MMS people. To ensure that MMS continues to provide outstanding levels of care for children, all staff are expected to follow the Staff Charter and these statements below help to clarify the expected behaviours encompassed in the Charter.

MMS MMS Values	Value Statements	Behaviours that model our Values
INTEGRITY	Always act truthfully	We provide a safe and welcoming environment We support each other We share ideas, skills and resources to sustain high morale We are open and honest in all we do We exemplify the trust families place in us every day We empower employees to make proactive decisions
EXCELLENCE	Always strive for excellence	We provide opportunity for learning and growth We take pride in striving for the best for all We set ourselves and our children challenging, but realistic goals, and take personal accountability to achieve them We work collaboratively, think creatively and celebrate our achievements We believe that with patience, sensitivity and respect we can support each individual's potential for excellence
RESPECT	Treat others as we would like to be treated	We meet each day with optimism We recognise that the process of exploration is encouraged and valued We encourage inclusion and diversity and accept the rights of others We maintain an environment where it is encouraged to share views and ideas. This includes children, parents, community and colleagues We consider the way our actions will impact on others We show regard and appreciation for our environment We consider the environment and act in a sustainable manner

Objective - Excellence

To maintain the strategic intention to be a school of excellence, we recognise that excellent reflection, planning and enabling of top quality education and care are necessary across the school. Everything School staff do, how they act, think and behave, should reflect and sustain the School's excellent standard of quality care towards the children entrusted to the School for learning and education.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS**General Expectations of all MMS staff, volunteers and board members**

All persons acting on behalf of MMS, in any capacity are expected to:

- hold and maintain the appropriate (and current) qualifications, VIT and/or Working with Children clearance as required for your role at MMS;
- behave in a way that represents our values in all aspects of your employment (for volunteers, engagement);
- ensure we provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for MMS community
- maintain high standards of conduct whenever you are representing MMS;
- respect the rights of other persons and:
 - treat other persons fairly, courteously and without discrimination, harassment or bullying,
 - uphold the rights and responsibilities of families and caregivers as set out in MMS Policies,
 - be respectful of, and responsive to, persons of all ethnicities, cultures, values and beliefs,
 - promote the principles of equal opportunity in MMS campuses.
- perform your duties as required to the best of your ability, showing commitment to a high quality of work by acting within the bounds of all relevant legislation, rules and regulations at all times including:
 - making decisions appropriate to your position held and being responsible for those decisions and the actions that result from them,
 - being supportive of your work colleagues and accepting job responsibilities as a team member or MMS staff, and following the lawful and reasonable instructions and directions of supervisors as outlined in your contract,
 - upholding the reputation and standing of MMS families, by ensuring the security and confidentiality of all information that is gained during the course of employment with MMS,
 - treating all MMS property and assets with care and respect,
 - using financial and non-financial information gathered by MMS and personal knowledge of the systems and processes at MMS only to perform MMS's functions,
 - being supportive of changes made by MMS
 - Complying with the Code of any professional body that you are registered or affiliated with, where this impacts upon MMS.
- Exercise good judgement to determine what action, behaviour or conduct to take in any given situation. Any such action needs to be able to withstand scrutiny, from internal and external parties, if necessary;
- Act professionally and with integrity at all times. Professionalism includes:
 - maintain a calm attitude towards children and parents, treating situations objectively rather than subjectively (behaving rationally rather than emotionally) in front of others and considering the points of view of everyone;
 - striving to ensure a high standard of work in everything employees do;
 - Understanding the significant influence staff have in the lives of children because the relationship involves regular contact over relatively long periods of time. These features of education and care settings make it extremely important for staff in direct contact with children to understand how to foster positive relationships and conduct their behaviours in ways that enhance children's wellbeing;

- being guided by the Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics, The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics, and Department of Education Ethics;
- respecting all other persons they come into contact with in the course of completing MMS's duties;
- Using appropriate channels eg. approaching the Principal, to address and resolve any problems or issues of concern;
- complying with all applicable MMS policies, procedures and processes;
- Perform their duties to the best of their ability with care, competence and efficiency. At all times when representing MMS, whether during or after working hours if discussing MMS, our staff are considered to be acting on behalf of MMS and this Code of Conduct applies

Additional Responsibilities of MMS Staff who hold leadership responsibilities (eg Coordinators, Nominated Supervisor, Management and Board Members)

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- expecting and maintaining high standards of conduct in the school community and workplace;
- setting an example to all by your own observance of this Code of Conduct;
- ensuring that the requirements of this Code of Conduct are reflected in the day to day management of all and the leadership of staff;
- ensuring that staff have access to copies of this Code of Conduct and other relevant documents and policies;
- representing MMS positively and professionally when interacting with MMS's employees, visitors, volunteers and contractors;
- Reporting unacceptable behaviour or conduct to the management delegates specifically Vice Principal, Business Manager and Principal. Such behaviour or conduct will be investigated and it will be ensured that staff who appropriately disclose information regarding unacceptable conduct are supported;

E. EXPECTATIONS LOOKING AFTER STUDENTS IN OUR CARE

As outlined in our Blueprint and in both the Children's Charter and Staff Charter, MMS recognises the importance of fostering positive interactions between employees and the children they work with. MMS staff are to interact and communicate with students in a highly professional and ethical manner, befitting the highest possible standards of care, at all times. Staff and volunteers who have contact with students will respond to, and guide them, through positive and meaningful interactions and will show respect for each child as an individual.

All MMS staff in their relationships with students, are required to ensure that the physical and emotional wellbeing of students is safeguarded, and that their own behaviour is guided by a duty of care both within and beyond the education and care setting to provide children with an adequate/considered level of protection against harm.

All staff, volunteers and board members of MMS are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as clarified in the points below.

All staff, volunteers and board members of MMS are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by (list of acceptable behaviours):

- adhering to MMS Child Safe Policy at all times
- 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
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to MMS Child Safety Officer / leadership staff, and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to MMS Child Safety Officer / leadership staff
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.
- use positive guidance and behaviour management strategies and work with children in an appropriate manner; (note: behaviour management techniques must not include physical, verbal or emotional harm or the deprivation of liberty)
- if a staff member or volunteer is unsure of positive guidance or behaviour management strategies, they must seek help immediately
- provide a pleasant, safe and nurturing environment for all children, free from harm or any hazard likely to cause harm
- seek to develop positive learning outcomes for all children;

Staff, volunteers and board members must not (list of unacceptable behaviours):

- 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 (for example inappropriate sitting on laps when it is unnecessary or can be avoided. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometimes, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- 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 (for example, personal social activities or about films which are M15+) or express adult anger or emotion
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express critical personal views on cultures or race
- demonstrate personal sexuality in the presence of students or comment on a student's sexuality
- discriminate against any child for any reason especially of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child enrolled in the school, or their family outside of our organisation without our Child Safety Officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with student updates or e-newsletters)

F. COMMUNICATION – ALL MEDIA

Communication & Information Technology

MMS recognises the importance of effective communication to ensure it achieves its goals. With the two campuses and speed of digital communication it is important that communications are received, and shared, in a timely and effective manner.

All MMS staff are reminded when communicating that they are representing MMS and that they should uphold all the values and policies of MMS, relevant to how, and what, they are communicating, particularly in regard to the strict maintenance of confidentiality, privacy and professionalism at all times.

Following the Responsible Use of Information Communication Technology Policy, the MMS network including communication technologies, software and hardware and resources such as printers and IT systems, are provided for to enhance teaching and learning opportunities in a safe physical and emotional environment. Any forms of communications, technical applications, procedures or processes that interfere with this primary objective will be considered unacceptable and will be dealt with swiftly.

Language

To ensure a high standard of quality in our work and the positive reputation of MMS, staff and volunteers need to use appropriate language or words and need to desist from the use of derogatory comments whilst representing MMS, or in the presence of other staff, families, guardians, suppliers, contractors or children.

Participation in mainstream media and social media

Following the Responsible Online Behaviour Policy, members of the MMS community are required to act ethically and responsibly in their use of technology and social media when such use relates to, or may impact on the School or other members of the MMS community.

G. MMS PROPERTY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Copyright and Intellectual Property

All MMS related documents, materials and tools which are developed at Melbourne Montessori School (including its policies, procedures and learning and educational programs) are the property of Melbourne Montessori School and cannot be copied or reproduced, in any way, for use outside of MMS unless, with prior consent, for other Montessori schools.

Privacy and Confidentiality

During the normal course of running the school, employees and volunteers may be trusted with personal and confidential documents and information that belongs to (for example):

- MMS;
- the students in the care of MMS and their families and carers;
- employees;
- Government Agencies;
- MMS's suppliers; and
- Other persons and networks which the MMS Representatives interact with in the course of managing or conducting MMS's affairs.

In accordance with the & Confidentiality Policy, MMS staff and volunteers need to be mindful of the personal or confidential information of much of the information they deal with and need to be careful not to discuss nor disclose this information to another person, unless such discussion and disclosure is required to perform their duties or to comply with a legal requirement. If any employee is ever unsure as to the need to use/disclose/discuss any information or document, they are to err on the side of caution, not use/disclose/discuss the information and seek advice and direction from the Principal/Cycle Coordinator.

This applies equally to persons whilst they are employed/engaged and after they leave MMS.

All MMS information and documents must be kept in an appropriate storage area. This means that some documents and information are to be kept in a locked and secure location (including, employee-related information, students' details and family information, MMS records including financial records).

Use of MMS Property and Resources

MMS provides a number of resources which enable employees to carry out their jobs (including cash, equipment, telephones, internet and intranet systems, computer hardware, technology systems and associated software).

Whilst it is natural that there may be some approved usage of these items by employees on a 'personal use' basis, such usage is at the discretion of MMS and employees are required to obtain permission from the Principal or Business Manager before using any MMS property for personal/non organisational use.

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that the MMS logo, letterhead and MMS stationery entrusted to them are used carefully, lawfully, honestly and not misappropriated. Unless proper authorisation has been granted, MMS resources are not to be used for private purposes.

In addition, MMS's property and resources are not allowed to be removed from MMS premises without the express permission of the Principal or Business Manager.

Telephones and Mobiles and Internet usage

MMS Phones in the classroom are freely available to staff for any matters relating to school business and staff are expected to limit the use of the phone for personal matters. The use of personal mobile phones is permitted during time release or lunch times, but not during class time or on Yard Duty. When receiving or making calls on behalf of the school, employees are to remember they are representing MMS and should speak in a professional manner upholding MMS's values. At no time should inappropriate material (such as racist, sexist) be viewed at any MMS premises whether on MMS or personal devices nor transmitted nor received via MMS telecommunications or computer technology. See the Responsible Online Behaviour Policy.

Children are only permitted to use the phone for outgoing calls with teacher permission.

Photography at Work

As outlined in the Privacy Policy, specific conditions apply to MMS staff photographing children and families at MMS:

- photographs may only be taken of children by MMS staff with the consent of the child's parent or guardians, granted when completing the Family Enrolment Form or separately through the Image and Media Consent (Children) Form;
- photographs of children and families may only be used for the purposes listed in the consent;
- photographs of children and families are only to be taken, transmitted or saved by MMS Representatives on MMS owned cameras, devices or computers;
- MMS Representatives are never to take, transmit or save photographs of children or families on personal cameras, devices or computers.

H. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

MMS staff must disclose in writing to the Principal the existence of any potential or actual conflicts of interest that may impact on their MMS-related duties. Where a reasonable risk of conflict of interest is determined to exist, MMS staff and volunteers need to comply with advice on how to resolve the conflict e.g. to desist from the activity in question.

Any persons with questions about the difference between perceived and actual conflict of interest need to discuss with either the Principal or Business Manager for clarification. Considerations will be made according to the circumstances and detail of scenario provided, and all reasonable efforts must be made to reduce the negative impact of either a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

Examples of or circumstances of conflicts of interest, include, but are not limited to:

- doing business with, or being employed by, an organisation that is in the same or similar business as MMS or a competitor of MMS;
- undertaking secondary employment for families who attend MMS such as providing private tutoring to students
- doing business with a supplier because they have given MMS or one of its employees a gift or benefit

- working alongside, or in a manager/employee relationship with a close relative (for example, spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, grandparent or the parent of their spouse)
- working in the immediate area/room as a student attending MMS who is a close relative (for example, child, step-child, foster-child, niece, nephew grandchild or a child in respect of whom the MMS staff acts as guardian or primary care giver);
- being involved in a decision relating to the selection, appointment or promotion of a close relative or associate

MMS leadership do not suggest these arrangements cannot occur. Rather MMS Management reserve the right to set boundaries, have discussion with those directly impacted, and make any changes deemed appropriate regarding how these scenarios will be supported. The focus is to ultimately ensure a supported, positive experience for the whole MMS community.

Employee Relations

MMS is committed to promoting positive working relations among all our employees, and we encourage anyone to talk to the Principal or Business Manager if they have any concerns about unacceptable actions or behaviours or even if they are unsure but feel compromised.

I. ACCEPTANCE

All staff, volunteers and board members are required to read this Code of Conduct and return to HR Officer an acknowledgement and acceptance of this addition to conditions of employment or engagement.

This Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with all other MMS policies and procedures, employment contracts and relevant industrial instruments.

As outlined in every MMS staff or board member terms of employment/engagement, persons found breaching this policy could be subject to conduct management, which depending on circumstances and ultimately, for the sake of the children, may result in disciplinary action or termination of employment and/or legal defamation or other proceedings.

As outlined in every MMS visitor or volunteer terms of engagement, persons found breaching this policy will be subject to disciplinary action or immediate cancellation of engagement with MMS and/or legal defamation or other proceedings.

By observing these above standards and expectations you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to conduct to leadership title such as Principal, Vice Principal or Business Manager.

I, agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct.
(Insert full name)

Signature: **Date:**

REVIEW

This policy is to be implemented by: All Staff, volunteers and board members
Content Owner: MMS Principal

Last updated: September 2017