



# Thomastown Primary School

## CODE OF CONDUCT PRACTICES

(Child Safe Standard 3)

### **Making a professional judgement**

Adults at Thomastown 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	15 March 2022
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date will be 1 year from last review	15 march 2023