

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Author	Date	ED Approval	Board Adoption
EJT	August 2025	August 2025	October 2025

MITS Purpose: Supporting Indigenous students to achieve their educational aspirations in Melbourne

MITS Vision: Empowered Indigenous students inspiring strong communities

MITS Values: Respect Courage Culture Care

1 Introduction

A Child Safety Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable at MITS. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other, children and young people. When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the MITS environment becomes much more transparent and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children and young people from harm.

The Child Protection Code of Conduct applies to:

- all directors and staff members, including non-student-facing staff and temporary or casual staff;
- volunteers (direct and indirect);
- students;
- parents and carers;
- third party contractors, consultants and service providers (including external education providers);
- teaching students on placement at MITS; and
- visitors.

The Code is made available to all directors, staff, volunteers, families, students third party contractors, consultants, service providers, teaching students and visitors via MITS's public website and on Sentral.

2 Commitment to Child Safety

MITS is committed to the safety of children and young people. We want children and young people to be physically and psychologically safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children and young people, as well as our staff, volunteers and others who work with MITS.

As a school for Indigenous students, we are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people, and to the cultural safety of all from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. We are also committed to providing a physically and psychologically safe environment for children with disabilities.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and every allegation and safety concern will be treated seriously in line with our policies and procedures, and our external reporting obligations.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a 'reasonable belief' that an incident took place or if we have a concern about a potential risk of harm.

Factors contributing to 'reasonable belief' may be:

- (a) a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves);
- (b) behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed;
- (c) someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it; or
- (d) observing suspicious behaviour.

MITS is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our directors, leadership team, staff, volunteers and students to achieve these commitments. We also have site specific risk management plans which identify, amongst other things, particular situations that may increase the risk of child abuse or harm and identify mitigation factors for these risks. All teaching staff, non-teaching staff, the Board Directors, volunteers (direct and indirect) and parents/carers should review these risk management plans, which can be found on Sentral. Third party contractors, consultants and service providers can access this material from MITS management.

We support and respect all children and young people.

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

3 Definitions

Executive Committee means the Chief Executive Officer, the Principal, the Head of Boarding and Wellbeing.

Child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child;
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming;
- physical violence against a child;
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child;
- serious neglect of a child;

whether physical, verbal or online.

Child Safety Officers means MITS staff who are appointed as Child Safety Officers by the Executive Committee from time to time.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children or young people. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time. Harm can be the result of the behaviour of an individual or a group of people.

4 Our Child Safety Code of Conduct

This Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code also serves to protect students from the conduct of other students, reducing any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. The Code actively promotes child safety in the MITS environment whilst providing guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or effectively manage difficult situations.

Where a director, staff member, volunteer or other relevant adult breaches the Code, MITS will determine the appropriate level of action to be taken. Disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches a summary dismissal, or the immediate cancellation of a contract may result.

MITS reviews the Code at least every other year, and will undertake that review with input from directors, staff, students and other members of the MITS community.

MITS has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students within our community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Board directors, volunteers, third party contractors, consultants, service providers and parents/carers. The Board of Directors has endorsed this Child Safety Code of Conduct.

4.1 WHAT YOU MUST DO

- Behave as a positive role model to students by acting in accordance with MITS's values of respect, courage, culture and care.
- Promote the physical and psychological safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be pre-emptive, proactive and vigilant with regards to student safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.
- Comply with MITS's child protection policies and procedures.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of MITS's students as young Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.
- Promote the physical and psychological safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.
- Use positive and affirming language towards students.
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and then listen to them with respect and (where relevant) take into account their views when making decisions affecting them.
- Respect cultural, religious, gender and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene if students are engaging in bullying behaviour that targets, marginalises, humiliates, intimidates or vilifies.
- Report all breaches of this Child Safety Code of Conduct promptly.
- Report child safety concerns to one of our Child Safety Officers or a member of the Executive Committee ensuring that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are also met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is physically and psychologically safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for the safety of a student.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have 'a need to know'.

4.2 WHAT YOU MUST NOT DO

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to inappropriate behaviour.
- Use stereotyping, prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students.
- Express personal views on cultures, race, gender identity or sexuality in the presence of students.
- Do not discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, politics, pregnancy, family responsibilities, physical features, or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments, jokes or sharing sexually suggestive material directly or online.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.

- Engage in any form of bullying, physical threat or violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students or engaging with a student in any form of online forum).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Engage in meetings with a child that is not your own, outside of school hours and without recent and specific permission from the school and the child's parent, unless in a serious emergency situation.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including online contact or interactions with a student, or via a third party.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or visual / verbal recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post online any information about a student or their family that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; family's location or details of a club or group they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

5 Report Any Concerns

MITs has a Complaints Handling Policy that includes information for directors, staff and volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to. An easy-to-understand complaints information sheet will be provided for students, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint, and those involved in the complaint process.

The MITs's Child Safety Policy includes information for the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and other relevant adults about how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of MITs's nominated Child Safety Officers in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy. All documents relating to the Child Safety Policy, including the Complaints Handling Policy, are available on Sentral.

Communications will be treated seriously and confidentially on a 'need to know' basis.

All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

All directors, staff, volunteers (direct and indirect) and other relevant adults associated with MITs are required to prioritise the safety of children and young people in any complaint response or when a child safety concern is raised, and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police.

Under the Complaints Handling Policy and Disciplinary Policy individuals associated with complaints and concerns may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation;
- having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at MITs;
- not allowing unsupervised contact with children at MITs;
- removing their access to the MITs's IT system and facilities.

Third party contractors, consultants, service providers, students, parents or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of our Child Safety Officers immediately.

All MITs directors, staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), third party contractors, consultants, service providers, adult students, parents or other community members should be aware that there are criminal offences in Victoria for failing to act on child safety issues.

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

6 Signature

This Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reviewed and signed by all directors, staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), third party contractors, consultants and service providers upon commencement of their employment / engagement with MITS, and again at the commencement of each school year when employment / engagement continues. Adult students are also required to review and sign this Code.

I acknowledge that I have read, understood and will act in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

(Signature)

Date

(Print name)