Islamic College of Melbourne
—
P.O. Box 8153
ABN 44 127 774 298

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Australia

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1.   Rationale

This code of conduct outlines the expected standards for appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children, including online conduct.

A child safety code of conduct is intended to promote child safety in the school environment and raise awareness, to outline professional boundaries and acceptable and unacceptable adult/child relationships and behaviour. It should be unambiguous, widely disseminated and supported by supervision, professional development and training. A child safety code of conduct helps schools, staff and volunteers to raise behavioural issues. It provides a reference point for discussion when there may otherwise be confusion, uncertainty, or a lack of confidence about boundaries for appropriate behaviour with children.

This code of conduct is consistent with the college's child safety strategies, policies and procedures. It has been developed in consideration of the diversity of the students enrolled at the college, including children with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and vulnerable children. In considering this diversity children must always be protected from harm.

The college uses this code of conduct:

- As part of induction training for new staff and volunteers.

- As part of refresher training for existing staff and volunteers.

- To inform parents/carers and other persons associated with the college what behaviour they can expect from the college's staff and volunteers.

- To support and inform college protocols and reporting procedures should breaches of the code be suspected or identified.

Employment advertisements and contracts should include reference to this code of conduct.

The code of conduct applies to:

- All staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff
- Volunteers
- Students
- Parents/Carers
- Third party contractors
- External education providers
- School board members
- Teaching students on placement at the College
- Visitors

2. Acceptable Behaviours

At the Islamic College of Melbourne, maintaining and upholding the College Islamic ethos, is a requirement of every staff member in order to imbue students with a holistic, religious environment. Regardless of the extent or nature of interactions with students or whether employees are in support positions, the Islamic environment at the Islamic College of Melbourne can only be preserved when all members of staff uphold Islamic values in their roles. It is a genuine inherent requirement of every staff member whose conduct and behaviors are observed by students that they adhere to the religious ethos of the College. This requirement is not exclusive to religious teachers or religious leaders such as Imams. Any contradictions or affronts to these Islamic values risks compromising the Islamic environment and ethos of the school.

All staff, volunteers and board members of the Islamic College of Melbourne are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of the Islamic College of Melbourne are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to the Islamic College of Melbourne child safe policy at all times/upholding the Islamic College of Melbourne's statement of commitment to child safety at all times.

- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.

- Treating everyone, students, staff and teachers 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 student.

- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 towards 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 and all allegations of child abuse to the Islamic College of Melbourne's Child Safety Officers and ensure any allegation are to be reported to the police or child protection.

- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958.

- Reporting any child safety concerns to the Islamic College of Melbourne's Child Safety Officers.

- 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 college activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual office by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

3. Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example the offering of gifts or special treatment of specific children).

- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical for example having students lap sit excessively. (Lap sitting could be appropriate at times for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open 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 using the bathroom or changing clothes.

- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example personal social activities).

- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.

- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.

- Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.

- Have contact with a child or their family outside of the college without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent for example babysitting, play dates, etc. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street is obviously accepted.

- Have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary for example providing families with e-newsletters or communicating with students through the college email system to assist students with work).

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

- Use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account.

- Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social network usernames or email.

- Photograph or video a child without the consent of a parent or guardian.

- Work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

- Consume alcohol or drugs at the college or at college events in the presence of children.

- Communicate, endorse, or promote, via words or conduct, including digitally via social media, ideas which are contrary to the normative Islamic position of the College.

    To avoid any doubt, here is the College stance on a number of moral issues:
    1. Sexual Orientation and Extra-marital relationships: The only lawful sexual relations in Islam are between a male husband and female wife.

    2. Gender Identity: Islam clearly defines that there are only two genders – male and female. In Islam, males and females are defined by their anatomy, and not necessarily physical appearance and/or emotions. Thus, a male may dress as a female or self-identify as a female, but they are still male. In the school context, this means that students and staff with male anatomy must wear male school uniform, use male bathrooms, Wudu area and prayer area, play for male sporting teams, etc.

The School reserves the right to commence disciplinary action should staff not comply with any of the expectations set out above. Disciplinary action may include termination of employment.

ICOM CODE OF CONDUCT
Last Updated: 4/3/2022

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4. Reporting or Raising Concerns about Staff or Volunteer Conduct

Any student or staff member who has concerns regarding staff or volunteer conduct must report this concern to the Child Safety Officers using the report template for this purpose. The issue will be investigated and if the findings indicate any grounds or doubt in respect of the conduct of the staff member or volunteer, this will be immediately reported. Below is the process for investigation any reported concerns and how the college handles them.

a)   Response to Allegations

When responding to allegations about a staff member or volunteer, the Child Safety Officers should immediately look into the matter. However, any allegation of reportable conduct to be made against the Principal needs to be made to the Chairman of the School Board.

b)   Steps in the investigative process

Please refer to the flow chart located in Policy 14.3.5, responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse.

c)   Risk Assessment

When an incident is reported or observed the Child Safety Officers will:-

- Conduct an initial and subsequent risk assessment including an assessment of the safety of the children concerned.
- Share the risk assessment with the principal
- Together with the Principal, decide what action, if any, e.g. suspension, is to be taken regarding the employee who has had an allegation made against them, and:
- Assess and monitor the risk of continued access of the employee (who has had an allegation made or conviction recorded against them), to children attending the school.

d)   Documentation and Record Keeping

- All documents held by the college and relating to an allegation or conviction of reportable conduct or details of behaviour that does not constitute reportable conduct will be kept on a strictly confidential basis.
- Should the Department of Human Services or Victorian Police be notified in accordance with the college's obligations the related documents will be kept indefinitely and stored in a secure location separate to the employee's file.
- The Human Resource Manager in consultation with the Child Safety Officers will be responsible for keeping and storing all records relating to all matters addressed by this code of conduct and only those persons whom the college is obliged to advise on this information or need to be aware of the contents of such documents will have access to them.

5. Further Information

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website: http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-colleges

Additional resources for colleges in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website (http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards) In particular, it has an overview of the Victorian child safe standards, has information to help colleges understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards including examples of measures colleges can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training: child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au. Early childhood services operating under the National Quality Framework or Children's Services Act 1996 should contact: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Islamic College of Melbourne Child Safety Officers.

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

I agree to adhere to this code of conduct:

Name: _____   **Sign:** _____   **Date:** _____
full name   *signature*   *date*