

Child Safe STANDARD 3

Code of Conduct for Behaviour with Children

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children at Alphington Grammar School.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. All staff and volunteers at Alphington Grammar School are required to comply.

OUTLINE of the Code of Conduct (see elaborations for some points below)

All staff, volunteers and members of the School Council of Alphington Grammar School 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 Alphington Grammar School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

1. Adhering to the Alphington Grammar School child safe policy at all times / upholding the Alphington Grammar School statement of commitment to child safety at all times.
2. Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
3. Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions.
4. Modelling appropriate adult behaviour.
5. 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.
6. Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children. ***A**
7. Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification).
8. 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).
9. Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
10. Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child. By working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children. ***B**
11. Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know. ***C**
12. Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Alphington Grammar School's Child Safety Team, and ensuring any allegation is reported to the police or child protection.
13. Reporting any child safety concerns to Alphington Grammar School's Child Safety Team.

14. If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.
15. Encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff and volunteers must not:

1. Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
2. Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults including doing errands of a personal nature. ***D**
3. Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical. ***A**
4. Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors, allowing children to work out of sight with visitor). ***B**
5. Use prejudiced, oppressive or aggressive behaviour or language with children.
6. Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
7. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities).
8. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
9. Express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
10. Discriminate against any child because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability. ***E**
11. Have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without the knowledge and/or consent of a member of the Child Safety Team. ***F**
12. Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children. ***F**
13. Engage in rough or physical games with children. ***A**
14. Have any online contact with a child or their family. ***F**
15. Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Elaborations

**A: Physical contact with children at Alphington Grammar School.*

In a school setting there are daily occurrences where teachers may have physical contact with children. This is more likely to happen with younger children (primary school) and will seldom be necessary with older children (secondary school).

Any physical contact must always take place in an open area where other people are present.

All personnel are strongly advised to think and consider any physical contact with children and judge whether it is NEEDED and APPROPRIATE and whether a non-physical response could suffice.

Appropriate physical contact with children could include:

- Helping or assisting a sick, injured or distressed child.

- Holding hands when escorting children.
- Shaking hands.
- Helping a child try on a costume etc.
- Helping a child with toileting if required.
- Assisting a child with a disability with a task if required.
- Allowing a small child (under 6 years of age) to sit on the lap of an adult for the purposes of sharing a book etc. This needs to be carefully considered: is there another way in which the experience can be shared closely, for example, side by side seats? This should only occur if there is another adult present.
- Modelling a sport or other skill. (eg, how to hold a bat or a musical instrument).
- Accepting a hug (hug should not be initiated by the adult).
- Passing affirmative contact in the presence of others (high 5's, pat on the back).

Inappropriate Physical Contact with children includes:

- Any contact of a sexual nature.
- Any contact of a violent or abusive nature (including yelling, 'losing it' even if no bodily contact made).
- Any contact of an overly affectionate nature, for example, kissing, cuddling.
- Any contact made in anger or frustration, for example, pulling a child into line, grasping a child in any manner while giving a reprimand etc.
- Any contact initiated by the child that crosses personal boundaries, for example, a child offering to massage an adult's shoulder etc., a protracted hug or cuddle, kissing. In these situations, the contact should be declined and /or diverted and the child distracted and gently rebuffed. Repeated instances should be noted and discussed with a member of the Child Safety Team.
- Any rough play. All rough play is discouraged and where children and adults engage in sporting competitions together, adults must be extra vigilant that any physical contact is measured and fair.

**B: Working alone with children at Alphington Grammar School.*

In the school setting there are frequent times when adults are alone with children. This can include situations such as but not limited to:

- Individual tuition, for example, music, learning support.
- The administering of first aid or counselling.
- Escorting a child from one place to another.
- Assisting a child with toileting.

- Keeping a child in class while others are at another activity, for example, to complete work, for non-participation in the activity.

In all cases where an adult is alone with a child **all reasonable steps** must be taken to ensure that the activity is legitimate, open and transparent. This can be achieved by taking some or any of the following measures:

- Ensure the activity is a scheduled or pre-arranged one, for example, music tuition, learning support, reading. Where a child is collected for any scheduled or non-scheduled lesson, another adult (in the Primary School, usually the classroom teacher), should always be informed. In the case of secondary students removed from class for non-scheduled lessons, an email alerting the timetabled teacher should be sent.
- Any situation where an adult is alone in an enclosed room should be avoided where possible. Exceptions to this are for the administering of first aid or counselling; tuition in music rooms or for learning support providing the room is unlocked and the lesson is a scheduled one (see above).
- If an adult has cause to be alone with a child, or finds themselves alone with a child, he/she should ensure that another adult is aware of the situation and its purpose and that the door is open. If it is not possible to have the door remain open, then the adult should ensure the door is unlocked. Another adult should actively monitor the situation. All situations should be considered before they occur if possible and, where practical, another adult should attend as a witness. This practice is also strongly encouraged for AGS staff members when they are required to deal with parents or caregivers in a one on one situation.
- Any adult being approached by a child seeking an unscheduled meeting alone should alert another adult and follow the guidelines above. Repeated instances should be discussed with a member of the Child Safety Team.
- Any adult meeting alone with a child should terminate the meeting immediately in the event the young person initiates or attempts to initiate any physical contact. In the case of a child seeking comfort, the child should be gently rebuffed and guided to an area where others are present and the child can be reassured and physically comforted in the presence of others if needed. In the event the contact is of a sexual nature, the adult must immediately rebuff the child, state that the situation is inappropriate and terminate the meeting. The adult should then report the incident to a member of the Child Safety Team.
- Any adult meeting alone with a child should terminate the meeting immediately in the event the young person initiates discussion of a sexual nature intended to create a personal intimacy between the child and the adult. The adult should then report the incident to a member of the Child Safety Team.

**C: Privacy*

All staff and volunteers are bound by the Alphington Grammar School Privacy policy. The school recognises that issues surrounding the Child Safe Policy are especially private and extra care should be taken to ensure prescribed protocols on the sharing and storage of information are followed. This is outlined in the AGS Privacy Policy.

**D: Children used to meet the needs of adults*

The school recognises that children, staff and volunteers work together in many ways to achieve various outcomes. In many instances, adults are required to instruct children to assist in tasks not specifically linked to teaching and learning. These tasks may include tidying up, helping set up for an event, unloading or packing away equipment etc. The school endorses these tasks as part of normal daily school life and recognises that they help build a sense of responsibility.

However, tasks that have no link with the running of the school but are more personal and adult focused, such as fetching lunch or refreshment for the teacher, are not to take place. Although children may enjoy this personal responsibility, the use of children to meet the personal need of an adult, even if an innocent one, blurs the boundaries and relationship roles and leaves children vulnerable to agreeing to inappropriate requests from adults.

**E: Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity, disability or family circumstance.*

At Alphington Grammar School, all children are valued and respected. Discrimination against a child, or allowing discrimination to occur, is prohibited and not to be tolerated. All adults are responsible for the monitoring of their own behaviours, the behaviour of other adults and the behaviour of other children in this respect.

**F: Exchange of Personal contact details with children/families; Out of Hours Contact.*

No adult at Alphington Grammar School should exchange personal details with a child. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Home address, mobile or landline telephone numbers
- Private email addresses
- Online gaming or social networking platforms

Normal email communication with families is appropriate via school email and ediyary system and with secondary students as required.

No adult at Alphington Grammar School should arrange to meet a child outside of school hours without prior knowledge of a member of the Child Safety team. For example, no babysitting, tutoring, attendance at private social gatherings. Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate. School sanctioned gatherings are appropriate but adults should not attend 'after parties' etc. Where an adult is also a parent or relative of the school, attendance at private gatherings is appropriate but staff in this unique position must be extra vigilant that relationship boundaries are not crossed if other non-related children are present.

(For further information see [Appendix 11, Alphington Grammar School Information & Communication Technology Policies](#)).

The **Alphington Grammar School Code of Conduct for the Behaviour with Children** applies to all staff and volunteers at Alphington Grammar School in all settings, both in and out of school, including camps, overseas trips etc. All staff and volunteers at Alphington Grammar School are required to sign a copy of the Code of Conduct for the Behaviour with Children as of Semester 2, 2016. A copy of this signed code will kept in staff and volunteer files.