



PERTH
MONTESSORI
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STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Schools are required to implement a code of conduct that is consistent with the Example Code of Conduct, published by the Australian Human Rights Commission, and with the National Child Safe Organisation Principles.

This code provides guidance on general conduct which is expected and that which is prohibited. It is not an exhaustive list of what constitutes misconduct or unethical behaviour. Staff will be held accountable for their misconduct and any misconduct may be subject to disciplinary action by the School.

BOARD APPROVAL

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Signed by Board Chair:

Name of Board Chair: Dr. Andrew Marsh

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2. PURPOSE

All staff, governing body members, practicum students, volunteers, interns or trainees of Perth Montessori are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who engage with the School and are expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

3. OUR VISION, VALUES AND PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT

Mission: Empowering our children in an environment based on the values of resilience and respect.

Vision: Encouraging curious, independent lifelong learners.

Values: Independence, curiosity, respect, resilience and life-long learning

Philosophical Statement:

“We must look to the children as a vehicle for bringing change to humanity.” Dr. Maria Montessori

At Perth Montessori we promote respect of the child as a way to build their confidence and ability to think, act and learn independently. Providing students freedom to be themselves helps them develop their character. By engaging in hands-on activities and self-directed tasks students follow their own blueprint for learning.

The Montessori philosophy is at the heart of what we do and we make sure to include our community on the child’s learning journey.

Accordingly, Perth Montessori holds its staff to the highest standards of ethics and behaviour, with the expectation they will model and act in accordance with the School’s ethos in all they do.

4. PRINCIPLE ONE: EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

As an employee, you must be familiar with the school’s policies and procedures, know where you can access them for checking purposes and be able and willing to comply with the school’s policies and procedures. The policies and procedures are available on SharePoint in [General Documents / Policies and Procedures](#). In addition, many policies are also available via the [School Website](#) or in hard copy upon request from the administration. Upon employment, and at the beginning of each school year, you will be directed to a Staff Handbook with information on policies, including summaries of important policy points and procedures, and regarding any changes that may have been made in the previous year.

If you are uncertain about the scope or content of a policy with which you must comply, or any legal obligations to which you are subject, you should seek clarification from your direct supervisor, or the Principal.

You should also be familiar with the legislation under which you are employed as this may specify requirements with which you need to comply.

As a school employee, you are expected to:

- 4.1. Perform your duties to the best of your ability and be accountable for your performance,
- 4.2. Follow reasonable instructions given by your supervisor or his/her delegate,
- 4.3. Comply with lawful directions,
- 4.4. Carry out your duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner, while seeking suitable opportunities to improve your knowledge and skills, including through participation in relevant professional development,
- 4.5. Act honestly and in good faith in fulfilling your duties,
- 4.6. Be respectful, courteous and responsive in dealing with your colleagues, students, parents and members of the public,
- 4.7. Work collaboratively with your colleagues,
- 4.8. Ensure that your conduct, whether during or outside working hours, is consistent with the ethos of the school and does not damage the reputation of the school; and
- 4.9. Dress in a professional manner that is appropriate for your role.

5. PRINCIPLE TWO: GOOD TEACHING PRACTICE

As a professional teacher it is expected that you will provide quality teaching appropriate for your students, cater to the diversity of learners in your care and make every effort to help all students equally so they have every chance of succeeding.

Good teaching also means you will work closely with your colleagues, and other carers of your students, and respond appropriately and promptly to any concerns they have.

6. PRINCIPLE THREE: RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

[Staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and other staff](#)

The school expects employees to treat each other with respect and courtesy. Our daily interaction with others reflects on the school's reputation. Therefore, all employees are expected to be approachable, respectful, courteous and prompt when dealing with students, parents, other employees and members of the community.

Employees who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Modelling the Montessori principles of grace, courtesy and respect in your interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development.

The school forbids any form of child abuse, corporal and degrading punishment.

7. PRINCIPLE FOUR: DUTY OF CARE AND OH&S

As a school employee, you have a duty of care to students in your charge to take all reasonable steps to protect them from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted.

The duty encompasses a wide range of matters, including (but not limited to):

- 7.1. The provision of adequate supervision,
- 7.2. Ensuring grounds, premises and equipment are safe for students' use,
- 7.3. Implementing strategies to prevent bullying from occurring in the school, and
- 7.4. Providing medical assistance (if competent to do so) or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a student who is injured or becomes sick at school.

7.5. Duty of care

As an employee of the school, you have a duty of care to students in your charge. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted. For example, preventative measures should be taken against risks from known hazards and from foreseeable risk situations. The standard of care that is required, such as the degree of supervision, needs to be commensurate with the students' maturity and ability.

Duty of care to students applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by the School. The risks associated with any activity need to be assessed and managed before the activity is undertaken.

You should ensure that you are aware of all the school's health, safety and student welfare policies, including Duty of Care, Excursions, Workplace Learning and Administration of Medications, among others.

7.6. Occupational health and safety

You also have a responsibility under occupational safety and health legislation to take care of your own health and safety at work as well as that of others in the workplace. It is also your responsibility to ensure that your activities do not place your own safety at risk or that of your co-workers, students or other persons that you may come into contact with at work.

Considerations of safety relates to both physical and psychological well-being of individuals.

You should ensure that you are aware of and comply with the School's Safety and Health policies.

8. PRINCIPLE FIVE: MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

Teachers need to treat their students with courtesy and respect and provide an environment that encourages their students to do the same

As a school employee, you are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people. You must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people, and to support those who have been harmed.

While not all employees are required to manage and supervise students, it is important for all school employees to understand and observe the school's child protection policies.

The detection and prevention of grooming behaviour is a vital consequence of complying with this principle.

9. PRINCIPLE SIX: APPROPRIATE USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The school provides electronic communication facilities for its students and employees for educational or administrative purposes. It may monitor and view data stored or transmitted using the school's facilities. All staff and students must abide by the school's appropriate use of technology policies. The fast and permanent nature of electronic communication requires staff to be particularly vigilant with their own communications and that of their students.

10. PRINCIPLE SEVEN: USE OF ALCOHOL DRUGS OR TOBACCO

Occupational Safety and Health is of fundamental importance to the School. Maintaining a safe work environment requires everyone's continuous cooperation.

You are responsible for ensuring your capacity to perform your duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs and that the use of such substances does not put at risk you or any other person's health and safety.

The use of illegal substances on the school property is strictly forbidden.

11. PRINCIPLE EIGHT: IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Personal interests can, or have the potential to, influence a person's capacity to perform their duties impartially and in turn compromise their integrity and that of the school.

A conflict of interest can involve:

- 11.1. Pecuniary interests i.e. financial gain or loss or other material benefits;
- 11.2. Non-pecuniary interests i.e. favours, personal relationships and associations.

Conflict of interest also include:

- 11.3. The interests of members of your immediate family or relatives (where these interests are known),
- 11.4. The interests of your own, business partners or associates, or those of your workplace; or
- 11.5. The interests of your friends.

12. PRINCIPLE NINE: DECLARING GIFTS, BENEFITS OR BRIBES

As an employee, you may be offered a gift or benefit as an act of gratitude. There are some circumstances when to refuse a gift would be perceived as rude, insulting or hurtful. You are expected to exercise sound judgement when deciding whether to accept a gift or benefit.

Accepting gifts and other benefits has the potential to compromise your position by creating a sense of obligation and undermining your impartiality. It may also affect the reputation of the school and its staff. You must not create the impression that any person or organisation is influencing the school or the decisions or actions of any of its employees.

13. PRINCIPLE TEN: COMMUNICATION AND PROTECTING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- 13.1. School employees must maintain the confidentiality of school information. You should be mindful of confidentiality when in discussions with parents, staff, family members and others.
- 13.2. You cannot always give a guarantee of confidentiality especially if the matter under discussion is related to mandatory reporting.

- 13.3. School employees should be aware that there are strong legal requirements around the collection, release and protection of privacy of information.
- 13.4. Before asking for information or disclosing information staff need to assure themselves that they are acting in a legal manner. If unsure you should discuss the matter with your line manager.

14. PRINCIPLE 11: RECORD KEEPING

All employees have a responsibility:

- 14.1. To create and securely maintain full, accurate and honest records of their activities, decisions, appropriate school-based interactions and other relevant transactions;
- 14.2. To upload or store records in the school's record systems, as required; and
- 14.3. To not deliberately access school information to which they are not authorised to do so.

15. PRINCIPLE 12: COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 15.1. When creating material, you need to ensure the intellectual property rights of others are not infringed and information is recorded about any third-party copyright/other rights included in materials.
- 15.2. If you develop material that relates to your employment with the school, the copyright in that material will belong to the school. This may apply even if the material was developed in your own time or at home.

16. DECLARATION

I will:

- 16.1. Act in accordance with Perth Montessori's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times,
- 16.2. Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff,
- 16.3. Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well,

- 16.4. Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children at Perth Montessori,
- 16.5. Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries,
- 16.6. Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children,
- 16.7. Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families,
- 16.8. Report objectively observable behaviour which breaches or is suspected of breaching this Code, (other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations) to, the Principal, or their delegate,
- 16.9. Involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible,
- 16.10. Contribute, where appropriate, to Perth Montessori's policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing,
- 16.11. Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by Perth Montessori's risk assessment and management policy or process,
- 16.12. Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with Perth Montessori's policy and procedure for internal and external reporting (see Child Protection Policy and Procedure),
- 16.13. Comply with the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and Perth Montessori's policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing,
- 16.14. Comply with Perth Montessori's protocols on communicating with children, and
- 16.15. Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by the Children and Community Services Act 2004 and by the Perth Montessori's policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.

I will not:

- 16.16. Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child,
- 16.17. Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child,
- 16.18. Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members,
- 16.19. Be alone with a child unnecessarily,
- 16.20. Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with for a purpose unrelated to Perth Montessori's activities,
- 16.21. Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by Perth Montessori's policy and procedure on reporting,
- 16.22. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material,
- 16.23. Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs, or
- 16.24. Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.

17. BREACHES OF THIS CODE

- 17.1. All alleged breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct will be subject to scrutiny and if substantiated the person may be warned, suspended or have their employment terminated. If the breach involves or is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, the school is obliged to report this to the Director General of the Department of Education as a reportable incident. Please find further information about this in dot points below. Any potentially illegal activity will be reported to the Police and appropriate actions will be taken by senior management.
- 17.2. The consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of this *Code* will depend on the nature of the breach.
- 17.3. Employees are required to report all objectively observable behaviour, that is not permitted by the Code, other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations, to the Principal, the Deputy Principal or the chair of the school's governing body. NB: If the prohibited behaviour is by the Principal then it should be reported to the **chair of the governing body**.
- 17.4. Factors the school may consider when deciding what action to take may include:
 - The seriousness of the breach,
 - The likelihood of the breach occurring again,
 - Whether the employee has committed the breach more than once, and
 - The risk the breach poses to employees, students or any others; and whether the breach would be serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action.

- 17.5. Actions that may be taken by the school in respect of a breach of the Code include management or remedial action, training or disciplinary action ranging from a warning to termination of employment. The school reserves the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code. However, please note that circumstances where a formal warning is issued to a staff member or their employment is ceased, as a result of a breach that is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, the matter is required to be notified to the Director General of the Department of Education, as a reportable incident.
- 17.6. Section 42 of the *Teacher Registration Act 2012* outlines the circumstances under which registered teachers are to be reported to the Teacher Registration Board of WA (TRBWA). Circumstances where a formal warning is issued to a teacher or their employment is ceased, as a result of a breach of the Code of Conduct that is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, fits within the requirements of s.42, as well as being a reportable incident to the Director General of the Department of Education.

What do I do if I see someone breach the Code of Conduct?

- 17.7. Act to prioritise the best interests of children,
- 17.8. Take actions promptly to ensure that children are safe,
- 17.9. Promptly report any concerns to the school’s designated person (The Principal, Sally Alderton, or Deputy Principal, Adin Livnjak, or their delegate);
- 17.10. Follow Perth Montessori’s policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns, reports and/or allegations;
- 17.11. Comply with Children and Community Services Act 2004 if relevant, and with Perth Montessori’s policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.

Perth Montessori will not tolerate victimisation or other adverse consequences that are directed towards any person who makes such reports in good faith.

Acknowledgment:

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct during my engagement/employment with Perth Montessori. I understand that breaches of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action and/or termination of my employment with Perth Montessori.

..... (Signature)

..... (Full Name)

..... (Date)

18. DEFINITIONS:

CHILD ABUSE

Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law and are defined by the Department of Communities:

- (1) Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or caregiver.
- (2) Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and developmental level, and includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:
 - (a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
 - (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
 - (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.
- (3) Emotional abuse includes:
 - (a) psychological abuse; and
 - (b) being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.
- (4) Neglect is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic or chronic.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm. *[UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006)].*

DEGRADING PUNISHMENT

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child *[UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006)].*

GROOMING

The use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in order to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or avoiding exposure. Please refer to the school's (insert relevant policy name here) for information on recognising grooming behaviour.