

# Code of Conduct

<b>Last Review:</b> N/A	<b>Constructed / Reviewed by:</b> Clayton Utz
<b>Next Review:</b> March 2026	<b>Approval Required:</b> Yes
	<b>Board Sign Off Date:</b> Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

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## 1. Statement of Context and Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to outline the standards of conduct that are expected of all GISSA staff, team members, staff from GISSA Member Schools, students and parents/spectators.
- 1.2 An objective of this Code of Conduct is to promote child safety.
- 1.3 The principal responsibility of staff from GISSA and GISSA Member Schools is to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. Staff must ensure that the workplace is safe and free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and violence.
- 1.4 This Code of Conduct is intended to provide a guidance framework only and is not an exhaustive list of the required standards. This Code of Conduct supports and should be read in conjunction with applicable legal instruments.

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## 2. Application

This Code applies to all:

- GISSA employees, volunteers and contractors;
- employees, volunteers and contractors from GISSA Member Schools,  
(collectively referred to as **staff** throughout this code of conduct);
- students participating in GISSA competitions; and
- parents and spectators attending GISSA events and competitions.

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## 3. Reference Points / Background Papers

- 3.1 *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic);
- 3.2 *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic);
- 3.3 *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic);
- 3.4 DFFH Resources for Child Safe Standards: Child Safe Code of Conduct<sub>1</sub>
- 3.5 An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards;
- 3.6 Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Procedure;
- 3.7 Privacy Policy;
- 3.8 Social Media and Social Networking Policy; and

3.9 Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

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#### 4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Legal instrument** means either legislation, an award, a collective enterprise agreement or contract of employment.
- 4.2 **Child Safe Officer** means the staff member of GISSA appointed to fulfil this role as part of their duties.
- 4.3 **Child** means a person who is under the age of 18 years who attends a GISSA event.
- 4.4 **Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

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#### 5. Policies, Procedure and Laws

- 5.1 GISSA staff are required to observe and comply with all of GISSA's policies and procedures and applicable legislative instruments at all times during the course of their employment or engagement (whichever the case may be) with GISSA.
- 5.2 Parents and spectators are expected to comply with the standards of conduct set out in the Policy when attending GISSA events and competitions.

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#### 6. Staff from GISSA and GISSA Member Schools

##### 6.1 Professional and Personal Conduct and Child Safety

- 6.1.1 The personal and professional behaviour of staff should conform with the standards that could reasonably be expected of persons who hold similar positions.
- 6.1.2 Staff are required to undertake their duties in a professional, responsible and ethical manner and to act in the best interests of GISSA. They are expected to act professionally and honestly when performing their duties.
- 6.1.3 As part of the screening process, the following key event personnel must have and, if requested, provide appropriate evidence of a valid WWCC (or other state equivalent) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a school setting:
- (a) all staff and Board members
  - (b) those paid by GISSA or GISSA Member Schools for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
  - (c) volunteers;
  - (d) relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
  - (e) anyone else who staff determine requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for GISSA or GISSA Member Schools.
- 6.1.4 Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be the responsibility of the individual.

## 6.2 Dealing with Children (including with respect to Child Safety)

6.2.1 Staff must ensure that they act within professional boundaries and according to legal requirements.

6.2.2 This Code of Conduct provides a set of principles and standards about how staff should behave with children. All staff are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children in both physical and online environments and are expected to behave in accordance with this Code of Conduct. In particular, all staff (and in particular, those engaged in child-connected work) must act lawfully at all times and:

- (a) adhere to GISSA's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Procedure at all times and uphold the overarching values and principles set out therein;
- (b) take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse (including online abuse);
- (c) treat everyone with respect;
- (d) listen and respond 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;
- (e) ensure all interactions with children involving IT and social media are appropriate, and reflect GISSA's commitment to child safety;
- (f) ensure as far as practicable that children are appropriately supervised when interacting with adults or other children through online forums without compromising the child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections or learning opportunities;
- (g) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning their self-identification and by recognising the importance of such student's relationships with their extended family and community, including Elders);
- (h) promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by exhibiting zero tolerance of discrimination and by recognising the tendency of people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds/communities to mistrust authority figures);
- (i) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, in terms of level of supervision and care provided for such children);
- (j) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary or intersex (for example, by never questioning their self-identification and encouraging them to express themselves);

- (k) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children who are unable to live at home (e.g. children in and out of home care or custodial settings) (for example, by actively communicating and collaborating with the child's caseworker, carer or support agency and by implementing strategies to support school engagement and achievement).
- (l) ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child, including through online / telephone forums. If this is not possible, staff must ensure any one-on-one contact is clearly documented;
- (m) encourage and recognise the importance of friendships and support from peers to help children feel safe and be less isolated;
- (n) report any child safety concerns and/or any allegations of child abuse to GISSA's Child Safe Officer in accordance with the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Procedure and in relation to the latter, ensure such allegations are reported to the police or child protection authority;
- (o) if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child is safe;
- (p) observe these standards and acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Code of Conduct to GISSA's Child Safe Officer;
- (q) welcome parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child's safety;
- (r) attend and participate in all compulsory training;
- (s) take all reasonable steps to eliminate racism and to ensure that any instances of racism are identified, confronted and addressed with appropriate consequences;
- (t) take all reasonable steps to actively support and facilitate the inclusion of, and participation by, Aboriginal children;
- (u) facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns;
- (v) staff should also be aware of and observe the provisions of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), including that:
  - (i) it is a criminal offence to communicate (including electronically) by words or conduct with a child with the intention of facilitating the child's engagement or involvement in a sexual offence with them or another adult (**Grooming Offence**); and

- (ii) it is a criminal offence for a person who, by reason of the position they occupy, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person and knows that there is a substantial risk that that person will commit a sexual offence against the child, negligently fails to reduce or remove the risk (**Failure to Protect Offence**). A person negligently fails to reduce or remove a risk if that failure involves a falling short of the standard of care that a reasonable person would exercise in the circumstances.

#### 6.2.3 Staff must not engage in unlawful conduct or:

- (a) develop any 'special' relationships with students/children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- (b) exhibit behaviours with students/children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical;
- (c) interact with students/children through their personal telephones or social media accounts in an inappropriate manner;
- (d) put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- (e) do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- (f) engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities);
- (g) use inappropriate language or gestures in the presence of children;
- (h) express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- (i) discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability;
- (j) have contact (including online or telephone contact) with a child or his/her family outside of GISSA dealings without consent from the family (for example, no babysitting). Note that incidental or accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is not inappropriate;
- (k) work with any young person while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs/substance;
- (l) breach the content outlined in the Position Statement referring to Taking/Using images of children under the Social Media and Networking Policy;
- (m) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

### 6.3 **Dealing with other staff**

Staff must ensure that they treat each other with respect and courtesy. They must demonstrate their respect by holding other staff in high regard and work cooperatively with others in the best interests of GISSA.

### 6.4 **Public Statements**

6.4.1 Staff making written or oral comments on any matter relating to GISSA and which might reasonably be expected to become public, must ensure that they hold proper authority and authorisation to do so. Staff must not make public comments that would damage the reputation of GISSA.

6.4.2 Staff are not permitted to communicate directly with the media on behalf of GISSA unless they have been directed to do so through written communication by GISSA. If staff are contacted by media representatives, they are not permitted to provide any comments other than to direct the media representative to the Executive Officer.

### 6.5 **Attendance**

Staff are expected to attend for work as required and on time.

### 6.6 **Dress**

Staff must ensure that their appearance is neat, clean and appropriate for their particular area of work.

### 6.7 **Smoking**

GISSA does not promote or encourage smoking or vaping. Staff are not permitted to smoke/vape on GISSA premises or in the immediate vicinity of entrances to GISSA premises. Staff are not permitted to smoke/vape in the presence of children or parents.

### 6.8 **Confidential Information**

Staff must respect the confidentiality of information received as GISSA personnel. Confidential information received by staff during their engagement remains the property of GISSA during and beyond the period of employment and must not be disclosed.

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## 7. **Students**

### 7.1 Students will:

- 7.1.1 always observe the highest standards of sportsmanship.
- 7.1.2 always perform to the best of their ability.
- 7.1.3 accept without question the decisions of umpires and officials.
- 7.1.4 shake hands at the completion of all matches.
- 7.1.5 be gracious in victory and defeat.
- 7.1.6 participate by the competition rules and regulations.

- 7.1.7 respect all participants in the game and treat them courteously. This includes fellow team members, opponents, umpires, spectators and officials.
- 7.2 Bad language, abuse and poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated. The GISSA Executive Officer is to be notified by the Director of Sport of the school at which the offending student attends of any such incident and the Principal or their delegated representative will follow their own school administration processes to address the matter.

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## **8. Spectators and Parents**

Spectators and parents will observe the highest standard of sportsmanship and always conduct themselves in an ethical manner.

### **8.1 Spectators**

8.1.1 Spectators will:

- (a) show appreciation for a good performance by any athlete or team member in an appropriate and encouraging manner.
- (b) respect all participants in the sport competition and treat them courteously. This includes follow spectators, athletes, umpires, coaches, staff and officials.
- (c) respect the traditions and rules of the schools and sporting venues which they visit and act accordingly.
- (d) accept without question the decisions of umpires and coaches.
- (e) respect and adhere to the rules and regulations of GISSA.

8.1.2 Spectators must not verbally or otherwise intimidate any players in any form such as shouting, excessive cheering, questioning of decisions or interfering with play.

### **8.2 Parents**

8.2.1 Parents will:

- (a) aim to support and encourage their daughters in their participation in sport.
- (b) respect and support the ongoing commitment required of their daughter as a team member.
- (c) focus on their daughter's efforts and performance rather than winning or losing.
- (d) role model good sporting behavior and respect.
- (e) appreciate good performance and skillful play by all participants.
- (f) respect officials' decisions and teach children to do likewise.
- (g) respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.

- (h) not interfere with the conduct of any events, or approach any match officials during or after competition.
- (i) provide all necessary consents as reasonably required by GISSA.

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## **9. Consequences for Breach of this Policy**

9.1 GISSA emphasises the need to fully comply with the requirements of this policy. Breaches of this policy will be treated seriously and dealt with appropriately, including (but not limited to):

9.1.1 in respect of staff, disciplinary action, including termination of employment;

9.1.2 in respect of students, the offending student being removed indefinitely from the competition; and

9.1.3 in respect of parents/spectators, exclusion from the field of play, venue or surrounds.

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## **10. Implications for Practice**

### **10.1 At Board Level**

10.1.1 To properly implement this policy, GISSA must ensure:

- (a) that this policy is endorsed on an annual basis;
- (b) that copies of this policy are made available to all GISSA staff;
- (c) that this policy is incorporated into GISSA's record of current policies;
- (d) that this policy is incorporated into GISSA's induction program and any ongoing training, to ensure that all GISSA staff are aware of the policy, have read and understood the policy, and acknowledge their commitment to comply with the policy; and
- (e) that periodic training and refresher sessions are administered to GISSA staff in relation to this policy.

### **10.2 At Other Levels**

To properly implement this policy, all GISSA staff must ensure that they abide by this policy and assist GISSA in the implementation of this policy, including communication of this Policy to all students and parents/spectators.