



# Parent Code of Conduct

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## 1. Purpose

Methodist Ladies' College (MLC) values parents and guardians as part of the College community and recognises that they have a right to participate in their child's education. Cooperation, collaboration and partnership between parents and the College ensures that student learning, wellbeing and the core values of responsibility, respect and compassion are supported.

The purpose of the Parent Code of Conduct is to ensure such cooperation and support by outlining the College's expectations for all parents and guardians regarding the conduct expected of them while engaging in College related activities or representing MLC.

## 2. Scope

This Code applies to all MLC parents, guardians and caregivers, (collectively, "Parents") with students enrolled at MLC. This Code applies across all College environments, including at all MLC campuses (Kew and the Boarding House, MLC Banksia and MLC Marshmead), both during and outside school hours and within and outside the physical school environments, including online.

## 3. Policy Statement

### 3.1. Responsibilities

The **Board** is responsible for endorsing this Code of Conduct.

The **Principal** is responsible for defining this Code of Conduct and implementing the standards of conduct.

**Staff members** are responsible for providing guidance to Parents through positive role modelling and when appropriate, clear and respectful directions.

**Parents** are responsible for adhering to this Code of Conduct in support of the College's effort to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment for students and workplace for staff. Parents agree to be bound by this Code of Conduct when they accept an offer of enrolment from the College.

### 3.2. General expectations

#### 3.2.1. Be a positive role model and support the College

Parents are expected to support the educational ethos and values of the College, model appropriate behaviours for their children to learn from, and work with the College as it educates and provides wellbeing support to all students.

Parents can support the College and be positive role models by:

- Abiding by the College's policies, procedures and directions, and ensuring their children do the same.
- Being aware of the College's child protection protocols and, in particular, the Child Safety Policy which aims to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students.

- Respecting (and showing to their children they respect) that the College is inclusive and welcomes students from a variety of backgrounds, and with different needs.
- Encouraging their children to actively participate in the life of the College, including in the many sporting and co-curricular activities available (noting that some will be compulsory).
- Being responsive to concerns raised by the College about their own child, including by being cooperative, providing information and attending meetings when required.
- Keeping the College informed about their child's behavioural or educational needs, including by providing updated medical information as it becomes available. However, parents also need to appreciate that while the College will take into account any new information, the College cannot accommodate every need.
- Keeping the College informed about their child's parenting arrangements, including any court orders that may be in place. However, parents should not involve the College in parenting disputes, or expect the College to act as the go-between for estranged parents.
- Recognising the damage that gossip can do within a College community, and avoiding unconstructive commentary (including criticism, uninformed rumour or speculation) with other parents, including on social media.
- Understanding that the College endeavours to make considered decisions that are in the best interests of all students and the entire community, and that any concerns or grievances regarding College practices should first be raised via the College's established internal complaints mechanisms.
- Completing forms and providing information and permissions in a timely manner when requested to do so by the College, in order to enable the College to comply with its many regulatory requirements regarding child safety, health and welfare.

### 3.2.2. Behave respectfully towards members of our community

MLC expects that parents will always behave respectfully towards College staff (including employees, contractors and volunteers), students and other parents.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of behaviours that are not considered respectful:

- Bullying, intimidation, discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation and child abuse.
- Actual or threatened aggression or violence.
- Behaviour that causes a risk to a person's health and wellbeing.
- Defamatory comments.
- Gossip, rumour, and innuendo.
- Raising one's voice, or using offensive language, while communicating.
- Age-inappropriate language when communicating with children.

### 3.2.3. Appropriate use of technology and social media

The expectations set out in this Code of Conduct also apply to the way a parent uses technology and behaves online.

For example, Parents should:

- Respect a staff member's professional and personal boundaries, by not using their personal online presence to raise College matters (or otherwise engage in disrespectful behaviour).
- Not take photos, videos or other recordings of another student without their parent's consent, and not publish information (including personal details, contact information, images and recordings) concerning a staff member, parent, student or other member of the College community online without express consent.
- Avoid publishing information which may bring the College (or any of its staff, students, Parents and other members of the College community) into disrepute. This includes where an image or recording shows a student in College uniform behaving inappropriately.

- Not communicate with other students outside of the College, including by email or on social media, without prior consent from that student's parent(s).
- Not discuss confidential or sensitive College matters, including any matter relating to grievances about a particular staff member, students or other Parents online.
- Not set up any online website, forum or group which features the College's name in its title, or which may suggest that it is operated or sanctioned by the College.

#### 3.2.4. When visiting College grounds, or attending College activities and events

Parents must respect the College's risk management procedures when visiting the College. Parents should immediately proceed to Reception upon arrival to sign in, and should only enter a classroom or other student environment when invited to do so by a staff member. This requirement does not apply when visiting the College only to:

- attend an activity or event to which all members of the College community have been invited;
- visit the College Uniform Shop; or
- drop off or collect a child from College.

When visiting the College, or attending College activities and events, Parents should model appropriate and respectful behaviour. This includes:

- Demonstrating good sporting conduct and fair play when attending the College's art, drama and sporting events.
- Adhering to applicable occupational health and safety and risk management procedures.
- Following any reasonable directions given by College staff.
- Showing appropriate care and regard for the property of the College and others. Any damage should be promptly reported to the College.
- Dressing appropriately for the occasion.
- Not being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

#### 3.2.5. Drop off / pick up

When dropping off and picking up students from the College, Parents are expected to ensure the health and safety of all members of our College community, as well as the wider community, at all times.

Parents must adhere to all traffic rules and any College traffic management system in place. This includes adhering to applicable speed limits, observing all traffic signs, limiting the use of car horns (unless indicating imminent danger), and parking appropriately and safely.

### 3.3. **Responsibility for others**

Parents are expected to ensure that other individuals involved in their child's life, such as other relatives and carers, are also aware of and adhere to this Parent Code of Conduct.

### 3.4. **Raising concerns appropriately and productively**

The College is committed to the education and wellbeing of each student. It is therefore critical that Parents are able to raise genuine concerns and grievances they may have about such matters in an appropriate, constructive and respectful forum.

The College's grievance management procedures are set out in the Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy. This policy sets out how concerns and grievances may be raised with the College; who they should be raised with, and how the College will deal with these in a respectful and timely manner.

Parents with concerns and grievances should consult the Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy. However, in general:

- Parents should not communicate with another student about an issue concerning their own child. Parents must not attempt to discipline a student who is not their child and should not raise their voice or be aggressive or hostile when communicating (verbally or non-verbally) with another family's child.
- Parents should raise their concerns with their child's teacher in the first instance. More serious concerns or grievances, including where a parent is dissatisfied with a teacher's response to a concern, may be raised with the appropriate member of the College leadership (as set out in the Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy).
- Parents should clearly set out their concerns and grievances, and what they would practically like to see happen.
- Parents should appreciate that while the College is committed to dealing with their concerns and grievances in a timely manner, it will not always be practicable for staff to provide an immediate acknowledgement or response (particularly where a concern or grievance is sent by email).
- Parents should respect that the College employs experienced educators and other professionals who are well-trained in making academic, disciplinary, co-curricular and wellbeing decisions every day. While the College will always take into account the interests of the parent's child, the College must ultimately make decisions that take into account the interests of all students (and others who may be affected by the College's decisions).
- Parents should recognise that just as the College will seek to respect each student's privacy, the College will also respect the privacy of other members of the College community. This means there are limits to what information the College may share with a parent when issues arise. This does not mean that the College is not taking an issue or situation seriously or hiding information from a parent.

#### **4. Consequences for Breaching Code of Conduct**

The Principal will have absolute discretion for deciding how to best respond to concerns about a parent's compliance with this Code of Conduct.

Where the Principal considers that a parent has breached this Code of Conduct, the Principal may take one or more of the following actions (and not necessarily in any particular order):

- Request that the relevant conduct immediately cease.
- Provide a written warning.
- Ban a parent (or another relevant person) from the College grounds, either for a particular period or permanently.
- Exclude a parent (or another relevant person) from College activities or events.
- Require that a parent (or another relevant person) only communicate with a nominated College representative.
- Issuing either an Ongoing or Immediate Community Safety Order under the School Community Safety Orders Scheme.
- Termination of the enrolment of a Parent's daughter(s) / child(ren).

Staff and volunteers are empowered to take steps to protect their own health and wellbeing. If they feel that a parent is being inappropriate, they are encouraged to indicate this and ask that it stop. If it does not, or if a staff member feels that a parent's actions are posing a risk to their or someone else's health and wellbeing, they are empowered to remove themselves from the situation. This may include by immediately concluding a meeting or phone call, or by requiring that a parent immediately leave the College grounds (or activity or event).

## 5. Related College Policies and Documents

- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy – Relationships for Learning
- Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure

## 6. References

- [School Community Safety Order Scheme, Department of Education and Training](#)

## 7. Governance

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