

Code of Conduct Policy

Purpose

ECMS is committed to promoting and embedding a culture of professionalism, integrity, and respectful behaviour across all of its services and teams. This Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of all who work and enter an ECMS workplace and gives guidance in areas where employees need to make personal and ethical decisions.

This Code does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of what to do in every situation. Related ECMS Policies and Procedures, The Child Safe Standards, The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics and The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct are detailed within to provide ECMS staff with more comprehensive guidelines around conduct, ethics and child safety.

Our Values

Our values at ECMS provide a behavioural framework for how all staff and those working/placed at our service should interact with children, families and one another.

ECMS’s values are Respect, Inclusiveness, Learning and Enrichment, Connectedness, Responsiveness and Trust.

These values help inform and shape our culture at ECMS and ensure that the wellbeing and care for the children in our services is at the heart of everything we do.

Scope

All ECMS employees, contractors, volunteers, student placement workers, parents and others who enter an ECMS workplace.

Roles & Responsibilities

CEO and People & Capability	To actively promote and model this Code across ECMS and ensure that appropriate and timely action is taken where there is a potential breach.
Management	To champion a respectful and professional workplace culture and act as a positive role model reflecting positive agreed behaviours and values of ECMS. To challenge (and where required, report) any behaviour or act that goes against the appropriate behaviours described in this policy.

All staff members,
volunteers, contractors,
student placement
workers and parents

To understand, embrace and execute the Code of Conduct and associated positive behaviours at all times. To reflect the values in all interactions with children, families, colleagues and external partners. To challenge, and where required, report, any behaviour or act that goes against the positive behaviours within this policy.

Expected professional, respectful conduct at ECMS

With relation to this Code, ECMS employees will:

- Always carry out duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner;
- Maintain the highest standard of professional conduct in their attitude and behaviour towards all individuals including children, families, colleagues, contractors and members of the community.
- Ensure staff operate in a safe environment in accordance with all relevant legislation including Safety, Child Safe Standards, ECMS policies and procedures and other applicable frameworks;
- Create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance learning;
- Develop and maintain respectful, honest and courteous relationships and open communication towards children, parents, families, visitors, colleagues and members of the community.
- Ensure that all persons covered by this Code are not discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief or any other preference or personal characteristic.
- Use constructive processes to address differences of opinion in order to negotiate shared perspectives and actions;
- Speak positively in support of the organisation's philosophy, values and operations whilst representing the organisation in public forums;
- Respect the rights to privacy and maintain confidentiality of those covered by the Code;
- Maintain ethical and appropriate standards when using social media e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.

Unacceptable and unethical conduct at ECMS

In promoting and embedding a positive and respectful workplace culture, **ECMS will not tolerate conduct** that is in breach of the law, Child Safe Standards, ECA Code of Ethics, The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and ECMS's Policies and Procedures. These include but are not limited to:

- [Harassment](#).
- [Bullying](#).
- [Occupational Violence](#).
- Serious crimes and/or [acts of misconduct](#). e.g. consumption of prohibited substances and/or drugs, theft, abuse, actions involving breach of ethical standards and departmental regulations in dealing with children etc.
- [Victimisation](#).
- Promoting and engaging in unsafe workplace practices.
- Conflicts of Interest: e.g. taking part in the selection and appointment of someone who is a family member or determining promotions for a close friend etc.

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- Failure to declare gifts or benefits in alignment with the *workplace gifts register*, or seeking out money, gifts or benefits for personal use or consumption.
- Unacceptable behaviours as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

In addition, ECMS employees will:

- When offered a gift or benefit and declaring gifts/ benefits that exceed \$20 to your Line Manager to log in the *workplace gifts register*. Staff will not ask for money, gifts or benefits for any reason or purpose.
- Adhere to professional boundaries and exercise sound professional judgement. To ensure professionalism and avoid confidentiality, conflict of interest and liability issues, it is mandatory that all staff maintain only a professional relationship with families at the centre. Examples of professional boundary crossing include but are not limited to:
 - babysitting for families outside of hours, regardless whether they ECMS employee is receiving payment
 - providing families with their personal contact details
 - attending children’s birthday parties, christenings etc.

Escalating or reporting any concerns

All staff members will escalate or report a concern or complaint in a timely manner with the aim of addressing the issue before it escalates further or continues.

Matters relating to the safety and wellbeing of children will be immediately reported as per the organisation’s OCEO 3.0 Child Safe Policy and Procedure.

Any concern or complaint should be initially raised with the Line Manager. If for any reason this isn’t appropriate, the concern or complaint can be made to a Senior Manager or any member of the People & Capability Team.

More information on making a complaint or raising a grievance is detailed in the organisation’s Grievance Procedure Policy and Guidelines.

Associated ECMS Policies

- Disciplinary and Performance Management Policy and Guidelines
- Bullying Prevention Policy and Guidelines
- Harassment Prevention Policy and Guidelines
- Grievance Procedure Policy and Guidelines
- Confidential Information Policy
- Privacy Policy

Associated legislation and frameworks

- UN Convention of Human Rights
- UN Convention on the rights of a child
- UN Convention of the rights of people with disabilities
- UN Convention on the rights of refugees
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

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- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995.
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- Child Safe Standards
- Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct

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