



## Code of Conduct

*Trek Learning Centre acknowledges that we gather, work, learn and play on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.*

### Statement of Commitment

Trek Learning Centre is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where children and young people are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between children, young people and adults and between children, young people and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to children and young people in our environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal children and young people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other children and young people experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting children and young people based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at Trek Learning Centre, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in Trek Learning Centre has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our children, young people, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

## Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct sets expectations for how staff, volunteers and contractors at Trek Learning Centre should behave ensuring a felt sense of safety for children and young people. Trek Learning Centre mission is to provide all children and young people who come to the organisation with a safe place where they are able to learn successfully, manage complex emotions and understand their own responses and self-survival patterns so having behavioural standards to manage the risks to children and young people is important.

This Code of Conduct identifies positive child safe behaviours that we ask staff, volunteers and contractors to demonstrate. It also identifies behaviours that we consider unacceptable and not permitted at Trek Learning Centre. All Trek Learning Centre staff, volunteers and contractors are expected to follow these standards of behaviour at all times.

## Obligations

### I will:

- take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and young people, including where it relates to concerns that they feel unsafe
- uphold the rights of children and young people who come into contact with Trek Learning Centre to feel heard on matters relevant to their safety, taking disclosures of harm or abuse seriously
- identify and mitigate risks to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- report any concerns, allegations, disclosures or observations of child abuse in line with Trek Learning Centre's policies, processes, mandatory reporting and reportable conduct reporting requirements
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse to management or the Child Safety Officer
- report all child / young person safety concerns to the Child Safety Officer or management
- report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct to Child Safety Officer or management
- abide by Trek Learning Centre's commitment and obligation to be a child safe organisation
- actively promote and consider cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and those from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and consider their needs in providing that environment
- provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment that supports and values the ideas and opinions of children and young people and treats them with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, disability or other status
- participate in all compulsory training and professional development including training on child safety and wellbeing

- empower children and young people by providing an environment where they can actively participate and 'have a say', especially on issues that are important to them
- promote friendships and encourage children and young people to support their peers
- consider the different needs of all children and young people at Trek Learning Centre, support them to participate fully, helping them feel included with a sense of belonging
- report any conflicts of interest held (such as an outside relationship with a child or family group)
- observe professional boundaries with children and young people at all times, working in an open, transparent and safe way by ensuring where appropriate interactions can be observed by other adults
- respect the privacy of children, young people and their families disclosing information to people on a need to know basis and in accordance with privacy legislation
- comply with all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation, our child safe policies and procedures and disclose any information of charges, convictions of abuse and all other offence history in accordance with the department's Criminal Record Check policy

**I will not:**

- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour towards children – this includes although not limited to physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, create fear, neglect or sexual misconduct
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- discriminate against children or young people on the basis of their age, gender identity, race, sex, cultural or sexual orientation, vulnerability, ethnicity or disability
- develop inappropriate / 'special' relationships with children or young people including relationships that show favouritism or unnecessary or unsuitable attention
- display violent or inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person
- use inappropriate, offensive, hurtful, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language or gestures when speaking with, or in the presence of a child or young person
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children and young people or exhibit behaviours, or do things of a personal nature for children and young people which may be construed as inappropriate
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- engage in open discussions of a mature nature including but not limited to sexual experiences, drug or alcohol use in the presence of children and young children
- use any computer, mobile phone or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children or young people or expose them to offensive sexualised content
- take photographs, screenshots or share images of children involved in activities that are not authorised by Trek Learning Centre
- have unauthorised contact with children, young people or families either online, on social media or by phone
- exchange personal contact details with a child or young person such as phone number, social networking sites or email address unless necessary

- offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs
- put children and young people at risk through being alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so
- engage in babysitting, mentoring and/or tutoring a child or young person or other reasons outside the scope of Trek Learning Centre work and work hours

### **Breach of the Code of Conduct**

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to the Victorian Police, or to the Commission for Children and Young People. Our Complaint Handling Policy provides more information about our reporting obligations to external authorities as well as describing protections and confidentiality provisions for anyone making a report.

Not following standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action. Some behaviours on their own may not be a serious breach of the Code of Conduct but together may indicate a concerning pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer contract.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If any person in a position of authority within our organisation becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child may become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (for example, an employee, contractor or volunteer), and they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, then they must take all reasonable steps to do so.

A person in authority who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk may be charged with the criminal offence of 'failing to protect' and may face a term of imprisonment. If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child or young person, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence.

**Signature:** I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its terms.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_