

# PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CANDLEBARK AND ALICE MILLER SCHOOLS

## FIRST-UP:

Many or most groups of people include a variety of personalities, attitudes, opinions, beliefs and experiences. It is not our desire or intention to try to achieve some sort of unanimity of world-views among parents or students. Nonetheless, there are attitudes, opinions and beliefs to which we as a school adhere, and which form the basis of the school's functioning. And there are 'ground rules' which must be observed at Candlebark and Alice Miller, when parents are interacting with the school community, or with groups formed within that community because of associations with the school, or with employees of the school, or with students of the school.

## 2. THE SCHOOL:

Candlebark and Alice Miller (**the School**) are two campuses of the same school. The educational services we provide are primary schooling from Foundation (Prep) through to Year 12, based on the Victorian curriculum, and leading to the attainment of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) for those who wish to pursue that goal and who meet the requirements for VCE. We also have a full-year orientation program for future Foundation students, which runs for three hours a week during school terms.

As per the regulations for the registration of schools, we have a number of policies which are easily accessible on the websites of Candlebark and Alice Miller. We expect that all parents, guardians and step-parents will read these policies as part of the process of enrolment of a child at the school, and will familiarise themselves with them. Implicit in our acceptance of a student or students at Candlebark or Alice Miller, and the continuing enrolment of the student or students, is the understanding that all parents, guardians and step-parents have read the policies, understand them, and assent to their application to any child or children of the family enrolled at either campus of the school.

Also implicit in an enrolment and the maintenance of a student's enrolment is the understanding that parents, guardians and step-parents support the principles upon which the school is based, and the regular practices of the school, all of which are clearly set out on the two websites. These 'regular practices' include various camps and excursions that occur from time to time as an integral part of the School curriculum

Henceforth in this Code of Conduct I'll use the word **Parents** to refer to parents (including single parents), guardians and step-parents.

We encourage the involvement of Parents in the life of the School, and we aim to work with Parents to support, nurture and educate all children enrolled at the school. However, we recognise that we need to place limitations on the access to the school property and involvement in the school's activities of some Parents, as a result of specific issues of which we have become aware. Examples would include dangerous driving on the school property, or the existence of a current apprehended violence order against a Parent.

We have zero tolerance of bullying and violence in our School.

This Parent Code of Conduct outlines the way in which the School requires Parents to conduct themselves when visiting the School, participating in School activities and

communicating with members of our community (including students, staff and other parents), and includes consequences for breach.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY AND PRIVACY**

Parents must fully disclose any special needs of the child or children before the completion of the enrolment procedures, including but not limited to any medical, physical, learning or psychological needs. Where any disclosed special needs change or where any special needs arise, Parents must notify the School immediately. Parents must, on an ongoing basis, provide to the School copies of medical reports or developmental assessments, such as reports from paediatricians, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, or other professionals, that relate to the child or children's development. Parents must also complete the child or children's student's medical form accurately, as part of the enrolment procedure.

If a child is ill or injured, necessitating urgent hospital and/or medical treatment (for example injections, blood transfusions, surgery) and if Parents are not readily available to authorise such treatment, the Principal or, in his absence, a responsible member of the School staff, may give the necessary authority for such treatment.

A student's personal property is not insured by the School, and the School does not accept any responsibility for loss.

The School may from time to time collect personal information about parents and students which may be necessary for the School's function or activities. The School may use and disclose information in such a manner as the Principal or Head of Campus may deem appropriate for the purposes of the student's education, health, care, welfare or development.

Parents must provide to the School all current Family Court or other court orders relating to them and the student. The School's Privacy Policy deals with the confidentiality of such information.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT: DETAILS**

When attending the School or any School-related event, Parents must:

- (a) refrain from engaging in malicious or judgemental gossip (either directly or online) and ensuring that anything they say about others is fair and truthful;
- (b) refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification;
- (c) refrain from offensive, insulting or derogatory language or conduct. This includes wearing clothing with offensive words or insignias;
- (d) not smoke on school grounds within four metres of any entrance (this is in accordance with Victorian Law);
- (e) not possess alcohol on school grounds, unless at an event where the drinking of alcohol by adults has been sanctioned by the School;
- (f) never possess illicit drugs on school grounds;
- (g) not attend school events if affected by alcohol or other intoxicants;

(h) not come onto either campus outside normal school hours (e.g. in the evenings, at weekends or during school holidays) without specific permission from the School Principal or a Head of Campus, or unless 'delivering' or picking up a child or children from a School organised activity which is beginning or ending outside normal school hours..

(i) show proper care and regard for School property, the property of others and occupational health and safety concerns.

(j) not bring dogs or other animals onto the school grounds, unless given specific permission by the School Principal or a Head of Campus.

## **COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION WITH STAFF, OTHER PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

Written and spoken communication to anyone in the School community should be courteous and respectful.

When communicating, Parents must:

(a) interact civilly with staff, students and other parents at all times;

(b) not use abusive language or expletives, raise their voice, insult or engage in violent behaviour to anyone on school grounds or at any school-related events;

(c) ensure that relationships with students are strictly in accordance with appropriate roles and that favouritism, special treatments and deliberate exclusion are avoided;

(d) ensure that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of and relationship with the student such that questions of impropriety do not arise;

(e) not discipline or raise their voice or get involved in verbal altercations with another parent or child under any circumstances;

(f) advise the School of areas of potential conflict, such as parenting and family court orders in accordance with relevant laws.

Parents must respect the privacy of other students, Parents, staff, contractors and volunteers in the School community.

The School expects parents to behave lawfully on school grounds and observe the terms of any order, obligation or undertaking to which they may be subject.

Parents must not:

(a) take a photo or video recording of another student or parent without their consent;

(b) post a photo or video recording of another student or parent on social media without consent;

(c) post a photo or video recording of a child who is not their own on social media without obtaining consent from the child's parent beforehand;

(d) intimidate, undermine, threaten, bully or harass other students or parents; or

(e) disclose the personal details of a student or parent to another person without consent.

## **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Despite the range of positive uses of social media, Parents recognise that there are also a number of ethical and legal issues associated with its use, which can be directly or indirectly damaging to the School and others.

Parents must ensure they abide by the laws, and by the School's expectations of Parents.

When using social media, Parents must:

- (a) not discuss or mention the School, its staff or any members of the School community in a negative or defamatory way;
- (b) be respectful to staff, contractors, volunteers, other parents, and/or students;
- (c) never post sexually inappropriate or other material that may damage the reputation of the School.
- (d) make all reasonable efforts, which demonstrate vigilance, appropriate supervision, and the setting of appropriate limits, to ensure that their children comply with the School's policies regarding electronic media;
- (e) never post photographs of students or staff representing the School and its students if they have the potential to bring negative connotations towards the School and its staff and students;
- (f) never disclose any confidential information regarding parents, staff, contractors, volunteers, and/or students to third parties without the individual's express consent;
- (g) never make contact with students (other than their own) using any form of social media without the express consent of the student's parents;

## **FEES**

Parents must pay the applicable non-refundable Application Fee at the time of lodgement of the Application for Enrolment. All fees are payable in advance and are due on receipt of account. If Parents fail to pay an account for fees and/or charges by their due date, the student's enrolment may be suspended or terminated by the School and the School may subsequently without further notice refuse entry to the student.

A full term's notice in writing must be given to the Principal before any student is removed from the School. The notice must be given no later than one week prior to the end of the preceding term. If this notice is not given, parents are liable for a further term's fees plus GST. This amount is a genuine pre-estimate by the School of the loss that it would suffer if the required notice is not given.

No remission of fees, either in whole or in part, will be made if the student is absent due to illness, leave, suspension or other cause.

Parents are responsible for the payment of all medical and ambulance expenses incurred by the School on behalf of the student.

Further details can be found in the School's Fees and Refunds Policy.

## **PROCESS FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT**

The School takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents express their concerns to the School, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect in order to try to resolve the matter.

As a general guide, minor issues may be raised with the teacher or teachers specifically responsible for the pastoral care/welfare of the relevant grade/year level. Cases of more serious inappropriate conduct or misconduct ought to be directed to the relevant Head of Campus or the Principal.

Each situation will be considered as it arises and consideration of the situation will be based on the issues i.e. on a case-by-case basis.

Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or other matters relating to the School.

In cases where a Parent does not act in accordance with this Parent Code of Conduct in person in or outside of the school grounds, during a phone call or via email or other forms of communication (for example, texting or using Facebook or using methods yet to be devised as of April 2019), the staff member may take one of the following actions:

- (a) request that the Parent cease their inappropriate communication in order to allow the communication between the Parent and staff member to proceed;
- (b) inform the Parent that unless the inappropriate communication ceases, the staff member may put an end to the interaction/conversation;
- (c) request another staff member be present for the remainder of the meeting, if deemed necessary, and notify the Parent that the meeting will not proceed without another staff member present; and/or
- (d) lodge a complaint against the offending Parent in accordance with the School's Complaints Policy.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND BREACHES**

Respect and dignity will be accorded to all members of the school community and the school will do all it can to ensure that students at Alice Miller and Candlebark feel safe.

Any conflict on school grounds will be dealt with, as much as possible, in a mature and appropriate manner in accordance with existing school and DE&T procedures.

Every effort will be made to listen to the grievances of all involved parties in a calm and rational manner without recourse to involvement of outside parties who are not directly involved. However, parents should try to keep in mind that school staff do not necessarily have the time or energy to deal with disputes that are essentially trivial, that no issue can be properly understood until all points-of-view have been heard, that children tend to move on quickly from disputes (and if they do not, it may be because they are not encouraged by their parents to do so), and it is vital to teach children from the youngest age to take a "problem-solving approach" (in other words, to ask questions like "What are some ways that we can get this thing sorted out/this problem solved?").

Parents who encourage their children to harbour grievances and to think the worst of certain other children are risking considerable harm to the prospects of their children's success in their adult lives.

The consequences for breaches of by Parents of this Parent Code of Conduct will be determined by the Principal and may include the following:

(a) the School may ban a Parent from entry to school grounds or from attending School-related co-curricular activities or other events.

(b) the School may direct that a parent may only communicate with members of staff through a nominated School representative.

(c) in cases of extreme or prolonged breach of this Parent Code of Conduct by a parent, the School may terminate the enrolment of the children of that Parent.

(d) the School, where appropriate, may involve other authorities.

(e) the School may take such other steps as it deems appropriate according to the nature of the breach.

**Related policies and procedures:**

**School Privacy Policy**

**School Fees and Refund Policy**

**Use of Social Media Policy**

**Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy**

**Behaviour Management Policy**

**Attendance Policy**

John Marsden

April 2019.

To be reviewed, April 2021