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Cottage by the Sea

QUEENSCLIFF

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CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of everyone engaged by Cottage by the Sea when working with, supervising, supporting or otherwise interacting with Children.

This Code is designed to:

- promote the safety, wellbeing, participation and empowerment of Children;
- make clear the behaviours that are expected and prohibited;
- support Personnel to maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- reduce the risk of Child Abuse, discrimination and misconduct; and
- support compliance with Victoria's Child Safe Standards, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and other applicable legal and policy obligations.

This Code must be read together with the Cottage by the Sea Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Procedures Manual, complaints and reporting procedures, human resources requirements, privacy and media consent requirements, and any other relevant organisational policies.

Scope

This Code applies to all Board members, employees, volunteers, contractors, secondees, labour hire personnel, work experience students and any other person engaged by Cottage by the Sea in any capacity (Personnel).

Personnel must comply with this Code whenever they are performing duties for Cottage by the Sea, representing Cottage by the Sea, participating in programs or activities, supervising Children, communicating with Children or their families, or using Cottage by the Sea systems, devices or online platforms.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Code, all Definitions are as set out in Cottage by the Sea's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy.

Our Commitment

Cottage by the Sea is committed to creating and maintaining a Child Safe organisation where children are safe, feel safe, are heard, are respected and are empowered to participate in decisions that affect them.

Cottage by the Sea is committed to an environment where:

- the best interests of Children are prioritised;
- Children are treated with dignity, fairness and respect;

- Children are supported to understand their rights and raise concerns safely;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children are supported to express and enjoy their culture;
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Children living with disability and Children of all identities and family backgrounds are included and supported;
- families and communities are appropriately informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing; and
- Child Abuse, harm, grooming, neglect, discrimination and racism are not tolerated.

All Personnel are responsible for contributing to a Child Safe culture. Personnel must act consistently with this Code, the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Procedures Manual and Cottage by the Sea's values and related policies.

Expected Behaviours

1. Respect and Support Children

- Treat all Children with dignity, fairness and respect.
- Listen to Children and take their concerns seriously.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all Children attending Cottage by the Sea
- Encourage Children to express their views and ask questions.
- Support Children's rights, privacy and personal boundaries.
- Act as a positive role model at all times.

2. Promote inclusion and cultural safety

- Treat all Children equally regardless of background, ability, gender identity, sexuality, culture, religion or beliefs.
- Support the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.
- Support Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promote inclusion for Children living with disability.
- Challenge discriminatory, exclusionary or racist behaviour.

3. Maintain professional boundaries

- Maintain appropriate professional relationships with Children at all times.
- Use language that is respectful and age-appropriate.
- Ensure interactions with Children are transparent and observable wherever practicable.
- Follow Cottage by the Sea supervision requirements, including overnight supervision procedures.
- Apply the two-adult supervision principle wherever reasonably practicable in higher-risk settings and activities.

4. Protect Children

- Take all reasonable steps to protect Children from abuse and harm (including any identified peer-to-peer abuse).
- Report concerns, disclosures, allegations or breaches immediately.
- Follow all Child Safety policies and procedures.
- Cooperate with investigations and safeguarding processes.
- Complete required Child Safety training and annual acknowledgements.

Prohibited Behaviours

Personnel **must not** engage in any conduct that places a Child at risk of abuse, harm, grooming, neglect, exploitation or discrimination.

1. Abuse, harm or exploit a Child

Personnel **must not**:

- engage in any form of Child Abuse, grooming, neglect, exploitation or unlawful conduct involving a Child;
- use physical punishment, force, intimidation, threats or coercion;
- humiliate, shame, belittle, degrade, ridicule or intentionally embarrass a Child;
- ignore, dismiss or minimise a Child's concern, disclosure or allegation of harm;
- engage in conduct that is racist, discriminatory, exclusionary or culturally unsafe;
- expose a Child to inappropriate language, images, material, conversations or behaviours; or
- encourage, permit or fail to challenge conduct that may cause harm to a Child.

2. Maintain professional boundaries

Personnel **must not:**

- develop a 'special' relationship with a Child or show favouritism through gifts, privileges, private attention or unnecessary one-on-one time;
- seek, exchange or use personal contact details with a Child or their family unless authorised for a legitimate organisational purpose;
- communicate privately with a Child through personal phones, emails, messaging apps, social media accounts or gaming platforms;
- visit, host, transport or meet a Child outside approved Cottage by the Sea activities unless expressly authorised and documented;
- share personal information that is not appropriate to a professional relationship; or
- place themselves or a Child in an isolated or unobservable situation where this is not required for safety, care or program delivery.

3. Engage in inappropriate physical contact

Personnel **must not:**

- initiate unnecessary physical contact with a Child;
- wrestle, play fight, roughhouse or engage in physical games that blur professional boundaries;
- carry, lift or restrain a child unless required for safety, care, first aid, personal support or approved program delivery;
- allow a Child to sit on their lap, or hug a Child;
- enter bathrooms, change rooms or sleeping areas contrary to approved supervision procedures; or
- engage in any physical contact that could reasonably be interpreted as sexual, intimidating, coercive or inappropriate.

Necessary physical contact for safety, first aid, support, instruction, program participation or personal care must be appropriate, proportionate and observable wherever possible.

4. Photography, Devices and Online Safety

Personnel **must not:**

- use personal devices to photograph, video record, audio record, livestream, monitor or otherwise record children, including through wearable recording technology such as smart glasses;
- store images, videos or audio recordings of children on personal devices or personal cloud accounts;
- take photographs, video or audio recordings in bathrooms, change rooms, sleeping areas or other private spaces;
- publish, share or distribute images or recordings of Children without appropriate organisational approval and consent;
- access, create, possess or distribute inappropriate material involving Children; or
- communicate privately with Children through personal accounts, personal devices or unauthorised online platforms.

Personnel must only use approved Cottage by the Sea systems, accounts, devices and platforms when communicating with, photographing, recording or storing information about Children. All use of images, recordings and personal information must comply with consent, privacy, recordkeeping and technology requirements.

5. Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking and Vaping

Personnel **must not** consume alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco products or vapes while working with, supervising or being responsible for Children. Personnel must not perform duties while impaired by alcohol, drugs or medication, including prescription medication that may affect their capacity to perform their role safely. Any concern about fitness for duty must be reported to a manager immediately.

Overnight Camps and Residential Programs

Because Cottage by the Sea delivers overnight programs, all Personnel must:

- follow approved sleeping arrangements, supervision ratios and overnight supervision procedures;
- avoid isolated one-on-one situations with Children wherever reasonably practicable;
- comply with bathroom, change room, bedroom and personal care supervision requirements;
- maintain professional boundaries during overnight activities, excursions, transport and informal time;
- ensure any personal care, first aid or support is appropriate, respectful, documented where required and observable wherever practicable; and
- immediately escalate any concern about unsafe accommodation, supervision, transport or program arrangements.

Reporting Obligations

Personnel must act promptly whenever they become aware of, suspect or receive a disclosure about Child Abuse, harm, grooming, neglect, misconduct, unsafe practice or a breach of this Code.

- prioritise the immediate safety and wellbeing of the Child;
- take reasonable steps to remove or reduce any immediate risk of harm;
- report concerns as soon as possible to the Designated Child Protection Officer or, in their absence, another authorised manager;
- follow the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Procedures Manual and complaints handling procedures;
- make any mandatory external reports required by law or organisational procedure;
- preserve confidentiality and only share information with people who need to know in order to protect the Child, respond to the concern or comply with legal obligations; and
- cooperate with any internal or external investigation, review or safeguarding response.

If a Child is in immediate danger contact Victoria Police on 000 immediately and then follow Cottage by the Sea reporting procedures as soon as it is safe to do so.

Failure to Comply

Breaches of this Code are taken seriously.

A breach may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment or engagement, removal from duties involving children, referral to external authorities, notification under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, or other action required by law or organisational policy.

Failure to report a Child Safety concern, disclosure, allegation or breach may also result in disciplinary action and may have legal consequences.

Related Documents

- Child Safety& Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Procedures Manual
- Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- Privacy Policy
- Media, Photography & Consent Procedure
- Recruitment, Screening & Working with Children Check procedures
- Volunteer and Contractor induction materials

Declaration

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the Cottage by the Sea Child Safety Code of Conduct.

I agree that I will:

- comply with this Code and all related Child Safety policies and procedures;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Children;
- immediately disclose any charge, conviction, investigation, suspension, restriction or other matter that may affect my suitability to work with or around Children; and
- immediately report any concern for the safety or wellbeing of a Child, any unsafe practice, or any suspected breach of this Code or the Child Safety& Wellbeing Policy.

I understand that failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary action, termination of employment or engagement, removal from duties involving children and/or referral to external authorities.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____