



SA MONTESSORI
quality early childhood education and care

SA Montessori Code of Conduct for creating and maintaining a 'Child Safe Organisation'

Providing a 'home away from home' for young children is our great privilege, and it carries certain ethical, moral and legal responsibilities to protect, empower, support and advocate for those children.

This Code of Conduct expresses the requirements of every SA Montessori employee, contract worker, volunteer or student-teacher on placement. All of these individuals share the responsibility of contributing to a safe environment for children and therefore ensuring that SA Montessori remains a 'child safe organisation'.

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for employees and volunteers of our organisation. **All employees, volunteers and student-teachers within our organisation are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:**

- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people,
- Abiding by the principles and procedures set out in SA Montessori's Child Protection Policy, Duty of Care Policy, Ethical Conduct Policy, Confidentiality Policy and Police Clearance Policy.
- Maintaining the standards set out in the Staff Handbook (or Student & Volunteer Handbook).
- Treating everyone (this includes staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents) including those of different race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes and religious beliefs with respect and honesty and ensure equity is upheld.
- Taking a holistic and proactive view of a child's well-being, in line with our Positive Mental Wellbeing Policy and our Wellbeing Pledge.
- Being a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them.
- Setting clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and the children in our care.
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people, including through non-verbal cues such as body language and behavioural expressions.
- Being alert to detrimental social behaviours, such as exclusion or aggression, and responding promptly and appropriately to model pro-social interactions and strategies.
- Ensuring another adult is always present or in sight when engaging in personal caregiving routines with a child, such as changing a nappy or assisting with toileting.
- Ensuring that students and volunteers are never left alone with a child and are always in the presence and supervision of at least one employed member of staff.
- Engaging in formal training in safe environments, as well as ongoing critical reflection regarding the implantation of these principles within the service and in-house training or mentoring as required.
- Being alert to children and young people who are, or may be at risk of harm, and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) and accessing emergency assistance (000) if there is imminent risk.
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian
- Encouraging children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them, including through inviting children's voices in program planning, risk-benefit analysis and our statement of philosophy.
- Embodying the principles and practices outlined by Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics.

Employees, volunteers and student-teachers must not:

- Engage in 'rough' physical games or persist with any games involving physical touch and/or chasing after a child has indicated a desire to stop.
- Use (or threaten) unwanted physical touch or restraint as a form of discipline.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism, such as the offering of gifts or special treatment.
- Promote or perpetuate keeping 'secrets' with children, even in regards to innocuous subjects (with the use of 'surprise' introduced as a more empowering alternative to 'secrets').
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Overrule or ignore a child's bodily autonomy during personal caregiving routines.
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, language, development, ability, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Record or capture any identifying information about a child on their personal devices, including photographs, videos or address/contact details.
- Make or retain copies of any identifying information about a child or their family, including address/contact details, except where it is expressly required and authorised for work purposes and complying with the Confidentiality Policy.

Reporting a Breach of the Code of Conduct

Each employee has a duty of care to protect the safety of children. Any perceived, suspected or observed breach of the Code of Conduct should be reported to the centre Director/Manager.

If an individual is not comfortable approaching the centre Director/Manager (and/or if the breach involves the Director/Manager), the perceived, suspected or observed breach can be reported to Jessica Langford (Managing Director, SA Montessori) confidentially via jessica@samontessori.com.au

Breaches can also be reported as a complaint to the Education Standards Board (1800 882 413).

If a breach of the Code also involves harm or risk of harm, the incident/individual must be reported to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78).

If a Breach of the code presents an emergency or imminent risk of harm, police assistance may be requested (000).

Consequences of Breaching the Code of Conduct

Any perceived, suspected or observed breach of the Code of Conduct will result in immediate disciplinary action, including performance management, a potential written warning, and the possibility of immediate termination.

I agree to abide by this code of conduct:

Name:..... **Role:**

Signature:..... **Date:**.....

Witnessed by SA Montessori leadership/management:

Name:..... **Role:**

Signature:..... **Date:**.....