

# child safety

## CODE OF CONDUCT



St John Ambulance Australia (St John) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. We recognise the importance of providing a safe environment for all children accessing our services, activities and programs.

Our Members should always respect and foster the dignity and self-esteem of children, and empower them to speak out if they feel unsafe. In turn, St John aims to foster a culture where Members can freely raise concerns about child safety.

This Code of Conduct aims to provide guidance to Members appropriate conduct when working with children. It is intended to complement legislation, St John policies and professional standards (as these apply to Members).

### ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

#### DO:

- uphold this Code of Conduct and St John's child safety policies and procedures—keep a copy handy, such as on your personal computer or device
- respect the rights, dignity, diversity and worth of all members, regardless of difference
- uphold the principles of equity in working with children (e.g. making reasonable adjustments if possible)
- treat children and their families with respect, fairness, professionalism and courtesy
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children particularly if they are disclosing that they or another child has been harmed or is at risk of harm
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse and migrant backgrounds, and children with a disability
- establish and maintain a child safe environment in the course of your work
- act as a positive role model
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of children and handle personal information in line with St John's Privacy and Information Handling Policies.
- understand the limitations relating to privacy and confidentiality regarding child abuse. If you believe or suspect a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or an allegation or disclosure has been made, this must be reported
- adhere to the Youth Member Behaviour Management Policy, including the available responses for breaches to Agreed Codes of Behaviour and Code of Conduct
- be vigilant and proactive about child safety and report all allegations, suspicions or concerns promptly
- understand and comply with reporting obligations
- ensure that all communications are safe, respectful and promote the good image of St John
- maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure a professional and appropriate tone in all social media interactions, especially with children\*

\* Some members role requires them to manage social media pages and this may require the member to 'friend' a young member of another St John entity. In this case, communications must relate strictly to the members role. Contact outside of that role is prohibited. Members should never engage in conduct that would contravene St John's Social Media Policy.

**Making first aid a part of everybody's life.**

## UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

You must **NOT**:

- engage in any activity with a child that is likely to cause harm including participating in any behaviour that would constitute abuse, neglect, exploitation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a 'special' relationship with a child, or ignore the behaviours of other adults, that could be seen as favouritism, overly familiar, inappropriate or 'grooming' behaviour
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with children which may be interpreted as inappropriate, including the use of language (e.g. profane or sexualised) or discussion of topics that are adult in nature
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child, including doing things for the child they can do themselves (e.g. toileting), unless delivering a medical service where touch is necessary to assess or treat the child
- use physical means to discipline or control a child
- be in a one-to-one situation with a child, including transportation\*\*
- take a child that is engaged in a St John service, activity or program to our homes\*\*
- communicate directly with a child through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, chat rooms, gaming sites, texting etc) outside of St John's programs, your position description or without oversight
- seek contact with a child outside of St John's programs, including participating in any private social function at the request of a child
- express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- participate in sexual or intimate behaviour while in a St John environment, including between consenting members above the legal age of consent
- engage in a sexual act with a child
- request that a child keeps communication with an adult a secret from their parents/carers
- photograph or video a child without their consent and the consent of their parents/carers
- store photographs or video of a child engaged in St John services, activities or programs for personal use. Photographs and video taken of children engaged in St John services, activities or programs must be used for official St John purposes only
- give gifts to a child outside of St John programs, unless authorisation is obtained for gift-giving
- consume or supply alcohol and/or other drugs under any circumstances in a St John environment or an environment where you have a duty of care for children
- form an intimate relationship with any child over whom you have direct authority
- engage with children online in a way that may be considered to be abusive or inappropriate, including the use of language or topics that are adult in nature (e.g. profane or sexualised) and behaviours that may constitute grooming.
- discuss or show content of an intimate, mature or adult nature in the presence of children, or use sexual innuendo or participate in sexually suggestive behaviour with children
- treat a child unfavourably or discriminate because of disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity

\*\* Should a situation arise where such measures are necessary, preventative practices should be adopted. See the National Child Safety Guidelines for more information.

## BREACHING THE CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

All Members, contractors and visitors are required to comply with this Code of Conduct. It applies in all situations—including at youth activities and events, when treating a casualty or using digital technology for example.

If you breach this Code of Conduct, you may face disciplinary action. For serious breaches, this may even be termination of your involvement with St John. Serious breaches may be reported to the police.

There may be special situations where a member may need to operate outside of the Code, such as during an emergency. Members should always attempt to seek authorisation for any action that breach this Code of Conduct. You must also advise St John of any action(s) taken that breach this Code of Conduct as soon as possible.

## CHAMPIONS

The Australian Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will support the implementation and monitoring of this Code of Conduct. The CEO will also provide information and support to members to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively. All adult Members will champion this Code of Conduct.

**IF A CHILD IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM, CALL **TRIPLE ZERO (000)**.**

This Child Safety Code of Conduct was approved by the St John Ambulance Australia Inc. Chief Executive Officer on 14 May 2019. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed in May 2020 or before if legislative or other changes require its amendment.