



## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS CODE OF CONDUCT 2026

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|-------------|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 5.          | May 2026       | Include governing body members. | JM                |

## Introduction

Yallingup Steiner School is committed to providing a child-safe environment and only promotes practices which provide safety and wellbeing for students.

Steiner Education is a worldwide movement with a clear orientation to supporting the development of students in their entirety of body, soul and spirit. The conscious establishment of healthy and respectful human relationships is an important tenet of building individual and community health within our schools.

This Code of Conduct has been established to provide guidance and assistance to staff and other relevant adults, in their everyday decision making and when faced with a dilemma. School staff are in a unique position of responsibility and authority and must make every effort to ensure that they provide a positive and safe learning environment for students. By accepting a contract of employment with Yallingup Steiner School, staff are agreeing to abide by the school's Code of Conduct.

The Code places an obligation on all staff to take responsibility for their own conduct and to work with colleagues cooperatively, to achieve a consultative and collaborative workplace where children are protected and people are comfortable to work.

A safeguard for the property and reputation of the school is also included in this Code of Conduct.

## Scope

All staff, including volunteers, interns or trainees of Yallingup Steiner School have an obligation to abide by this Code of Conduct and will be held accountable for any breaches of the Code.

For the purposes of this document "staff" refers to all paid and unpaid staff, including volunteers, governing body members, interns or trainees of the Yallingup Steiner School.

## Definitions

### ***Child abuse:***

Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law and are defined by the Department of Communities:

- (1) Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or caregiver.
- (2) Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and developmental level, and includes sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- (a) the child is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
- (b) the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- (c) there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.

(3) Emotional abuse includes:

- (a) psychological abuse; and
- (b) being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.

(4) Neglect is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic or chronic.

**Corporal punishment:**

Any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement; can also include, for example, forcing the child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect the child or others from harm. *[UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006)]*.

**Degrading punishment:**

Any punishment which is incompatible with respect for human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child *[UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8 (2006)]*.

**Grooming:**

The use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in order to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or avoiding exposure. Please refer to the school's (insert relevant policy name here) for information on recognising grooming behaviour.

## Principles of the Code of Conduct

As part of the School's duty of care to its students, the expectation is that staff will always act in the best interests of students and that their welfare and safety will be of paramount concern.

The Code of Conduct also extends to respect for property and adult interactions.

Staff and volunteers are responsible for their own actions and should avoid any conduct which might be construed by a reasonable person as inappropriate. When considering student interactions, staff may consider the following questions:

- How might my behaviour be perceived by others?
- Am I treating a student differently to others?
- Can I achieve the same outcome through a more appropriate interaction?
- Would I do this or say this if a colleague or parent were present?

**Yallingup Steiner School expressly forbids any form of child abuse, corporal and degrading punishment.**

### Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Those people identified under this Code of Conduct are accountable for their actions:

- The consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of this Code will depend on the nature of the breach.
- Staff are requested to report any observed behaviour not permitted by the Code, other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations, to the Executive Committee.
- Breaches that are considered Reportable Incidents will be lodged with the Director of Education, as prescribed by the Non-Government Schools Regulation Standards.
- Actions that may be taken by the school, in respect of a breach of the Code, include management or remedial action, training or disciplinary action ranging from a warning to termination of employment. The school Executive Committee reserves the right to determine, in its entirety, the response to any breach of this Code, except in circumstances where a formal warning is issued to a staff member or their employment is ceased as a result of a breach that is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, the matter is then required to be notified to the Director General of the Department of Education, as a reportable incident.
- The Teachers Registration Board of Western Australia (TRBWA) and The Western Australian Police will always be notified where necessary, if a breach is suspected to have involved grooming behaviour, in compliance with Section 42 of the *Teacher Registration Act 2023*. *(under section 42 of the Act, employers are required to give notice within 7 days if it is suspected on reasonable grounds that the teacher has engaged in serious misconduct or taught with serious incompetence AND as a result the teacher is dismissed, suspended, resigns or ceases teaching at the school).*

### Expectations of Staff

Staff are expected to perform duties to the best of their ability and be accountable for their performance.

The following apply:

1. Honesty and in good faith in action when fulfilling duties.
2. Respectful, courteous, and responsive dealings with colleagues, students, parents and members of the public.
3. Active collaboration with colleagues.
4. Ensuring conduct, whether during or outside working hours, is consistent with the ethos of the school and does not damage the reputation of the school.
5. Responsibility for currency of qualifications (e.g. TRBWA) and required training updates and security checks, Mandatory Reporting, Working With Children and Senior First Aid.
6. Familiarity with the school's policies and procedures.
7. Familiarity with legislation overarching employment.

### Professional Boundaries Between Teachers and Students

Professional boundaries between teachers and students as outlined by the TRBWA are outlined below:

1. a) **Emotional Boundaries** - Emotional self-regulation primarily involves using appropriate levels of emotion in interactions with students and dealing with students' emotions appropriately in teaching settings.
2. b) **Relationship Boundaries** - Relationships between teachers and students are professional relationships, with a recognition that teachers are not 'friends' with students, in the way students are friends with other students.
3. c) **Power Boundaries** - Teachers are in a position of power and authority over students and must ensure they do not abuse that position.
4. d) **Communication Boundaries** - These relate to what teachers say and how they say it.
5. e) **Physical Boundaries** - Teachers should limit physical contact with students to circumstances where, using 'time, place, circumstances' as a guiding principle, the contact is appropriate and required or necessary. Teachers must ensure they do not engage in inappropriate physical contact. (See 'Physical Contact with Students' below)

Any breach of the above boundaries is a breach of the Yallingup Steiner School Code of Conduct. These boundaries are not necessarily mutually exclusive, more than one boundary may be breached at the same time.

### Physical Contact with Students

Decisions to use any physical intervention must always take into consideration the environment, reasonably foreseeable risks and the culture, age, maturity, personal history, understanding and developmental capacity of the student, including any care plans that may be in place.

Students identified as more likely to be aggressive due to fear, trauma, neurological disorders and/or mental health issues need to be supported and responded to in ways that recognise their needs and reduce the likelihood of adverse behaviour. The starting point for any situation where a staff member is considering using physical contact with students is to use verbal and/or visual directions rather than physical contact. Where physical contact is essential for safety reasons (e.g. with aquatic or gymnastic instruction), permission should

be sought from the student to hold them in a particular way before doing so.

In some circumstances, staff may need to discourage students from inappropriate expectations of hugs or cuddles. This should be done tactfully so as not to embarrass or offend the student.

**It is inappropriate for staff to routinely hug students.**

Where students have special and/or complex needs it is important to follow the negotiated strategy outlined in their documented plan/s. Where physical contact is required for the student to engage in their learning programme, the least intrusive level of prompt should be implemented at all times.

Staff can take reasonable action, including physical contact with a student or a student's property, to:

- manage or care for a student
- maintain or re-establish order or
- prevent or restrain a person from placing at risk the safety of any person or – damaging any property.

The action taken must be proportionate to the circumstances of the situation.

When dealing with disciplinary appeals involving physical contact, the WA Industrial Relations Commission has applied the following principles in deciding whether the contact was reasonable:

- physical contact is not appropriate as a response to mere 'bad behaviour' by a student, unless there is an actual risk of self-harm, or harm to others;
- physical contact is not to be used to discipline students;
- even 'minimal' physical contact can be unreasonable if there were reasonable alternatives; and
- even if a student initiates physical contact, the staff member must ensure that any response is limited to what is necessary to deal with the risk of harm, and not continued beyond a point where it is needed. This may include the staff member avoiding, if possible, any physical contact with the student.

*Working With Younger Students*

Teachers are more likely to have contact with younger students, for example when offering comfort or guidance and in daily aspects of teaching younger children. This may involve assisting students who need help dressing or undressing at appropriate times. Such contact must be authorised or be consistent with general rules. At such times, it is suggested that where possible, another adult be present or in the vicinity, for example an education assistant.

It is also wise to record unavoidable contact which falls outside this Code of Conduct and to report it to parents and the Executive Committee at the earliest opportunity, also recording the fact that it was reported.

The conduct of teachers who work with younger students may be identified as a concern where their conduct and contact:

- with one student is distinguishable from that with the other students in circumstances where there are not appropriate educational reasons (and who have not, for example, recorded or reported the reasons for the different conduct and contact); or
- is different to most other teachers in similar circumstances and gives rise to concerns.

### Reporting to the Executive Committee

Staff have a responsibility under the Code of Conduct to report the following to the Executive Committee:

- A charge with or conviction of a serious offence.
- Subjection to a Violence Restraining Order.
- Awareness of a crime committed by another staff member.
- Concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person enrolled at the school.
- Concerns about the inappropriate actions of any other Staff member that involves children or young people.

### Standards for Teachers

As an educational institution, Yallingup Steiner School is staffed primarily by teachers. Using the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Professional standards as a benchmark, it is expected teachers will provide quality teaching appropriate for students, recognising the diversity of learners in their care and making every effort to ensure students have every chance of succeeding.

Professional Engagement standards require working closely with colleagues, parents and carers and responding appropriately and promptly to any concerns that arise. Engagement in professional learning is also an essential component of maintaining the AITSL Standards.

### Respect for Others

Staff have a responsibility to promote the welfare of students and other staff. The school expects employees to treat each other with respect and courtesy.

Positive daily interactions with others builds the school's workplace culture and reputation.

All employees are expected to be available, approachable, respectful, courteous and prompt in dealing with other people when at work, for the benefit of students, parents, other employees and members of the community.

Employees who work with students have a specific responsibility to present themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Modelling respectful and effective self regulation in interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development.

All staff are expected to:

- Model positive interactions with students, parents, other staff members and members of the community.
- Continually monitor and reflect on individual practice and follow the guidance in this Code of Conduct.

- Abstain from rude or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression. Abusive, threatening, intimidating or derogatory language and physical abuse or intimidation towards other staff, students and parents is unacceptable.

**Any unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying of a fellow employee, contractor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian constitutes grounds for dismissal and/or reporting to relevant authorities.**

### Duty of Care and Non-delegable Duty

Teaching Staff specifically hold a non-delegable duty of care to students under their supervision.

When deciding on and preparing activities for students, teachers must use their professional judgement to balance the risk of harm involved in the activity with what the students will learn from undertaking the activity. A teacher's professional judgement must be guided by the school's policies.

When non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers agree to take personal care/charge of students, they owe a duty of care to students and must take reasonable care to prevent harm from coming to students, however:

- Overall duty of care cannot be assigned to staff who are not teachers.
- Overall duty of care cannot be assigned to external providers.

While others may have 'charge' of a specific activity, it is the teacher who retains the overall duty of care of the students and must therefore remain close by to make sure that students are not exposed to unnecessary risk.

It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that assigned care givers are aware of their delegated responsibility.

**Appropriate Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media** The school provides electronic communication facilities for its employees for educational or administrative purposes. The Executive may monitor and view data stored or transmitted using the school's facilities. The fast and permanent nature of electronic communication requires staff to be particularly vigilant with their communications. Electronic communication and social media are not available for use by students at Yallingup Steiner School.

### Drugs and Alcohol Usage

Work health and safety is of fundamental importance to Yallingup Steiner School. Staff are responsible for ensuring their capacity to perform duties unimpaired by the use of alcohol or drugs. The use of such substances must not put at risk one's own or any other person's health and safety.

The use of illegal substances on the school property is strictly forbidden.

### Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interest

Personal interests can, or have the potential to, influence a person's capacity to perform their duties impartially and in turn compromise their integrity and that of the school. A conflict of interest can involve:

- a) pecuniary interests i.e., financial gain or loss or other material benefits. b) non-pecuniary interests i.e., favours, personal relationships and associations. Conflict of interest also include:
- a) the interests of members of your immediate family or relatives (where these interests are known).
- b) the interests of your own, business partners or associates, or those of your workplace; or
- c) the interests of your friends.

Staff should openly declare any real or potential conflicts of interest as they arise during the management of their duties.

### Declaring Gifts, Benefits or Bribes

Staff are expected to exercise sound judgement when deciding whether to accept a gift or benefit.

Accepting gifts and other benefits has the potential to compromise one's position, by creating a sense of obligation and undermining impartiality. It may also affect the reputation of the school and its staff.

Staff must not create the impression that any person or organisation is influencing the school or the decisions or actions of any of its employees.

### Communication and Protecting Confidential Information

Staff must maintain the confidentiality of school information and be mindful when in discussions with parents, staff, family members and others.

A guarantee of confidentiality, especially if the matter under discussion is related to mandatory reporting, cannot always be given.

Staff must observe legal requirements pertaining to the collection, release and protection of privacy of information.

Before asking for information or disclosing information, staff should consider the necessity carefully.

### Record Keeping

Staff have a responsibility:

- a) to create and securely retain reasonable and regular records of their programmes, activities, school-based interactions and other relevant transactions.
- b) to upload or store records in the school's record systems, as required; and
- c) not to deliberately access school information to which they are not authorised.

### Copyright and Intellectual Property

When creating material, staff must ensure the intellectual property rights of others are not infringed and information is recorded about any third-party copyright/other rights included in materials.

Any material developed that relates to employment with the school, the copyright in that material will belong to the school. This may apply even if the material was developed in one's own time.

## Related Documents

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Behaviour Management policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Emergency and Critical Incidents Management Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Excursions, Incursions & Camps Policy

## Appendix 1

### Declaration

**It is a condition of Employment at Yallingup Steiner School that all policies and procedures of the school will be adhered to.**

**Further to this expectation, staff must sign and return a copy of the following statement:**

I will:

- Act in accordance with the considerations of the Yallingup Steiner School Staff Code of Conduct outlined herein.
- Act in accordance with Yallingup Steiner School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and procedures at all times.
- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children at Yallingup Steiner School.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- Report objectively observable behaviour which breaches or is suspected of breaching this Code, (other than those subject to mandatory reporting obligations) to the Executive Committee.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to Yallingup Steiner School's policies, discussions and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by Yallingup Steiner School's policies and procedures.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with Yallingup Steiner School's policies and procedures.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by law and/or Yallingup Steiner School's policies and procedures.

I will not:

- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with for a purpose unrelated to Yallingup Steiner School's activities.
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by Yallingup Steiner School's policy and/or procedures for reporting.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.

Name: .....

Job Title: .....

Date: .....

Signature: .....