

All children, regardless of gender, diversity, religion or ability, are treated equally and respectfully. The health and safety of children remain paramount for all staff involved in the education and care of children attending St Nicholas.

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CROC) is an internationally agreed set of standards and principles regarding how children should be treated and to what minimum human rights they are entitled. Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has used the CROC principles to inform an Australian code of ethical behaviour with regard to children.

Educators are required to have a good understanding and work in accordance with the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, which is on display at our centres. Professional reflection helps educators implement the code of ethics.

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

In this Code of Ethics, the protection and well-being of children are paramount and therefore speaking out or taking action when witnessing unethical practice is an essential professional responsibility.

I. In relation to children, I will:

1. Act in the best interests of all children.
2. Create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance their learning.
3. Provide a meaningful curriculum to enrich children's learning, balancing child and educator-initiated experiences.
4. Understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing.
5. Ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future.
6. Collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity.
7. Value the relationship between children and their families and enhance these relationships through my practice.
8. Ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin.
9. Negotiate children's participation in research, by taking into account their safety, privacy, levels of fatigue and interest.

10. Respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment.
11. Safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when shared on digital platforms.

II. In relation to families, I will:

1. Support families as children's first and most important teacher and respect their right to make decisions about their children
2. Listen to and learn with families and engage in shared decision making, planning and assessment practices in relation to children's learning, development, and wellbeing.
3. Develop respectful relationships based on open communication with the aim of encouraging families' engagement and to build a strong sense of belonging.
4. Learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems.
5. Respect families' right to privacy and maintain confidentiality.

III. In relation to colleagues, I will:

1. Encourage others to adopt and act in accordance with this Code and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours.
2. Build a spirit of collegiality and professionalism through collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty.
3. Acknowledge and support the diverse strengths and experiences of colleagues in order to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills.
4. Use constructive processes to address differences of opinion in order to negotiate shared perspectives and actions.
5. Participate in a 'lively culture of professional inquiry' to support continuous improvement.
6. Implement strategies that support and mentor colleagues to make positive contributions to the profession.
7. Maintain ethical relationships in my online interactions.

IV. In relation to community and society, I will:

1. Learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing.
2. Collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families.
3. Use research and practice-based evidence to advocate for a society where all children have access to quality education and care.

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4. Promote the value of children’s contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities.
5. Work to promote increased appreciation of the importance of childhood including how children learn and develop, in order to inform programs and systems of assessment that benefit children.
6. Advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

VII. In relation to the profession, I will:

1. Base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whom I work.
2. Take responsibility for articulating my professional values, knowledge and practice and the positive contribution our profession makes to society.
3. Engage in critical reflection, ongoing professional learning and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession.
4. Work within the scope of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
5. Encourage qualities and practices of ethical leadership within the profession.
6. Model quality practice and provide constructive feedback and assessment for students as aspiring professionals.
7. Mentor new graduates by supporting their induction into the profession.
8. Advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care.

Reference: *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC)*
<http://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycroc.pdf>

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