



## 1.8 Code of Conduct

### Purpose

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**At John Street we require all stakeholders to be respectful and ethical.**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote child safe standards, professionalism, confidentiality and ethical conduct, and to inform children and families, and the community, of the standard of professional conduct they can expect John Street to uphold.

John Street uses this code as a basis for evaluating professional conduct, and as a framework to inform our pedagogy, relationships, philosophy, and influence and position within communities and society.

### Objective

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John Street is committed to a code of conduct, upholding the child safe standards, and ethical principles and professional standards that guide decision-making and practice at John Street.

This includes a system of ethical inquiry that helps us to reflect upon how we relate and contribute to the education and care community in which we actively participate.

### Definitions

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**John Street leadership** – The Centre Directors and the Board.

**Stakeholders** - All members or participants that are seen as having an interest in John Streets success. This includes Families, Children, Educators and Staff, Committee of Management (the Board), the Centre Director, Volunteers, Students.

**Professional Conduct** – The moral and social manner in which a person carries out their professional responsibility.

### Scope of Policy

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All Stakeholders.

### Standards of professional conduct

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The professional conduct of the team at John Street in relation to one another, the children and their families, the community, and the Education and Care Services sector is based on the following set of expected standards of professional conduct:

- John Street will administer an approved education and care service in compliance with legislation including the Education and Care Services National Law, professional standards and best practice.
- Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) *Code of Ethics (2016)* will be used as a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals.
- John Street will implement Child Safe Standards set forth by its governing bodies as apply from time to time including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, the Wrongs Amendment Act 2017, and the Reportable Conduct Scheme (July 2017).
- John Street will *uphold the ethical responsibility to take action in the face of injustice and when unethical practice occurs (ECA 2016)*.
- John Street will engage in reflective, ethical, and sustainable decision-making.
- John Street will provide a program within a family and child-centred context.

These standards of professional conduct are supported by, and should be read in conjunction with

- Early Childhood Australia's *Code of Ethics (2016)*.
- the National Quality Framework document as made available through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.
- Child Safe Standards.
- John Street's Operational policies and procedures, which provide a framework for accountable and responsible professional practice.
- John Street's Statement of Philosophy.

### **Conduct of Families**

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John Street has the moral and legal obligations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff, and visitors to the Centre.

To help us meet these obligations, we ask that families agree to abide by the following Families Code of Conduct – a code specifying the behavioural rules and principles that we expect them to follow in their interactions with children and staff at the Centre.

#### **In relation to children we expect families attending to:**

- Be a positive role model at all times.
- Speak to children in an encouraging and positive manner.
- Treat every child with equal respect and dignity.
- Listen actively to children and offer empathy, support, and guidance where needed.

**In relation to other adults (including staff) we expect families to:**

- Use respectful, encouraging, and accepting language.
- Give encouraging and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Respect the rights of others as individuals.
- Accept staff decisions and follow their directions at all times. Speak with the staff member if you have a problem complying with any directions.
- Refer matters or concerns related to managing children's behaviour to staff promptly (given behaviour guidance within the Centre is the responsibility of staff).
- Refrain from public criticism of children and adults at the Centre.
- Do not, under any circumstance, approach a child, parents/guardians or member of staff in a confrontational manner.

**In general we expect families and other persons attending to:**

- Be responsible for the supervision of their children at all times (where such children are not enrolled in the program).

If you have any complaints or concerns about our Families Code of Conduct outlined above, please follow the recommended procedures for raising these as outlined in our Family Handbook.

**Conduct of Children**

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We all have the right to feel safe and be safe at all times. This code of conduct applies to all children who attend John Street.

**When at John Street we expect children to:**

- Play safely, be gentle and respect others.
- Keep hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
- Listen when others are talking.
- Follow directions.
- Respect John Street and personal property.
- Use appropriate language.
- Ask an educator if you need help.

**Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics 2016**

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Early Childhood Australia's *Code of Ethics (2016)* is an integral part of John Street as it guides the ethical principles and professional standards of conduct towards children, families, colleagues,

communities, students, employers, yourself, and the conduct of research. The Code of Ethics is referred to widely within the education and care sector, and is highly respected. The Code of Ethics is owned by the field, rather than imposed upon it (ECA 2016).

John Street accepts professional ownership of ECA's *Code of Ethics (2016)* and formally acknowledges that the ECA's *Code of Ethics (2016)* provides John Street with:

- A basis for critical reflection
- A guide for professional behaviour
- Principles to inform individual and collective decision-making.

### **Ethical Response Cycle**

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John Street endeavours to ensure that the planning and delivery of the program reflects ECA's *Code of Ethics (2016)* and recognises that every now and then situations present that do not have laws, policies or procedures to guide their resolution.

In order to reach sound ethical judgements, John Street works through an ethical response cycle, based on *Newman and Pollintz's (2001)* framework to support and validate systematic, humane and sensitive reasoning. The cycle involves the following:

#### **Procedures**

- Identify the facts surrounding the issue.
- Identify any legal aspects and community values.
- Refer to John Street Philosophy, Policies and Procedures.
- Identify the principles of ECA's *Code of Ethics (2016)* that are relevant to the issue.
- Form an opinion based on professional knowledge, application of the Code of Ethics, and the specific contexts for the issue, then discuss these opinions with others to decide on how to respond to the issue.
- Reflect on the outcomes to guide the development of consistent ways of responding to the issue if it arises again and document the outcome to inform further development of policies and guidelines that are fair and equitable.

### **Communication Plan**

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John Street's Code of conduct acknowledging ECA's *Code of Ethics 2016* is a valuable tool for empowering families and communities to maintain high expectations of John Street, and for those party to the Code to self-assess their professional behaviour. For this reason, the Code will be widely promoted and upheld by all stakeholders at John Street.

## Procedures

- John's Street's Code of conduct will be made available in the policy and procedures manual, in staffing publications and family publications.
- The ECA *Code of Ethics (2016)* is displayed at John Street in the foyer.
- The ECA *Code of Ethics (2016)* is made available to the professional team during staff orientation, in staffing publications, is on display in the staff room, and in this policy document.
- Staff responsible for program planning documentation will ensure that the planning and delivery of the program reflects ECA's *Code of Ethics (2016)*.

## Child Safe Standards

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All staff, volunteers and board members of John Street are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards, and in the company of, children, as noted below.

Our comprehensive approach to Child Safe Standards is set out in our **Child Safe Standards Policy**.

To summarise, all personnel of John Street are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to John Street's Child Safe Standards Policy at all times, including upholding John Street's statement of commitment to child safety at all times.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Treating everyone with respect.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they, or another child, has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification).
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination).
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to John Street leadership and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection.

- Reporting any child safety concerns to John Street leadership.
- Ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe if an allegation of child abuse is made.
- Encouraging children to have a voice and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

**Staff and volunteers must not:**

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate on occasion, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area).
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors).
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities).
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- Discriminate against children for any reasons including, cultural and/or LGBTQIA backgrounds, religion, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters).
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

**Responsibility**

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It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to implement this policy.

**Legislative Provisions**

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**DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2011-2012**

<b>Section 6.5</b>	<i>What are my services responsibilities to parents?</i>
<b>Section 6.6</b>	<i>What are my responsibilities to children?</i>

<b>Section 6.6</b>	<i>What are my services responsibilities to staff?</i>
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**Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)** - Section 3(2)(b); 3(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f); 165-166 & 168

**Education and Care Services National Regulations 2016:**

<b>r.155</b>	<i>Interactions with children</i>
<b>r.156</b>	<i>Relationships in groups</i>
<b>r.168 (2)(i)</b>	<i>Education and Care Service must have policies and procedures</i>

**National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care**

<b>Standard 1.1</b>	<i>The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.</i>
<b>Standard 1.2</b>	<i>Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development</i>
<b>Element 2.1.1</b>	<i>Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.</i>
<b>Element 2.2.3</b>	<i>Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.</i>
<b>Standard 4.2</b>	<i>Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical</i>
<b>Standard 5.1</b>	<i>Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child</i>
<b>Standard 5.2</b>	<i>Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships</i>
<b>Standard 6.1</b>	<i>Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role</i>
<b>Standard 7.2</b>	<i>Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community</i>

**Sources**

Department of Education and Training, Victoria – website at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

Department of Justice and Regulation, Victoria – website at <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/>

Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 – accessible via <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>

Victorian Government’s Reportable Conduct Scheme (July 2017) – information about the scheme can be found at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/>

National Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2009, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT

Newman, L & Pollnitz, L (2001) *Will my response be ethical? : A reflective process to guide the practice of early childhood students and professionals*, University of Western Sydney, Sydney.

Early Childhood Australia (2016) *ECA Code of Ethics*, ECA – available at <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/code-of-ethics-core-principles/>

### **Related John Street Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

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<b>Policies</b>	<i>Child Safe Standard Policy; Philosophy; Expectations of Educators; Child Safety, Dealing with Complaints; Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs; Managing Poor Work Performance &amp; Gross Misconduct; Personal Safety &amp; Security; Equity, Diversity &amp; the Children’s Program; Multicultural Programming for Social Inclusion; Program Planning; Educational Equipment &amp; Toys; Communication with Families; Supervision of Children; Ongoing Professional Development</i>
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### **Authorisation & Review**

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This policy was approved by the John Street Board in July 2018.