

# *Child Safety Policy*

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Implementation Owner	Academic Director
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# Section 1 – Introduction

## 1. Preamble

AIT, and its subsidiaries and trading brands, hold the care, safety, and wellbeing of children & young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our organisation.

## 2. Scope

This policy is an overarching Group policy and applies to:

- i) All staff of AIT, Coder and ISCD, including employees and contractors;
- ii) All courses delivered by AIT, Coder and ISCD, including those delivered on their behalf by education providers with whom there is a licensing arrangement. If there are any discrepancies between an affiliate's policy and these, the AIT policy will apply.
- iii) All students (domestic and international) of AIT brands:
  - a. Academy of Interactive Technology Pty Ltd (also trading as Coder Academy Australia, iscd, and Work Ready Education) RTO: 90511, Registered Higher Education Provider PRV12005, CRICOS: 02155J
  - b. International School of Colour and Design Pty Ltd (iscd) RTO: 91439

## 3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of AIT to the care, safety and wellbeing of all our underage students. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep young people safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the school.

This policy considers relevant legislative requirements within the states of NSW, VIC, QLD, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

## 4. Principles

AIT has a moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing learning environments where all students including children & young people are respected, their voices are heard, and they are safe.

# Section 2 – Policy

## 1. The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at AIT:

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety, and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- AIT works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- All AIT staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children & young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children & young people.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the governments, the police, and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Employees, volunteers, contractors, parents, and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by the AIT Executive team.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

## 2. Definitions used in this Policy

**Child:** A child or a young person enrolled as a student at the school.

**Child abuse includes:**

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence
  - an offence under section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 VIC (grooming)
- b) the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
  - serious neglect of a child.

**Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**Child neglect:** The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

**Child physical abuse:** Generally, child physical abuse refers to the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviours include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or carer (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behaviour.

**Child protection:** Statutory services designed to protect children who are at risk of serious harm.  
**Child sexual abuse:** Any sexual activity between a child under the age of consent (16) and an adult or older person (i.e. a person five or more years older than the victim) is child sexual abuse.

**Child sexual abuse** can also be:

- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult in a position of power or authority over them (e.g. a teacher); the age of consent laws do not apply in such instances due to the strong imbalance of power that exists between young people and authority figures, as well as the breaching of both personal and public trust that occurs when professional boundaries are violated
- any sexual behaviour between a child and an adult family member, regardless of issues of consent, equality or coercion
- sexual activity between peers that is non-consensual or involves the use of power or coercion
- non-consensual sexual activity between minors (e.g. a 14-year-old and an 11-year-old), or any sexual behaviour between a child and another child or adolescent who, due to their age or stage of development, is in a position of power, trust or responsibility over the victim. Sexual activity between adolescents at a similar developmental level is not considered abuse.

**Mandatory Reporting:** The legal requirement to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect is known as mandatory reporting. Mandated persons include teachers, nurses, police, psychologists, psychiatrists and medical practitioners.

**Reasonable Belief:** When staff are concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

**School environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the AIT for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a) a campus of the school
- b) online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- c) other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

**School staff** means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- a) directly engaged or employed by AIT
- b) a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

### **3. Policy Commitments**

All students enrolled at AIT have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of students in our care (including children attending vacation and after school programs) will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable individuals, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

### **4. Our commitment to our students**

- a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children & young people enrolled in our courses and programs;
- b) We commit to providing children & young people with positive and nurturing experiences;
- c) We commit to listening to children & young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously, and addressing any concerns that they raise with us;
- d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children & young people are protected from abuse or harm;
- e) We commit to seeking input and feedback from students and staff regarding the creation of safe campus environments.

### **5. Our commitment to parents and carers**

- a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children;
- b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures;
- c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people;
- d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families, and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues;
- e) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

### **6. Our commitment to our school staff (employees, volunteers, and contractors)**

- a) We commit to providing all AIT staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities;
- b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people's protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns;
- c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by AIT staff, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children & young people safe from harm;
- d) We commit to providing opportunities for AIT school employees, volunteers, and contractors to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

## 7. Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at AIT has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

## 8. Guide to Responsibilities of School Leadership

The Heads of School, Divisional General Managers and Executive Leadership team at AIT recognise their responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety.

Responsibilities include:

- a) creating an environment for children & young people to be safe and to feel safe;
- b) upholding high principles and standards for all staff, volunteers, and contractors;
- c) promoting models of behaviour between adults and children & young people based on mutual respect and consideration;
- d) ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional development of staff;
- e) ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of openness to and ability to address child safety matters;
- f) providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child & young people's protection and wellbeing;
- g) ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

**8.1 Guide to Responsibilities of General and Academic Staff** Responsibilities of general and academic staff (employees, volunteers, and contractors) include:

- a) treating children & young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children & young people in their care;
- b) following the legislative and internal school processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected;
- c) providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children & young people is nurtured;
- d) undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children & young people;
- e) assisting children & young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse;
- f) following the AIT Employee Code of Conduct.

## 9. Organisational Arrangements

All staff at AIT are committed to the safety of all children entrusted into our care therefore the following arrangements have been put into place to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

- a) All staff with an ongoing administrative/teaching/training/assessing relationship with under 18-year-olds, or have access to their personal information, will have a current Working with Children's Check (or state-based equivalent), which is recorded on their staff record;



- b) All visitors to AIT campuses must sign in and out of the premises;
- c) AIT has leadership teams across its entities with responsibility for Student Wellbeing which meet on a regular basis to discuss the wellbeing of students.

## **10. Expectation of our School Staff – Employee Code of Conduct**

Across the AIT community, we expect all staff and volunteers to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the school. All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements. We have developed this Child Safety Policy, which recognises the critical role that all staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect. Our policy also protects school staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

## **11. Student Safety and Participation**

At AIT, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views. AIT will listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

## **12. Reporting and Responding**

AIT records any child safety complaints, disclosures, or breaches of the Child Safety policy, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. AIT complies applicable legislation of the relevant jurisdiction.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements dependent upon the jurisdiction.

AIT will report any incident in accordance with the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that an enrolled child or young person needs protection, or a criminal offence has been committed.

This policy assists staff, volunteers, and contractors to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

AIT has established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

- All staff who identify concerns regarding the sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse or neglect of a child must respond according to Mandatory Reporting, Grooming, Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislation and policies.
- When an allegation is directed against school employees (teachers, administrative staff, contractors, or any other staff member), this will be managed in accordance with established Human Resources policies and procedures.

- The Divisional General Managers, Heads of School, and Campus Managers shall ensure that staff receive induction and ongoing professional learning in relation to their obligations for student well-being and child safety and protection policies and procedures, inclusive of mandatory reporting, on an ongoing basis.

AIT Students complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following divisional policies and procedures:

- Group Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy

### **13. Screening and Recruitment of Staff**

AIT will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work. All staff of AIT, regardless of their role, are required to hold a valid and current WWCC. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all staff are provided with access to the AIT Employee Handbook and Staff Code of Conduct outlining and describing expectations and required behaviour.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

### **14. Child Safety – Education and Training for School Staff**

AIT provides employees, volunteers and contractors with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of and ability to address child safety matters. This includes induction, ongoing training, and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

### **15. Risk Management**

At AIT we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child and personal safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

### **16. Relevant Legislation**

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, Vic

- Working with Children Act 2005, Vic
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006(Vic
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, NSW
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Act 2018, NSW
- Child Protection Act 1999, QLD
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (the WWC Act), QLD
- Family Law Act 1975, Cth
- Privacy Act 1988, Cth

## 17. Legal Definitions:

**a) Failure to disclose offence:** Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

**b) Failure to protect offence:** The offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

**c) Grooming offence:** This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

## 18. Related Policies

- Website Usage Policy
- Internet and Email Usage Policy
- Supervision of Children & Young People Guidelines
- Complaints, Grievances, Appeals Guideline
- Access, and Equity Policy
- Critical Incident Policy

## 19. Breach of Policy

Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, AIT may start the process for managing employment concerns in accordance with establish Human Resources policies and protocols. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the General Manager is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the CEO, AIT.

Where any other member of the AIT community is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, AIT will take appropriate action, including in accordance with: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations.

## 20. Review of this Child Safety Policy

At AIT we are committed to continuous improvement of our systems and practices. We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance. A Modification history will be maintained.

## **21. Publication**

This policy is published on the web sites of AIT to ensure students have up-to-date and accurate information publicly available to them.

## Section 3 – Reference and Supporting Information

Document name	Document type	Location
Victorian Child Safe Standards	Ministerial Order No. 870.	External
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (AHRC)	Guidelines	External
Employee Handbook	Handbook	Internal
Privacy Policy	Policy	Internal

## Section 4 – Change History

Version	Approval date	Department	Approved by	Change
V1.0		Academic	GM	Adaptation of Child Safety Policy for AIT
		Technology & Design Division	EGM – Quality, Accreditation, Compliance	

