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**1. Purpose**

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people across all bestchance programs including Cheshire School.

All bestchance and Cheshire School Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school advisory members and any other adult involved in child-connected work, must follow the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by children and students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the following (where relevant):

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Code of Conduct
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

bestchance has zero tolerance of any breach of Child Safety and zero tolerance of racism.

**2. Acceptable behaviours**

bestchance and Cheshire School Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of our programs and school community involved in child-connected work, are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children and students by:

- Upholding our Commitment to Child Safety at all times and adhering to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and this Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct;
- Treating children, students and families in our programs, services and school communities with respect including those outside our services and school environments as part of normal social and community activities;
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student;
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and students, children and students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and students with a disability, children and students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) children and students;
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a child or student. One-to-one interactions between an adult and a child or student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult;
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to either:
  - Your direct Manager;
  - The Head of School;
  - The General Manager Governance and Safety; or
  - A Child Safe Steering Group Representative.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with *01.001c Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse Policy*;
- Displaying acceptable behaviours as per all relevant professional or occupational codes of conduct;
- Protecting all children and students, if abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm; and
- Abiding by all policies, procedures and strategies of the organisations and/or school relating to child safety and wellbeing.

**3. Unacceptable behaviours**

All bestchance and Cheshire School Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors and members of the school community involved in child-connected work, must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm;
- Develop a relationship with any child or student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts);
- Display behaviours or engage with children or students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context;
- Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a child or student;
- Ignore or fail to act on incidents of racism;
- Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the educational program or school curriculum or professional guidance;
- Treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity;
- Communicate directly with a child or student through personal or private contact channels (including social media, email, instant messaging, texting, etc.) except where that communication is reasonably in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter;
- Photograph or video a child or student in an educational setting school environment, except where appropriate consent has been obtained or where required for duty of care purposes;
- Consume alcohol against organisational or school policy or take illicit drugs in the organisation or school environment or at events where children and/or students are present;
- Have contact with any child or student outside of hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance, and parental permission has been sought.

**4. Breaches to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct**

All bestchance and Cheshire School Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the bestchance and Cheshire School community involved in child-connected work, who breach this Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct, may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education (or other governing authority) Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of this Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct must be reported to one of the following people:

- General Manager Early Years' Service (Integrated Childcare Centres and Kindergartens);
- Program Manager Children's Therapy Services;
- Head of School (Cheshire School).

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Head of School, the General Manager Governance and Safety must be contacted. Similarly, if the breach or suspected breach relates to a General Manager, the bestchance Chief Executive Officer must be contacted.

All allegations of alleged reportable conduct against a Board member, staff member, volunteer or contractor must be reported to the General Manager Governance and Safety.

**5. Review**

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct is to be reviewed annually and/or after any breach of this Code of Conduct.

## 6. Document Control

<b>Document ID</b>	TBA
<b>Policy Type</b>	Organisation Wide
<b>Policy Owner</b>	General Manager Governance and Safety
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Board
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<b>Document History</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
	1.0	02/12/2022	Inaugural version
	2.0	22/02/2023	Content update in line with the Child Safe Standards 2022
	3.0	12/03/2024	Position titles update
	3.1	01/04/2024	Terminology/language update