

Code of Conduct

How we behave at work — with each other, and with the children in our care.

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the standards of professional, ethical, and respectful behaviour expected of all employees (full time, part-time, casual, agency staff, contractors, and consultants, volunteers and student placements, directors, leaders and managers at every level and visitors and incursion providers while on our premises or with our children.

It provides a consistent framework for decision-making, conduct, and interpersonal behaviour, ensuring that all individuals act in a manner that upholds organisational values, legal obligations, and community expectations.

The Code is in two parts:

Part A — General workplace conduct (how we treat each other and the Company)

Part B — Child safety conduct (how we behave with, and around, children)

2. Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of the [CEO / Board / Executive Team] of Our Patch Group.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees (full time, part-time, casual, agency staff, contractors, and consultants, volunteers and student placements, directors, leaders and managers at every level and visitors and incursion providers while on our premises or with our children. It covers conduct:

- During working hours or while performing work duties;
- At work-related functions, conferences, and networking events;
- Off-site, remote or hybrid work environments; and

- Online or digital behaviour (including email, messaging, and social media) that may impact Our Patch Group.

4. Terminology

Throughout this Code, the word “you” refers to all employees (full time, part-time, casual, agency staff, contractors, and consultants, volunteers and student placements, directors, leaders and managers at every level and visitors and incursion providers while on our premises or with our children and the word “we”/ “Company” refers to Our Patch Group

5. Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Set clear expectations about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour;
- Protect the wellbeing and psychological safety of all individuals;
- Minimise legal, operational, and reputational risk;
- Support ethical, transparent and values-aligned decision-making; and
- Reinforce accountability and promote early resolution of issues.

6. Policy Statements

Our Patch Group requires everyone who works in or for our services to act with the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and care — particularly in relation to the safety and wellbeing of the children we work with. The Code of Conduct always applies while representing Our Patch Group.

7. This Code:

- sets clear behavioural expectations for everyone (Part A) and additional expectations for those working with or around children (Part B);
- supports the Our Patch Group Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy v2.0 and the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations;
- aligns with the National Quality Framework (regulations 168 and 170), the Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle, the Victorian 11 Child Safe Standards, and the South Australian Child Safe Environments framework;
- makes clear what we will not tolerate, and what happens when the Code is breached.

Part A — General workplace conduct

Part A sets out the standards of behaviour we expect of everyone in the workplace, regardless of the role you hold or whether you have direct contact with children.

1. Standards of conduct

You must:

- Treat everyone with courtesy, kindness, and respect, acknowledging the rights and dignity of all people.
- Respect individual privacy and maintain confidentiality in accordance with applicable privacy laws and organisational policies.
- Avoid any conduct that may unfairly harm the reputation, wellbeing or career prospects of others.
- Refrain from allowing personal relationships to interfere with professional judgement or responsibilities.
- Seek guidance or report concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour, breaches of the Code or unethical conduct to the People and Culture Team
- comply with all Our Patch Group policies, procedures, rules, regulations and contracts;
- comply with all applicable laws;
- comply with all reasonable and lawful instructions given by or on behalf of the Company;
- devote your time, attention and skill to your duties during working hours, and at other times where reasonably necessary to perform your role;
- be honest and fair in your dealings with families, children, colleagues, leaders and the public, and treat them with courtesy and respect;
- act faithfully and diligently, and actively pursue the best interests of children and the Company;
- work in a safe and compliant manner, and observe all workplace health and safety rules and responsibilities;
- ensure and maintain punctuality;
- respect Company property and use it only for proper purposes;
- dress in line with the dress code, and ensure your appearance is clean, neat and presentable (including wearing any uniform required of you);
- maintain confidentiality of any confidential information, records or other materials acquired during your employment, both during and after employment;
- behave in a way that upholds Our Patch Group's G.R.O.W values (Grounded, Relationships, Ownership, Wonder) and the integrity and reputation of the Company;

- report any conduct of others that breaches, or may breach, this Code, without delay.
- Remain impartial in the execution of duties and avoid any influence of personal beliefs or affiliations.
- Refrain from racism, ableism or any other form of discrimination directed at children, families or colleagues – including by other children – must be named and addressed, never ignored. Cultural safety obligations apply additionally under Part B.
- You are expected to comply with Our Patch Group Drug and Alcohol Policy.
- Smoking and vaping are not permitted on any service premises, in vehicles transporting children, or in the presence of children at any time, in line with regulation 82.
- You must protect the confidentiality of all information about children, families, colleagues and the business of the Company – during and after your employment.
- Information about children and families is only ever shared on a need-to-know basis with people who require it to keep a child safe or to deliver care.
- Where information sharing is required by law (e.g. mandatory reporting, regulator notifications, court order, or under State information-sharing schemes), confidentiality does not override that legal obligation.
- Records of children, complaints and incidents must be stored securely and retained in line with the National Regulations and the Company's record-keeping policy.

2. Breaches

- You must comply with this Code of Conduct and report any suspected breaches to the People and Culture team.
- Our Patch Group will investigate all alleged breaches fairly and promptly. Confirmed breaches may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or engagement.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 You must:

- Understand, comply with, and role model the Code of Conduct.
- Ask questions or seek clarification when expectations are unclear.
- Report breaches or concerns promptly through appropriate channels. If you witness or suspect a breach of Part A by anyone, you must report it without delay to your direct leader, the Safeguarding and Compliance Team and People and Culture. You will not be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern in good faith. If the breach relates to a child's safety, additional reporting steps apply –

see Part B, Section 16. You must follow those steps even if you have also reported under Part A.

- Cooperate with investigations and behave respectfully throughout the process.
- be familiar with this Code and to comply with it at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment or engagement. Serious breaches may result in summary dismissal. Where a breach involves a possible breach of law, the relevant authorities or police may be notified. Where a breach involves alleged child safety conduct, additional reporting obligations apply – see Part B.
- This Code is not contractual, and the Company may unilaterally introduce, vary, remove or replace it at any time. The terms and conditions of employment that are contractual are set out in your written employment contract. Where this Code describes any benefits or entitlements, they are discretionary.
- You must sign an acknowledgement that you have read, understood and will comply with this Code on commencement, on each annual update, and whenever the Code is materially revised.

3.2 Managers and Team Leaders

Must:

- Lead by example and uphold the Code's standards in daily practice.
- Communicate expectations clearly and consistently.
- Act promptly on behavioural concerns or potential breaches.
- Document issues and escalate them where appropriate.
- Support employees in understanding policy requirements.
- Ensure new starters receive induction on conduct expectations.
- Maintain confidentiality and avoid bias when managing concerns.

3.3 People & Culture Team

Must:

- Provide advice on the Code's interpretation and application.
- Maintain secure and confidential records.
- Monitor conduct trends and provide insights to the Executive Team.
- Ensure relevant training, communication and awareness activities occur.

3.4 Executive Team / Board

Must:

- Promote a culture of integrity, safety, and respect.

- Ensure that adequate resources support Code of Conduct implementation.
Foster accountability and continuous improvement.

4. Policy Monitoring and Compliance

Compliance with this policy may be monitored through:

- Regular reporting, complaint trends, and feedback surveys.
- Exit interviews, staff engagement results, and disciplinary data.

5. Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings;
- Formal disciplinary action;
- Termination of employment;
- Referral to external authorities where unlawful conduct is involved.

6. Review and Amendment

This policy may be reviewed and amended at Our Patch Group's discretion.

7. Contact Information

For further guidance on this policy, please contact the People & Culture Team,
or your direct line manager.

8. Managing Grievances under this Policy

- People and Culture reserve the right to determine the interpretation, application, or operation of this policy.
- Please refer to the company Grievance Policy and Procedure if you have a grievance relating to this policy.

Part B — Child safety conduct

Part B applies in addition to Part A whenever you are working with, or in proximity to, children — whether directly, indirectly, or incidentally. It also applies in online interactions involving children and families.

Part B reflects the behavioural expectations under:

- the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations;
- the Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle (Child Safe Organisations Act 2024);
- the Victorian 11 Child Safe Standards (Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005);
- the South Australian Child Safe Environments framework (Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017);
- the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations — in particular sections 165, 166, 167 and regulations 84, 84A–D, 155, 156, 168, 170, 175;
- the Reportable Conduct Schemes that apply in Victoria, and in Queensland for ECEC services from 1 July 2026.

11. Our commitment to every child

Every child has the right to feel safe, be safe, and be treated with respect in our services — regardless of their age, background, ability, culture, gender, family situation or identity. We have zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, harm, or behaviour that compromises a child's safety, dignity or cultural identity.

12. Behaviour with children

How you behave with and around children matters. The expectations below are not optional and are not subject to personal interpretation. They apply at all times you are with or near children, regardless of who is watching.

Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour

I WILL	I WILL NEVER
Treat every child with respect, dignity and warmth.	Use physical discipline, corporal punishment, or any form of force that is not necessary to protect the safety of the child or others.
Use positive, age-appropriate language and tone.	Yell, belittle, shame, sarcastically mock, threaten, humiliate or use language a parent would not want directed at their child.

I WILL	I WILL NEVER
Listen to children and take what they say seriously.	Use language of a sexual nature, or that is sexually suggestive, in front of or directed to a child – including jokes and innuendo.
Use positive behaviour guidance – redirect, model, support self-regulation.	Discipline a child in a way that uses isolation, food, sleep, toileting access or affection as a tool.
Maintain professional boundaries at all times, including online.	Develop a “special relationship” with a particular child, give individual gifts, or treat one child differently in a way that is not professionally justified.
Position yourself for line-of-sight supervision and remain alert.	Be alone with a child where you cannot be seen by another adult. Where one-to-one contact is unavoidable (e.g. emergency first aid), ensure another adult is informed and the situation is documented.
Where physical contact is necessary (e.g. first aid, comforting a distressed child, supervised toileting assistance), keep it brief, age-appropriate, in line-of-sight of another educator, and respectful of the child’s dignity and consent.	Use physical contact that could be misinterpreted – lap-sitting beyond what is age-appropriate for very young children, prolonged hugging, tickling, wrestling, kissing on the lips, or any contact a parent would not be comfortable with.
Acknowledge and respect each child’s cultural identity, language and family context – with additional regard for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under the Universal Principle.	Make racist, sexist, ableist or other discriminatory comments to or about a child or family – ever.
Report any concern, disclosure or breach immediately under Section 16.	Ignore, dismiss or downplay a concern, disclosure, or behaviour you find unsettling – even if it relates to another adult.

13. Online, digital and social media boundaries

Photos and recordings

- Photographs or videos of children may only be taken on service-issued devices, never on personal phones, watches or cameras.
- Images of children must be stored securely on Company systems and never copied to personal storage, social media accounts or cloud drives.

- Sharing images of children externally requires current written consent from the family (refreshed at least annually).
- You must not photograph or record children in change rooms, toilets, sleep areas, or any other private setting.

Communication channels

- All communication with children, parents and families about service business must happen through Company-approved channels (e.g. service phone, official parent app, service email). Personal phones, personal email, or personal social media must not be used.
- You must not connect with, follow, friend, message or interact with children or families in our services on personal social media, messaging apps or gaming platforms — during or after employment.
- You must not give children or families your personal phone number, personal email or personal social media handle.
- If a child or family contacts you through a personal channel, you must not engage, and you must report it to your leader as soon as practicable.

Service social media and digital tools

- Service social media accounts must never identify children by full name, school, address or any other identifying detail.
- Children using digital learning tools or screens must be actively supervised, with age-appropriate filtering in place.
- If you notice an online safety issue affecting a child (e.g. cyberbullying, contact by an unknown adult, exposure to harmful content), report it immediately under Section 16.

14. Physical environments, supervision and one-to-one situations

- You must actively supervise children at all times — scanning, listening, positioning and engaging, not standing in one spot or using your phone.
- Educator-to-child ratios (regulations 122, 123) must be met or exceeded at all times. You must not leave children unattended, even briefly, to make up a ratio elsewhere.
- During nappy changes, toileting assistance, dressing or any one-to-one situation, the activity must be in line-of-sight of another educator wherever practicable. Where not practicable, another educator must be informed.
- You must never transport a child in a personal vehicle or take a child away from the service environment without written authorisation under regulations 99 and 102.

- You must never invite a child to your home, take a child on a personal outing, or have any contact with a child outside service business unless that contact pre-existed and has been disclosed to and acknowledged by the Company in writing.
- Toilets, change rooms, storerooms, staff rooms and other low-visibility areas are managed by clear procedures — you must follow them.

15. Cultural safety and the Universal Principle

In Queensland, the Universal Principle requires every Child Safe Standard to be implemented in a way that promotes and upholds the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In Victoria, cultural safety is a stand-alone Standard 1. In all states we operate in, cultural safety is a child safety requirement — not an optional extra.

You must:

- respect and acknowledge each child's cultural identity, language and family context;
- identify and address racism — between children, from adults, or in the environment — never ignore it;
- support each child's right to express their culture, language and identity at the service;
- follow the lead of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, families and community-controlled organisations where the Company has established relationships, and avoid “tokenistic” representation of culture;
- not make assumptions about a child based on their cultural background, and not single out a child as a cultural representative.

16. Reporting concerns, disclosures and breaches of this Code

If a child discloses harm to you

Steps to follow

1. Stay calm. Let the child speak. Don't interrupt or fill silences.
2. Believe them. Tell them they did the right thing by telling you.
3. Don't ask leading or "why" questions. Don't promise confidentiality.
4. As soon as the child has finished, record their exact words – not your interpretation.
5. Report immediately to the Nominated Supervisor and Safeguarding and Compliance Team.
6. Make a mandatory report yourself if your professional judgement requires it – your legal obligation does not transfer to anyone else.

If you have a concern about another worker's behaviour with a child

- Report it immediately to the Nominated Supervisor and the Safeguarding and Compliance Team – do not investigate yourself.
- You must report concerns about another worker even if you are unsure, even if the worker is senior to you, and even if you fear being wrong.
- Reports made in good faith are protected. The Company will not tolerate reprisal against anyone who raises a genuine concern – retaliation is itself a breach of this Code.
- If the concern relates to the Nominated Supervisor or the Safeguarding and Compliance Team, report directly to the Approved Provider.

Mandatory reporting

All Our Patch Group educators and staff are mandatory reporters under the laws of Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. You must report suspicions of abuse, neglect or significant harm to a child to the relevant authority. The Code does not substitute for, and does not override, your individual legal obligation as a mandatory reporter.

State	Who to contact
Queensland	Child Safety Service Centre or Child Safety After Hours Service Centre (1800 177 135). QPS – 000 if immediate danger; 131 444 otherwise. QFCC for reportable conduct allegations (ECEC from 1 July 2026).
Victoria	DFFH Child Protection (regional intake; after-hours 13 12 78). Victoria Police – 000 if immediate danger. Social Services Regulator for reportable conduct. 'Failure to disclose' and 'failure to protect' are offences under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

State	Who to contact
South Australia	Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) — 13 14 78 (24 hours). SA Police — 000 if immediate danger.
All states	Notify the regulatory authority through the ACECQA portal within timeframes set by regulation 175 (generally 24 hours for serious incidents). Notify the Approved Provider immediately.

17. Reportable conduct

Under the Reportable Conduct Schemes in Victoria and Queensland (ECEC from 1 July 2026), the head of Our Patch Group must notify the relevant oversight body of any allegation that a worker has engaged in reportable conduct. Reportable conduct includes:

- a sexual offence committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child;
- sexual misconduct committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child;
- physical violence committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child;
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child.

If you become aware of an allegation that may amount to reportable conduct — about anyone, at any level of the Company — you must report it to the Approved Provider and the Safeguarding and Compliance Team immediately. The Company will manage notification to the oversight body. You must not investigate the allegation yourself, discuss it with the worker concerned, or share it beyond those who need to know.

18. Consequences of breaching this Code

Breaches of this Code are taken seriously. Consequences are determined according to the nature and severity of the breach, and may include:

- counselling or coaching;
- performance management or additional training;
- formal warning;
- termination of employment or engagement;
- summary dismissal in cases of serious misconduct;
- notification to the regulator, police, Working with Children / Blue Card authority, or the relevant Reportable Conduct Scheme.

A breach of Part B — child safety conduct — will be treated as serious in all cases. The Company will support natural justice and procedural fairness for the person concerned, while taking immediate protective action where a child may be at risk (including standing the person down from any contact with children pending investigation).

19. Related Our Patch Group policies and documents

This Code is read alongside, and supports:

- Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy v2.0
- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision Policy and room-level Supervision Plans
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy
- Nappy Changing, Toileting and Hygiene Procedure
- Recruitment, Induction and Performance Management Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Acceptable Use of Technology and Social Media Policy
- Reportable Conduct Procedure (VIC; QLD from 1 July 2026)
- Privacy and Information Sharing Policy
- Inclusion, Cultural Safety and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy

20. Acknowledgement

Every employee, agency staff member, contractor, volunteer and student must sign the acknowledgement below before commencing work with children, and again on each annual review or material update of this Code.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read and understood the Our Patch Group Code of Conduct, including Part A (general workplace conduct) and Part B (child safety conduct).
- I understand the standards expected of me and the consequences if I do not meet them.
- I understand my obligations as a mandatory reporter and my reporting obligations under this Code, including under any applicable Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- I will hold and maintain a current Working with Children Check / Blue Card / DHS Working with Children Check appropriate to my state of work.
- I will ask my leader or the Safeguarding and Compliance Team if I am unsure about anything in this Code.

Full name	
Role / position	
Service / location	
Working with Children Check / Blue Card number and expiry	
Signature	
Date	

21. Document control

Document	Code of Conduct
Version	2.0 (child-safe revision)
Previous version	1.0 – September 2024

This version reviewed	May 2026
Next scheduled review	May 2027 (or earlier if triggered by incident, regulator change, or material policy update)
Owner	Approved Provider, supported by the Safeguarding and Compliance Team and HR
Approved by	[Approved Provider / Board representative – to insert name and date on adoption]