

Child Safety and Protection Code of Conduct

Objectives

The objectives of this code of conduct are to:

- Comply with VARTA's obligations as set out in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- Demonstrate VARTA's commitment to child safety and preventing child abuse
- Comply with the Code of Conduct for Victorian public sector employees and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic), as well as the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

This policy and procedures will enable VARTA to:

- Work towards an organisational culture of child safety
- Set out acceptable behavioural expectations and boundaries towards children within the scope of VARTA's functions

Overarching principles

These overarching principles are consistent with the guiding principles of the *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008* (Vic) and the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic). The following principles will guide VARTA's development and review of policies and procedures pertaining to child protection and safety:

- The welfare, best interests and safety of the child are paramount and are the responsibilities of society as a whole
- Children's safety, health, development and wellbeing should be promoted and protected
- Sensitivity should be shown to the unique cultural, social and psychological circumstances of each child
- Children should be empowered and engaged in working towards their own interests

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees, volunteers and contractors working at VARTA, and their compliance is required. It is particularly pertinent for VARTA's counsellors, who are more likely to interact with children and young people in the course of information and support sessions.

This Code of Conduct makes reference to and incorporates the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees. VARTA is bound by that Code of Conduct and adheres to it in accordance with section 61 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic).

The Child Safety and Protection Code of Conduct is consistent with the public sector values as identified in section 7 of the *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic).

Code of Conduct

All VARTA employees, contractors and volunteers will:

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of VARTA as stipulated in section 100 of the *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 (Vic)*;
2. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
3. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people;
4. Demonstrate the public sector values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and commitment to human rights in their dealings with children and young people in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees;
5. Comply with VARTA's *Child Safety and Protection Policy and Procedures*, as well as any associated guidelines and processes;
6. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people in accordance with relevant legislation, including the *Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008 (Vic)*, the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*, the *Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)*;
7. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people, taking into account particular needs of children and young people from different cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities; and

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child or young person;
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
7. Show favouritism towards any child or young person through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation's programs and activities;
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children or young people;
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people; or
13. Do anything in contravention of the organisation's policies, procedures, this Code of Conduct or the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees.

Breaching this Code of Conduct

If you breach this Code of Conduct, you may face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation.

Review

This policy and related documents will be reviewed every two years and following every reportable incident. A review will assess whether the Code of Practice is compliant with the Child Safe Standards and how children to whom we have a duty of care could be better protected.

Effective date	
Superseded	N/A
Review	Every two years