

Child Safety Code of Conduct: Volunteers



This Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers (including board members) working with Ardoch, regardless of location.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

- provide guidelines about professional behaviours, expectations, and obligations
- outline appropriate and inappropriate behaviours
- outline the consequences of inappropriate conduct

*Ardoch recognises that it can be easy to forget some behaviours when volunteering online. We ask that you are mindful of the following Child Safety Code of Conduct **whether working online or in person.***

Ardoch's Commitment to Child Safety

Ardoch is committed to protecting children's and young people's right to safety and well-being. We know children have a right to be kept safe at all times, so we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse.

We know that some children are more vulnerable than others. That's why we actively promote the safety and well-being of children and young people who:

- are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- have a disability
- identify as LGBTIQ+.

Everyone who works with or represents Ardoch is responsible for ensuring that children are safe, feel safe, and are involved in decisions that affect their lives.

Expectations of Volunteers

Commitment to child safety

- Adhering to the Ardoch Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Upholding Ardoch's Commitment to Child Safety through all your actions.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse.
- Participating in child safety training and/or professional development sessions.
- Participating in supervision and performance review discussions with Ardoch staff.

Interacting with children and young people

In all settings:

- Contributing to an overall culture of child safety by listening and responding appropriately to concerns of children and young people and being alert and advising Ardoch if you notice any child safety risks.
- Treating all children and young people with respect and taking notice of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner to ensure a positive experience for them.
- Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with children and young people.
- Only communicating with children and young people within the parameters of the Ardoch program.

In person:

- Ensuring all contact with children and young people is in a supervised area

In virtual and on-line settings:

- Following the e-safety rules noted below.

Be a positive role model

- Dressing and conducting yourself in a manner consistent with your position as a positive role model to children/young people, and as a representative of Ardoch and our partner sites.

Reporting obligations

- Reporting any disclosure, suspicion/concern, or identified risks, relating to a child/young person's safety and wellbeing to Ardoch staff (and if applicable the school or Early Years Centre) as soon as possible.
- Ensuring all suspicions or allegations of child abuse or neglect are reported to Police (and/or Child Protection) in accordance with state legislative requirements outlined in Ardoch's Child Safety Policy. This especially applies to sexual abuse for which there are very strong laws around mandatory reporting to Police in most states.

Unacceptable behaviours

For the avoidance of doubt, the following behaviours are not acceptable under any circumstances:

Breaching commitment to Child Safety

- Breaching professional boundaries.
- Failure to participate in mandatory training and supervision sessions required by Ardoch.
- Failure to comply with the Child Safety Policy

Sexual misconduct or inappropriate physical contact

- Sexual misconduct, including any sexual activity (touching; fondling; oral, anal, or vaginal penetration, voyeurism, exhibitionism), exploitation, inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, making sexually suggestive comments, and grooming.
- Inappropriate physical contact, including holding, kissing, hugging, cuddling, tickling, or touching a child/young person in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive way, or engaging in rough physical games.
- Doing things of a personal nature that a child/young person can do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes (accompanying children to the toilet).

Gift giving or developing friendships or communication outside of the Ardoch program

- Providing gifts to children or young people.
- Developing friendships with the children, young people and/or families outside of Ardoch program, *including undertaking any 'babysitting' duties for families of children in the education provider where you volunteer.*
- Exchanging personal contact details or having unauthorised communication with children/young people outside of the Ardoch programs, including via social media (even if initiated by a child/young person).
- Taking of photographs or videos (including screenshots) of students or sharing details on social media without the explicit written permission obtained through Ardoch.

Failure to be a positive role model

- Discrimination or being disrespectful to other children or adults.
- Attending any Ardoch obligation under the effects of alcohol or illicit drugs.
- Disclosing any personal information of a controversial nature.
- Using inappropriate language.

Not meeting reporting obligations

- Ignoring children and young people who raise concerns or disregarding any suspicions of child abuse or inappropriate conduct towards children or young people.

E-Safety Rules

When volunteering virtually, in addition to the items above, please also:

1. Change your display name to your first name only (no surname)
2. Do not have anyone else in the room with you who can be seen or overhear your conversations.

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3. Make sure your background and surroundings are clean and professional
4. Do not text/communicate with students in the chat function of the virtual platform.
5. Ensure you speak to a supervising adult who is physically with the students prior to commencing your session, to ensure they are in the room and will be there for the duration of the session.
6. Do not leave the meeting at any time during the session.
7. Request that the supervising adult ensures the device is located so that your face can be always seen.
8. Do not use your phone while volunteering unless you need to call the school or Ardoch.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

All breaches, or allegations of breaches to the Code of Conduct are taken seriously.

If an alleged breach of the code is identified, you will be asked to cease volunteering while the breach is investigated and, if a breach is found to have occurred, any disciplinary action is determined. The disciplinary action may include but is not limited to additional training, additional supervision requirements, suspension from the volunteer role, or termination as an Ardoch volunteer.

If applicable, incidents will be referred to the Police and/or relevant authorities for further investigation.

Ardoch's Responsibilities to You

Training and Support

Ardoch will provide you with relevant training to assist your knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct to support you in providing a safe environment for children and young people.

Communication

Ardoch will provide you with information about any changes to the Code of Conduct and any new requirements that you may need to comply with to support the safety of children and young people.

Investigation of alleged breaches

Ardoch will respond to, and act promptly, to investigate any alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct and address these in a timely manner.

Reporting

Ardoch will support you to make any reports to relevant authorities (for example, police or child protection) that may be required during your volunteering.

Review of the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct will be reviewed as and when required in line with Ardoch's Child Safety Policy and any relevant legislation which may apply.

All volunteers are expected to re-sign the Code of Conduct at least annually and in the event of any changes to the Code of Conduct made in line with the above.