



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION  
AUSTRALIA

Edmund Rice  
Education Australia

# Code of Conduct

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# Contents

Preamble.....	2
1.0 Code of Conduct Introduction .....	3
2.0 Responsibilities of Representatives .....	4
3.0 Child Safe Code of Conduct.....	6
4.0 General Code of Conduct.....	12
5.0 Working with the Code .....	16
Code of Conduct Definitions .....	19
Policy Checklist .....	27
Reference List .....	28
Support Agencies .....	29



## Preamble

*Edmund Rice Education Australia* is a network of Schools, entities and offices, offering a Catholic education in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice. Established by the Christian Brothers in 2007, *Edmund Rice Education Australia* governs the Schools owned by the Brothers at that time, as well as Schools established since then. As a Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP), *Edmund Rice Education Australia* has its own canonical and civil identity but remains closely connected to the Christian Brothers and their ongoing ministry .

This Code of Conduct (Code) details, clarifies and affirms the standards of behaviour expected by *Edmund Rice Education Australia* for members of the *Edmund Rice Education Australia* community, referred to in this Code as **Representatives** of EREA and its schools.

Central to the mission of a Catholic School in the Edmund Rice tradition is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of each and every person present within *Edmund Rice Education Australia* and each of its *School* communities. The provision of a safe, supportive and enriching environment is an essential element in achieving this objective. Edmund Rice Education Australia has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse.

Within *Edmund Rice Education Australia School* communities, it is expected that *Students* will develop skills and attributes for building positive relationships and it is these same skills that *Edmund Rice Education Australia* expects will be modelled by *Representatives*.

This Code confirms general commitments, including a commitment to, and respect for the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church and the values of *Edmund Rice Education Australia* as espoused in the Charter and through the Touchstones. The Touchstones help set the direction and define goals as, following Blessed Edmund's example, *Edmund Rice Education Australia* seeks to make the Gospel a living reality in its communities. It is expected that the conduct of *Edmund Rice Education Australia Representatives* will give evidence to these teachings, beliefs and values.

The Code includes obligations of persons who fulfil the definition of *Representative* and sets out responsibilities which include:

- Interactions with Students, behaviour education of Students and physical contact with Students.
- Interactions between colleagues.
- Expectations regarding the use of Technology.
- Edmund Rice Education Australia's position on Sexual Harassment, Workplace Bullying, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Offences, Discrimination and Illegal Drugs and alcohol.
- A process for reports and complaints to be made about breaches of the Code.

## 1.0 Code of Conduct Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

The Code outlines the conduct and expectations required by Edmund Rice Education Australia for Representatives within the Edmund Rice Education Australia community.

### 1.2 Applicability

The Code sets out obligations for all Representatives within the communities of Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools and entities. The Code must be read carefully in conjunction with the definitions contained at the back of the Code.

### 1.3 Legal Implications

An agreement to uphold and comply with the Code is a requirement of employment, and is specified in applicable employment agreement with *Edmund Rice Education Australia*, its *Schools* or a related entity. This agreement also means that by signing the employment contract or its equivalent Representatives have accepted responsibility to familiarise themselves on an ongoing basis with the Code and comply with it.

*Edmund Rice Education Australia* reserves the right to vary the Code as necessary at its sole discretion, in order to reflect and respond to current legislative and organisational needs. Those changes are effective when communicated. The consequences of breaching the Code are set out in section 5.2. It is therefore imperative that Representatives are aware of, and familiar with the Code.

The Code is not intended to be legally binding on Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools. To the extent that the Code refers to obligations on Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools, those obligations are guidelines only and not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which Representatives should or may rely.

### 1.4 Review

The Code will be reviewed annually.

## 2.0 Responsibilities of Representatives

Section 2.0 is not intended to diminish responsibilities which may exist for Representatives who have a contractual relationship with Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools. The following, non-exhaustive list, includes the responsibilities which Edmund Rice Education Australia expects of its Representatives:

- Accessing and reading the Code.
- Enacting the provisions of the Code in good faith.
- Developing relationships based on mutual respect and courtesy, trust, collegiality, collaboration, and open communication.
- Using constructive methods for resolving any conflict which may arise.
- Abiding by all relevant Policies, including the EREA Child Safe Code of Conduct and the school's Child Safeguarding Policies and procedures.
- Enacting any Duty of Care applying personally to a Representative.
- Contributing to Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools enacting a Duty of Care.
- Refraining from conduct which may amount to Misconduct, Sexual Misconduct, a Sexual Offence, Serious Misconduct or otherwise warrant summary dismissal.
- Demonstrating and modelling ethical and moral behaviours.
- Complying with any risk management processes in place, including any risk assessment processes.
- Maintaining appropriate professional qualifications and registrations.
- Abiding by all responsibilities, commitments and duties set out in contracts applying to a Representative.
- Maintaining confidentiality of information and enacting privacy obligations unless disclosure is required by law (including as prescribed by Child Protection Legislation and the school's Child Safeguarding Policy), or disclosure is required by a professional standard applicable to the Representative, or unless there is risk of Harm or the personal safety of a member of the community.
- Serving Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools faithfully, diligently and with due care and skill.
- Respecting the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness in dealing with any complaints against colleagues.
- Avoiding behaviours which are or might objectively be perceived as Workplace Bullying or Sexual Harassment in accordance with Policies.

- Being truthful when making statements about qualifications, experience and competencies.
- Enacting obligations to a standard commensurate with professional skills and qualifications.
- Using the resources of Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools only as prescribed in Policies or contracts applying to a Representative.
- Declaring, or avoiding where appropriate, all Conflicts of Interest and otherwise refraining from acting or giving the appearance of acting contrary to the interests of Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools.

## 3.0 Child Safe Code of Conduct

Victorian Schools refer to **EREA Child Safety Code of Conduct (Victoria)** in each school's Child Safeguarding Program in place of Section 3.0 of this document.

### 3.1 Introduction

Edmund Rice Education Australia's vision for ensuring Schools are safe and supportive environments is outlined in the Edmund Rice Education Australia Commitment Statement to Child Safety. All Representatives have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play 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.

This Child Safe Code of Conduct provides a high-level statement of Professional Boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. It will assist Edmund Rice Education Australia to meet its obligations to have such a defined code as required by various States' Child Protection Legislation. More than this, it reinforces Edmund Rice Education Australia's commitment to providing safe and supportive environments where all children and young people entrusted to our care are affirmed in their dignity and worth as a person. Children and young people in the Edmund Rice Education Australia community are empowered to have a voice which includes listening and responding to their views and concerns.

This Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to Representatives. Required standards of behaviour for Students and parents / carers to protect Students from Harm are set out in the School's Student Code of Conduct and Parent Code of Conduct.

### 3.2 Interactions with Students

Representatives must treat all Students with respect. Representatives hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to Students. As such, it is their duty to establish and maintain Professional Boundaries with Students at all times.

Representatives must:

- abide by Professional Boundaries, acknowledging that interactions with Students by their very nature are open to scrutiny. Representatives should avoid placing themselves or a Student in a compromising position and avoid actual and/or perceived breaches of the Code.
- be familiar with, apply and act in accordance with the \*School/College\*'s Child Safeguarding Program.

Representatives must be vigilant and proactive taking all reasonable steps to protect children from Harm (refer to the Child Abuse Definitions in the \*School/College\*'s Child Safeguarding Program).

### 3.3 Professional Boundaries

Representatives must be conscious that their position places significant obligations on them including a requirement to maintain Professional Boundaries. Interactions with Students can extend beyond the School setting, including outside of School hours, outside of School grounds and by any medium of Technology (including social media).

Representatives must ensure that social interactions with Students do not give grounds for allegations against them. Representatives must not initiate or develop a relationship with any Student that is or can be perceived or misinterpreted as having a personal rather than a professional element.

Professional Boundaries between a Representative and a Student may be compromised by Representatives:

- Treating a Student with favouritism, or perceived favouritism (ie. by the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific Students);
- Attending parties or socialising with Students outside of organised School events;
- Sharing personal details about their private life with Students; or
- Meeting with Students outside of School hours without permission from the School.

Further to this, Representatives must:

- Not engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of, or which may be overheard by, Students.
- Avoid, as far as possible, situations where they are alone with a Student. In such situations Representatives must adhere to the prescribed School Policy with specific reference to working alone with a Student.
- Endeavour not to drive a Student in their car unless they have parental permission and do so in accordance with School Policies
- Only engage in paid tutoring or coaching of Students outside of School hours in accordance with School Policies.

Representatives must be aware that the Code applies regardless of:

- The location of where an interaction occurs, whether during or outside School grounds or during or outside School hours.
- A Student's age.
- A Student's consent.
- The consent of parents/guardians and families.
- Circumstances in which a Student initiates an interaction or relationship between the Representative and the Student.



### 3.4 Grooming

Representatives must not engage in Grooming or Grooming Behaviours (refer to the definition of Grooming in the \*School/College\*'s Child Safeguarding Program). Sexual interaction, including Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Offences, between Representatives and Students is never appropriate and is always unlawful, whether consensual, non- consensual or condoned by parents/guardians.

Representatives should be aware that where a relationship develops with an ex-Student, their employer is entitled to consider whether the Representative's actions suggest/suggested an abuse of their position as a staff member including if Professional Boundaries between the Representative and the Student were infringed. A judgment that abuse of their position has occurred would constitute Serious Misconduct and may result in the Representative's employment being terminated, together with mandated reporting to appropriate child protection agencies.

### 3.5 Personal Relationships with Students

Where personal relationships with Students such as family relationships and close friendship networks may exist, questions of Conflict of Interest may arise and Professional Boundaries may be tested.

Where such a situation may arise, a Representative is expected to:

- Be appropriately diligent in developing and maintaining Professional Boundaries
- Take steps to ensure any potential Conflict of Interest is avoided
- Comply with the School's Policy to make relevant disclosures to the Child Safety Officer (or equivalent) and/or the Principal.

### 3.6 Behaviour Education

Student behaviour education practices in Edmund Rice Education Australia Schools aim to facilitate the development and experience of responsible self-discipline amongst Students and to promote the well-being, safety and effective management of the School community.

Representatives should use positive and affirming language towards Students, and create open, safe and supportive environments where Students are encouraged to interact, socialise and "have a say". Representatives must develop and use effective, consistent and appropriate behaviour education strategies in day to day interactions with Students. These strategies should include clear, consistent and published methods of dealing with inappropriate behaviours. These strategies should reflect and apply the values of Edmund Rice Education Australia and be developed in accordance with relevant Policies and Disability Standards, where applicable.

Students who display recurring challenging behaviours, particularly unsafe behaviours, should be referred to the appropriate person (consistent with the \*School/College\*'s Student Management Policy).

Representatives should exercise prudent judgement and intervene when Students are engaging in bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way (consistent with a School's Student Management Policy).

**The use of any form of child abuse, corporal punishment or other degrading punishment is explicitly forbidden.**

### 3.7 Physical Contact with Students General

Representatives are required to develop and exercise prudent judgment and sensitivity regarding appropriate physical interactions with Students.

Edmund Rice Education Australia expects that when physical contact with a Student is necessary within the teaching/learning experience, Representatives must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable for the duty to be performed. Representatives must not initiate unnecessary physical contact with a Student or do things of a personal nature that a Student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.

Examples of situations where physical contact with a Student may be necessary, beneficial and/or supportive include:

- Assisting Students with special needs, for example to allow a Student to engage with a teaching/learning experience or the curriculum in general in accordance with School Policies and Disability Standards.
- Assessing a Student who is injured or ill. One should advise the Student of what they intend to do and, where possible, seek the Student's consent and have a colleague present.
- Teaching sport, music and other activities where physical handling of a Student is required to demonstrate a particular action or skill.
- Restraining a Student (consistent with the School's policies regarding Restrictive Interventions) when the Student, other Students, Representatives or others are being harmed or are in imminent danger of being harmed.
- A congratulatory handshake.

Edmund Rice Education Australia expects that any physical contact as referred to in the above examples:

- Is only acceptable if the contact is reasonable for the purpose of the management or care of the Student.
- Must be appropriate given the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the Student.
- Should be consistent with any individual behaviour education plan in place for that Student.

### 3.8 Physical Contact with Students: Risk and Response

As any physical intervention involves some risk of injury, Representatives must weigh this risk against the risks involved in failing to physically intervene when it may be warranted. Intervention may be warranted when a Student, other Students, Representatives or others are being harmed or are in imminent danger of being harmed. Such interventions should be employed as measures of last resort required to ensure safety and protection (ie. physical interventions, including physical restraints, removals or escorts in accord with the School's policies regarding Restrictive Interventions) or to contain and/or control the behaviour of Students in circumstances such as:

- A Student attacking a Representative or third party.

- A Student attacking another Student.
- Students physically fighting.
- A Student causing, or at risk of causing, injury to themselves or others.
- A Student misusing dangerous materials, substances or objects where it is likely that this will cause imminent harm.
- A Student placing themselves (deliberately or inadvertently) in a dangerous situation.
- A Student being attacked by a third party.

All Representatives using physical interventions are responsible and accountable for the manner in which they exercise that authority. Representatives must report all physical interventions to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Principals would then report the same to the EREA Director of Schools.

NB. The same physical contact guidelines apply during off-campus excursions and camps. School Excursion Policies may reference additional guidelines (ie. in the case of dormitory supervision).

### **3.9 Use of Technology**

Representatives are expected to adhere to the following guidelines regarding electronic communications with Students (consistent with any School Acceptable Usage and Social Media Policies):

- All use of Technology should be for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular events;
- All email communication between Representatives and Students should be via the School email system and reflect the Professional Boundaries between Representative and Student;
- All online contact between Representatives and Students should be via School systems and reflect the Professional Boundaries between Representatives and Student;
- Representatives should ordinarily not give out their personal telephone numbers to Students. In cases where this is necessary, contact by personal telephone numbers must reflect the Professional Boundaries between Representative and Student;
- Representatives should not exchange personal social media or instant messenger account details with Students or accept friend/follow requests or engage in any contact via social media or instant messaging;
- Representatives should not exchange personal pictures with Students;
- Representatives should not take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a Student without School authority; and
- Any Student personal contact numbers or other personal contact details made available to the School should only be used for School communications.

### **3.10 Inclusivity Principle**

Representatives are expected to promote the safety, participation and empowerment of all Students. Particularly, Representatives must:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students
- Promote the culture safety, participation and empowerment of Students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of Students with a disability
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of Students who are otherwise vulnerable

Representatives should not express personal views or discriminate against any Student based on culture, race, ethnicity, disability or sexuality.

### **3.11 Breaches and Reporting**

Representatives with concerns about conduct which falls below the standards expected by this Child Safe Code of Conduct might refer to:

- The definition of Harm; and
- The Definitions and Key Risk Indicators within the School's Child Protection Program.

Representatives must report any allegations of child abuse and concerns about child safety, including actual or perceived breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct, to one of the School's Child Safety Officers (or equivalent). This may include any concerns that Grooming, Sexual Misconduct or a Sexual Offence has been committed against a Student or that a Student has been the subject of Harm. Representatives must ensure their legal and mandatory reporting obligations are met, consistent with the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse within the School's Child Safeguarding Program.

Where an allegation of Harm is made, a Representative will ensure as quickly as possible that the Student involved is safe. The police should be called (000) if there are immediate concerns for the Student's safety.

## 4.0 General Code of Conduct

### 4.1 Care for Colleagues

In the spirit of nurturing individual and collective wellbeing, Representatives are expected to:

- Contribute to an atmosphere of respect, courtesy, trust, collegiality, collaboration, and open communication.
- Recognise and respect the individual potential, professional practice and talents of colleagues.
- Encourage openness and tolerance among colleagues.
- Use constructive methods for resolving any conflict which may arise.
- Respect the principles of natural justice in dealing with any complaints against colleagues.
- Not engage in behaviours which are or might objectively be perceived as Discrimination, Workplace Bullying or Sexual Harassment in accordance with Policies.

Representatives with concerns regarding the health and welfare of colleagues (physical, mental, emotional or intellectual) should take counsel from the Principal or the Deputy Principal. If Representatives are not able to make such contact they should contact the EREA Director of Schools. Concerns about a Principal should be reported to the EREA Director of Schools.

Representatives within the National or Regional Offices of Edmund Rice Education Australia should seek counsel from the Executive Director.

### 4.2 Use of Technology

Edmund Rice Education Australia expects that all Representatives will abide by relevant School Technology Policies. In particular:

- Observe copyright regulations and licensing terms and conditions relevant to the Technology.
- Observe confidentiality and preserve confidential information of Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools when using Technology.
- Respect the privacy of Students and not post online any information about a Student that may identify them (such as their name, age, contact details) without School authority;
- Not engage in Sexual Misconduct (which includes Grooming), Sexual Harassment, Sexual Offences, Workplace Bullying or Discrimination using Technology.
- Not bring themselves, Edmund Rice Education Australia or the School into disrepute by inappropriate personal online behaviours.

### **4.3 Legal and Illegal Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco: Introduction**

Representatives should be aware that personal conduct and lifestyle may have an adverse effect on Edmund Rice Education Australia, its Schools and their own personal or professional reputation. Representatives must consciously act to maintain their personal and professional integrity on occasions when alcohol, legal and Illegal Drugs and tobacco may be present.

Representatives experiencing difficulties in relation to Illegal Drugs, alcohol or tobacco are encouraged to access the Employee Assistance Program (ACCESS) or the Principal or Deputy Principal for assistance.

During employment or engagement, Edmund Rice Education Australia may require a Representative to undergo a drug and alcohol test, to monitor compliance with this Code and work health and safety legislation if Edmund Rice Education Australia or a School suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a Representative is working under the influence of Illegal Drugs or alcohol. Reasonable grounds for testing can be established if a Representative's behaviour, actions or conduct (whether observed by or reported to Edmund Rice Education Australia or the School) suggests that the Representative is under the influence of Illegal Drugs and/or alcohol.

#### **4.3.1 Legal and Illegal Drugs**

Representatives must:

- Not distribute Illegal Drugs.
- Not condone use of Illegal Drugs.
- Not condone misuse of legal drugs (ie. medication).
- Only distribute legal drugs (ie. medication) in accord with School Policies and as directed by the Principal, Deputy Principal, or EREA Director of Schools, and as set out in a medical plan with application to a particular Student.
- Not be under the influence of Illegal Drugs during business hours or during times where a Representative has responsibility for Students and/or Representatives or is otherwise fulfilling responsibilities to Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools.

#### **4.3.2 Alcohol**

Representatives, during or after School hours, must not:

- Distribute alcohol to Students.
- Condone use of alcohol by Students.
- Be under the influence of alcohol during business hours or during times where they have responsibility for Students and/or Representatives or are otherwise fulfilling responsibilities to Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools.

### 4.3.3 Tobacco

Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools are smoke free areas. Smoking is not permitted on Edmund Rice Education Australia premises or any School premises, or during times where a Representative has responsibility for Students.

Representatives must not:

- Distribute tobacco or tobacco products to Students.
- Condone use of tobacco by Students.

## 4.4 Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment is never condoned by Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools and is unlawful under the following legislation:

### Federal

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)  
Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)  
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)  
Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)  
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)  
Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

### State/Territory

Anti-discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)  
Anti-discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)  
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)  
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)  
Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)  
Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)  
Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 (NT)  
Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

The perpetrator of Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Harassment can be subject to legal proceedings if they engage in the conduct described in this Code. Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools will not indemnify a Representative found to have acted in breach of anti-discrimination or human rights legislation.

Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools can also be held to be vicariously liable (ie. be held responsible) for Discrimination, Harassment or Sexual Harassment in the workplace, and must take reasonable steps to prevent Discrimination and Sexual Harassment from occurring and respond appropriately to resolve incidents of Discrimination and Sexual Harassment.

#### **4.5 Workplace Bullying**

Workplace Bullying is not acceptable and never condoned by Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools. Representatives must not engage in Workplace Bullying and must abide by all relevant Policies. Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner is not Workplace Bullying.

#### **4.6 Fraud, Theft and Corruption**

Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach to fraud, theft and corruption and any such acts will not be tolerated in any form. Examples include:

- Theft of cash, consumables or equipment by Representatives;
- False or misleading timesheets (ie. dishonestly claiming payment for time not worked);
- False or misleading expense claims (ie. dishonestly claiming a business expense);
- False invoicing (ie. dishonestly providing invoices for goods or services not supplied in accordance with the description in the invoice);
- False accounting (ie. dishonestly allowing the reporting of incorrect or misleading financial results); and
- The misuse of the Representative's position or authority for personal or financial gain.

Representatives are required to immediately report any possible fraud, theft or corruption as soon as possible to Edmund Rice Education Australia or the relevant School.



## 5.0 Working with the Code: Breaches and Reporting

Edmund Rice Education Australia has developed the Code to be of support to Representatives in Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools to uphold professional standards for the benefit of all. However, in those cases where professional standards are not met, there needs to be clarity about reporting and resolution of issues.

### 5.1 Implementation

The Code is implemented through a combination of:

- Training and development in child safety and professional standards for Representatives;
- Education and information for Students and parents/guardians;
- Effective communication and incident management notification procedures;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation and corrective actions where necessary.

### 5.2 Breaches

A breach of the Code may be:

- A disciplinary matter for Edmund Rice Education Australia (and may result in performance management, formal warning, suspension, demotion or termination in accordance with industrial processes).
- A disciplinary matter for a School (and may result in performance management, formal warning, suspension, demotion or termination in accordance with industrial processes).
- A contractual matter (breach, termination).
- Professional misconduct referred to relevant authorities.
- Reportable conduct reported to relevant authorities.
- A regulatory matter referred to relevant authorities.
- A breach of statute referred to relevant authorities.
- A criminal matter referred to relevant authorities.
- A civil matter referred for legal advice and remedy.
- Any disciplinary process in relation to a breach of the Code will be managed with procedural fairness and in keeping with the principles of natural justice.

Edmund Rice Education Australia (and if authorised by Edmund Rice Education Australia, its Schools) retain discretion in responding to breaches of the Code.

Representatives acknowledge that a potential or actual breach of the Code may expose Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools to significant reputational damage and public scrutiny as a result of a Representative's conduct (which may include conduct outside of School hours). These factors will be taken into account when considering the scope of any allegations made under this Code, and any disciplinary action that may be taken as a result.

### **5.3 Reporting Guide**

The Code requires the accountability of all Representatives. The Code requires Representatives to report certain acts, omissions and/or failures to the Principal, the Deputy Principal, the EREA Director of Schools, or the Executive Director as prescribed.

Formal complaints, including breaches of the Code, must be made according to Policies;

- EREA Complaints Handling Policy and Guidelines
- EREA Workplace Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Guidelines

Vexatious complaints will not be accepted. Representatives who make vexatious complaints may face disciplinary action by Edmund Rice Education Australia or the Principal.

### **5.4 Procedures for Settling Disputes**

The EREA Internal Grievance Policy sets out procedures that apply to all grievances or disputes between a Representative and Edmund Rice Education Australia or a School in respect to any dispute relating to the Code.

In the event of a Representative having a grievance or dispute, the Representative shall in the first instance attempt to resolve the matter with the immediate supervisor, who shall respond to such a request as soon as reasonably practicable under the circumstances. Where the dispute concerns alleged actions of the immediate supervisor the Representative may bypass this level in the procedure.

If the grievance or dispute is not resolved at the level it has been lodged, the Representative may refer the matter to the next level of management. Such discussion should take place in a timely manner.

## 5.5 Queries

Any questions, comments or concerns in regard to the Code or its application should in the first instance be directed to the Principal or the Deputy Principal.

Further questions, comments or concerns in regard to the Code or its application should then be directed to the respective EREA Director of Schools:

Northern Region:  
+61 7 3737 6700

Eastern Region:  
+61 7 3737 6700

Southern Region:  
+61 3 9426 3200

Western Region:  
+61 8 7130 0802

Any reports required to be made to Edmund Rice Education Australia pursuant to the Code should be directed to:

Executive Director:  
+61 3 9426 3209

## Code of Conduct Definitions

**Child Protection Legislation** means child protection legislation:

- Enacted in each State and Territory of Australia;
- As it is in force and as it may be amended by the relevant legislature from time to time; and
- Which bestows obligation and responsibility on Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools;
- And is to be applied throughout the Code such that a Representative's obligations are in respect of the Child Protection Legislation applying in the jurisdiction in which the Representative engages with Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools.

**Child Abuse** may take the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and/or neglect. (See **Harm Caused to a Student**)

**Child Protection / Child Safeguarding Policy(ies)** means the child safeguarding policies:

- Encompassing the relevant Child Protection Legislation;
- Developed and enacted by Edmund Rice Education Australia;
- Developed and enacted by Schools;
- As it is in force and as it may be amended by Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools from time to time;
- And is to be applied throughout the Code such that a Representative's obligations are in respect of the Child Safeguarding Policy applying in the jurisdiction in which the Representative engages with Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools.

**Child Safety Officer(s)**\* means the person or persons a School has identified as having responsibilities as a Child Safety Officer and who is identified within the relevant Child Protection Program.

\*(NOTE: Known as Student Protection Contacts in Queensland).

**Conflict(s) of Interest** refers to a situation where a conflict arises for an individual between two competing interests. These are often, but not exclusively, interests of public duty versus private interests. A Conflict of Interest can be actual, potential or perceived.

**Corporal Punishment** involves any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light; typically involving hitting the child with the hand or with an implement ; and can also include, for example, forcing child to stay in an uncomfortable position. It does not include the use of reasonable physical restraint to protect a child or others from harm.

**Degrading Punishment** refers to any punishment which is incompatible with respect to human dignity, including corporal punishment and non-physical punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.

The following list provides Representatives with a guide to behaviours that are unacceptable as they are contrary to good professional practice and Edmund Rice Education Australia values and may result in emotional distress or psychological Harm to a Student. Such behaviours include but are not limited to:

- Using an object, such as a ruler, book or whiteboard marker to gain a Student's attention in a hostile or inappropriate physical manner.
- Restraining/holding a Student for any purpose other than when a Student's actions cause or threaten to cause imminent harm to themselves or others and consistent with the School's Restrictive Interventions Policy.
- Hitting or kicking a Student.
- Pushing, pulling, shoving, grabbing, pinching or poking a Student, including by their clothing.
- Shaking or forcibly handling a Student.
- Targeted and sustained criticism, belittling or teasing.
- Intimidating a Student.
- Swearing at a Student.
- Using sarcasm to humiliate.
- Using names or nicknames to undermine the self-confidence of a Student.
- Locking a Student in a confined space or forcing a child to stay in an uncomfortable position.
- Refusing biological needs as a means of punishment.
- Criticising a Student rather than the Student's actions.
- Practices which instil fear or using fear as a means of controlling a Student.
- Practices which cause a Student to feel alienated.

**Disability Standards** means the Disability Standards for Education 2005 formulated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and which came into effect in August 2005. The Disability

Standards clarify the obligations of Schools and seek to ensure that Students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other Students.

**Deputy Principal** refers to a person who is employed as a Deputy Principal of a School (or Head of Campus for a Flexible Learning Centre) and who undertakes the roles of a Deputy Principal, including those delegated by the Principal.

**Discrimination** (direct or indirect) occurs when a person is treated, or is proposed to be treated, less favourably than others because of an attribute protected by law. Attributes protected by law include:

- Sex;
- Relationship or parental status;
- Race;
- Age;
- Impairment or disability;
- Religious or political beliefs;
- Union activities;
- Gender identity;
- Sexuality (including sexual preference, transgender status or homosexuality);
- Lawful sexual activity;
- Pregnancy;
- Breastfeeding; and
- Family or carer's responsibilities.

**Duty(ies) Of Care** is a duty imposed on Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools by common law or by statute, or otherwise a Duty of Care which attaches personally to a Representative.

**Edmund Rice Education Australia** includes its registered Schools and early learning centres, educational facilities, national and regional offices (and any other associated entities).

**Grooming** (or Grooming Behaviours), includes actions deliberately taken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a Student, to lower the Student's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the Student. Grooming Behaviours include:

- Persuading a Student or group of Students that they have a 'special' relationship, for example by:
- Spending inappropriate time with a Student;
- Inappropriately giving gifts;
- Inappropriately giving favours to them, but not other Students;
- Inappropriately allowing a Student to overstep the rules;
- Asking the Student to keep this relationship to themselves;

- Testing boundaries, for example by:
- Undressing in front of a Student;
- Encouraging inappropriate physical contact (even where it is not overtly sexual);
- Inappropriately talking about sex;
- ‘Accidental’ intimate touching;
- Inappropriately extending a relationship outside of the School; and
- Inappropriate personal communication (including the use of Technology).

**Harm caused to a Student** encompasses any definitions set out in Child Protection Legislation and/or Child Protection Policy and includes:

- Child Abuse, as defined within the relevant Child Protection Program.
- Conduct by a Representative as a result of Grooming, Sexual Misconduct, a Sexual Offence or Discrimination.
- Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the Student’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing by any cause, other than confirmed accidental Harm not involving negligence or misconduct.
- Minor Harm that is cumulative in nature that would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to the Student if allowed to continue.
- Physical or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation or family violence or Student bullying or self-harm.

**Harassment** is prohibited by federal legislation, and is defined as:

- (a) Harassment in the workplace based on or linked to a person’s disability or the disability of an associate; or
- (b) offensive behaviour based on racial hatred, which is defined as something done in public that offends, insults or humiliates a person or group of people because of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

Harassment can be a single incident and can occur even if the behaviour is not intended to offend.

**Illegal Drugs** means any mind altering or legally controlled substance. This includes any drugs listed in the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 (QLD); Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (NSW); Drugs of Dependence Act 1989 (ACT); Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 (VIC); Misuse of Drugs Act 2001 (TAS); Controlled Substance Act 1984 (SA); Misuse of Drugs Act 1981 (WA); Misuse of Drugs Act (NT), or similar legislation relevant to any other State in Australia that Edmund Rice Education Australia may operate in, and any drugs listed in the Australian Standards 4308:2008 Procedures for specimen

collection and quantitation of drugs of abuse in urine and AS 4760:2006 Procedures for specimen collection and quantitation of drugs in oral fluid (or successor Australian Standards).

Edmund Rice Education Australia may also include drugs other than those listed in Australian Standards, such as those drugs referred to as “designer drugs”, including (but not limited to) synthetic cannabinoids and herbal highs, as well as other synthetic drugs such as opioids, hallucinogens, piperazines, stimulants and sedatives in the definition of “Illegal Drugs”.

**Policy(ies)** means material developed by Edmund Rice Education Australia and/or its Schools which provide policy statements, procedures and processes to be adhered to by Representatives.

**Principal** refers to a person who has delegated responsibility for the day to day operations of a particular School for which Edmund Rice Education Australia is the governing authority.

**Professional Boundaries** means parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person (a Student) entrusts their welfare and safety to another person (a Representative) in circumstances where a power imbalance exists or could reasonably be perceived to exist.

**EREA Director of Schools (previously known as Regional Director)** refers to a person who is employed by Edmund Rice Education Australia and who undertakes the roles of a EREA Director of Schools. Contact details of current EREA Director of Schools are set out in section 5.5.

**School(s)** means such registered educational entities owned or operated by Edmund Rice Education Australia, which provide educational services to Students and young people within the Edmund Rice Education Australia system (including Flexible Learning Centres and early learning centres). The Code is intended to cover all authorised activities undertaken by Schools (including but not limited to teaching, sport, excursions, camps, retreats, work experience and billeting) whether the activities are undertaken on designated School property or otherwise.

**Serious Misconduct** is the following conduct, adapted from the Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth) as amended, which may give Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools a right to immediately terminate the engagement of a Representative:

Wilful or deliberate behaviour by a Representative that is inconsistent with the continuation of the engagement.

Conduct that causes serious and imminent risk to:

- The health and safety of a person (including a Student)
- The reputation, viability or profitability of Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools
- The integrity of Technology of Edmund Rice Education Australia or its Schools
- Protection of intellectual property of Edmund Rice Education Australia or its entities.

The Representative, in the course of the Representative’s engagement, engaging in:

- Theft
- Fraud



- Assault
- A Representative being intoxicated by alcohol or under the influence of Illegal Drugs while at Edmund Rice Education Australia, at its Schools or otherwise with a responsibility for Students
- The refusal to carry out a lawful and reasonable instruction that is consistent with the Representative's engagement
- The Representative engaging in Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Workplace Bullying, Grooming, Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Offence, or causing Harm.

This definition of Serious Misconduct does not reduce the concept of Serious Misconduct as it may be defined in any contract or agreement which otherwise applies to the Representative.

**Sexual Harassment** is any unwanted or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which a reasonable person would find offensive, humiliating or intimidating. A single incident is enough to constitute Sexual Harassment.

Sexual Harassment may be physical, verbal or written and includes:

- Staring or leering;
- Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person or unwelcome touching;
- Suggestive comments or jokes;
- Insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- Intrusive questions or statements about a person's private life;
- Displaying posters, magazines or screen savers of a sexual nature;
- Sending sexually explicit emails or text messages;
- Inappropriate advances on social networking sites;
- Accessing sexually explicit internet sites;
- Requests for sex or repeated unwanted requests to go out on dates;
- Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications; and
- Any of the above behaviours or conduct carried out using any Technology, including social media.

**Sexual Misconduct** includes but is not limited to:

- Crossing Professional Boundaries, for example:
- Inappropriate, overly personal or intimate relationship with, or conduct towards, a Student:

- Sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour, for example:
- Sexual exhibitionism;
- Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature with a Student;
- Unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a Student;
- Personal correspondence or communications (including through any Technology) with a Student in respect of a Representative's romantic, intimate or sexual feelings for a Student;
- Suggestive remarks or actions of a sexual nature to or within the hearing or presence of a Student;
- Obscene gestures, language, or jokes containing sexual references (whether in person or communicated via any Technology), or deliberately exposing Students to sexual behaviour of others, other than in the case of prescribed curriculum material in which sexual themes are contextual;
- Possession, distribution or display of pornography;
- Encouraging or failing to discourage romantic or inappropriate advances by a Student;
- Any form of Sexual Offence.

NB. Should any Student engage, or attempt to engage, in inappropriate behaviour of a sexual nature with a Representative, then immediate steps must be taken to discourage the Student and the matter should be immediately reported to the Child Safety Officer and/or the Principal.

**Sexual Offence** means any criminal offence involving a sexual element that is committed against, with or in the presence of a child, including but not limited to:

- Indecent assault;
- Sexual assault and sexual abuse;
- Aggravated sexual assault;
- Sexual intercourse and attempted sexual intercourse;
- Possession/dissemination/production of child pornography or child abuse material;
- Using children to produce pornography;
- Grooming or Grooming Behaviours, including procuring children under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity.

All cases of Sexual Offence, or breaches of Child Protection Policies or Child Protection Legislation, also constitute Serious Misconduct.

**Student(s)** means any person enrolled as a Student at a School (including a Flexible Learning Centre or early learning centre) regardless of the age of the Student.

**Technology** includes, without limiting its ordinary meaning, information and communication technologies (ICT), communication devices, storage devices or applications, encompassing: radio, television, mobile phones, computer (Laptops, Tablets), data storage, printers, faxes and network hardware and software, satellite systems and all other digital communications, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as web-based and mobile technologies (ie. text and video messages, email, social media, file sharing, online data storage and videoconferencing).

**The Charter** means the statement of Touchstones proclaimed on 11 September 2017, for all Edmund Rice Education Australia Schools and educational entities giving ideals authentically linked with the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice and which underpin the ministry of Edmund Rice Education Australia Schools and educational endeavours.

**Vexatious Complaints** are written or verbal reports of alleged improper conduct made to an authority intending the report to be acted upon, where there is a demonstrated absence of reasonable grounds for suspecting the improper conduct, and the report is made to cause distress, embarrassment or stress.

**Representative(s)** are persons involved in Edmund Rice Education Australia and its Schools, Flexible Learning Centres and early learning centres as:

- Full time, part time, casual or fixed term employees;
- Supply, relief, aide, volunteer, placed or work experience teachers;
- Support and administration staff;
- Contractors or sub-contractors;
- Volunteers;
- Members of School and Flexi Network Advisory Councils; and
- Members of the Board and Council of Edmund Rice Education Australia.

**Workplace Bullying** is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person, or a group of persons, that causes a risk to health and safety. Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to the circumstances, may consider unreasonable, for example because the behaviour is victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening, and may include:

- Putting Representatives through "initiation rituals";
- Verbal abuse, threats, sarcasm or other forms of demeaning or intimidating language or communication;
- Constant unwarranted negative criticism or "nit-picking";
- Threatening to take unjustified action against a person unless they comply with unreasonable requests;
- Deliberately isolating a Representative by refusing to talk to or interact with them.
- Reasonable management action carried out in a reasonable manner is not Workplace Bullying.

## Policy Checklist

Policies to which the Code refers, or which may constitute a School's Child Safeguarding Policy, may include:

- Child Safeguarding (Safety & Protection)
- Child Safeguarding – Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others
- Mandatory Reporting / Reporting Obligations
- Conflicts of Interest
- EREA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- One:One Interactions with Students (Working Alone With Students)
- Protective Practices
- Student Duty of Care
- Student Code of Conduct
- Parent Code of Conduct

Policies to which the Code refers, or which may otherwise apply to Representatives, may include policies related to:

- Acceptable Use (of Resources, of Technology)
- Alcohol Usage
- Coaching Responsibilities
- Complaints Handling
- Cyberbullying
- Discipline
- 
- Dress Code
- Drugs Usage
- Excursions and Student Supervision
- Pastoral Care
- Social Media Acceptable Usage (School and Personal)
- Student Management
- Technology
- Tobacco Usage
- Transport
- Tutoring
- Workplace Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment

(This list is non-exhaustive.)

## Reference List

The following material may provide context to provisions within the Code and may be accessed by Representatives as set out below:

- Integrity of the Service in the Church: <http://www.catholic.org.au>
- The Charter of Edmund Rice Education Australia: <http://www.erea.edu.au/about-us/the-charter>
- United Nations Convention on The Rights Of The Child: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (2019): <https://www.dese.gov.au/uncategorised/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>

The following resources may provide further context to provisions within the Code, as is relevant in each State and Territory, and may be accessed by Representatives as set out below:

### Queensland

- Brisbane Catholic Education: <http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/> Education Queensland: <http://education.qld.gov.au/>

### New South Wales

- Catholic Education Office Sydney: <http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au/> Education and Communities: <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/>

### Victoria

- Catholic Education Melbourne: <http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/>
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/> South Australia
- Catholic Education SA: <http://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/>
- Department for Education and Children's Services: <http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/>

### Western Australia

- Catholic Education Office of Western Australia: <http://internet.ceo.wa.edu.au/> Department of Education: <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/>

### Tasmania

- Tasmanian Catholic Education Office: <http://www.catholic.tas.edu.au/> Department of Education: <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/> Australia Capital Territory
- Catholic Education Office: <http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/> Education and Training Directorate: <http://www.det.act.gov.au/> Northern Territory
- Department of Education and Children's Services: <http://www.education.nt.gov.au/>

The material in this does not form a provision of the Code unless explicitly provided for in the Code.

## Support Agencies

### **Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)**

Level 3, 175 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

The AHRC is the Commonwealth body that addresses complaints of discrimination and sexual harassment.

For resources [education@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:education@humanrights.gov.au)

To make a complaint:

complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au Website  
www.hreoc.gov.au Advice Line  
1300 656 419

Each State and Territory have a separate authority.  
Contact details can be found online.

### **Beyondblue**

Beyondblue provides people with access to information for depression and anxiety related matters. They can also make referrals to other relevant services.

Phone 1300 224 636

Website [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

### **Life Line**

Life Line provides people experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Phone 13 11 14

Website [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)