Professional Conduct
Professional relationships between employees and students

All students have a right to a safe physical and emotional environment.

As a departmental employee, you are expected to always behave in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people. You must actively seek to prevent harm to children and young people, and to support those who have been harmed.

While not all employees are required to manage and supervise students, it is important for all departmental employees to understand and observe the Department's child protection policies.

You must not impose physical punishment on a student in the course of your professional duties.

You must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be misinterpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student.

You must not have a sexual relationship with a school student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual or heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers.

As a TAFE NSW employee, you must not enter into a romantic or sexual relationship with any student (including any adult student) that you are responsible for teaching, tutoring, advising, assessing, or for whom you provide pastoral or welfare support. To do so raises serious questions of conflict of interests, trust, confidence, dependency, and of equality of treatment. Such relationships may also have a negative impact on the teaching and learning environment for other students and colleagues, and may carry a serious reputational risk for the Department.

Where a personal relationship, such as family relationship or close friendship exists between you and a student, or where there is a pre-existing sexual relationship with an adult student attending the same workplace, you must report the conflict of interest, or any potential conflict, to your supervisor or principal, and it must be managed carefully.

Wherever practical, you should avoid teaching or being involved in educational decisions involving family members or close friends. Where it is not practical to avoid such situations completely, another member of
staff should make any significant decisions relating to the student's assessments and have those endorsed by a supervisor.

Your professional relationship may be compromised if you:

- invite students to join your personal electronic social networking site or accept students' invitations to join theirs
- attend parties or socialise with students
- invite a student or students back to your home or attend theirs without an appropriate professional reason and without the consent of their parent or carer
- transport a school student in your car without prior approval from a supervisor and a parent or carer.

The boundaries of the professional relationship will be breached if you:

- have a sexual relationship or develop an intimate relationship with a student
- use sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students
- hold conversations of an intimately personal nature, where you disclose private information about yourself
- have contact with a student via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages or chat lines, without a valid context
- give students gifts of a personal nature that encourages them to think they have an individual and special relationship with you.

You are reminded of:

- the law prohibiting sexual relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years)
- the law prohibiting sexual relations between a teacher and their student under the age of 18 years
- the law prohibiting child pornography.