



Victorian Music Teachers' Association Inc.

# **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TEACHER HANDBOOK**

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### **Disclaimer:**

All content contained in this Handbook including general advice, recommendations, resources, references and policies are provided in good faith and have been obtained through research using reputable sources. The material is purely of an advisory nature and is intended to provide general guidelines for music teachers. Individuals and schools are advised to contact the relevant authority regarding any specific matter relating to the content in this Handbook. The VMTA accepts no legal responsibility for any of the material provided.

## Section 1

### USEFUL INFORMATION FOR INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TEACHERS

#### 1 Working Conditions

##### 1.1 Categories of Instrumental Music Teaching

The VMTA has established a list of conditions, terms and other information that may be relevant to instrumental music teachers working in a range of situations.

Three (3) categories of Instrumental Music Teaching are covered in this document:

(A) Schools (Government and Non-Government)

(B) Private Music Schools

(C) Private Studios

Teachers are encouraged to consider the points listed within this document, and in the case of categories (A) and (B), to discuss relevant points with the organisations, schools, or directors of music, where they will be working. Individual schools will have varying needs and policies regarding the engagement of Instrumental Music Teachers. The VMTA advises Instrumental Music Teachers to be aware of the nature of their engagement and recommends that a written statement of the nature of the engagement be documented.

For the purposes of this document, *Instrumental Teaching* is defined as encompassing non-classroom-based instruction of a practical or theoretical nature, either one-to-one or in small groups, and delivered in government or non-government schools, music schools or in home/private studio premises. In Victoria at least, there is no award or legislation covering the activity of instrumental music teaching, either in schools or privately. The VMTA fulfils an important role in providing a scale of recommended minimum teaching rates, published on the VMTA's website. Matters concerning classroom music teaching are covered by the relevant awards.

#### 2 Terms and Conditions of Employment in Schools (Category A & B)

##### 2.1 General Terms of Employment

Individual schools will have varying needs and policies regarding the engagement of instrumental music teachers.

VMTA advises instrumental music teachers to be aware of the nature of their engagement and recommends that a written statement of the nature of the engagement, or a formal contract, be documented.

General terms of employment to be clarified with the school include:

- Are you an employee or a contractor?
- Is your position casual, fixed term or ongoing?
- What is the duration of the engagement?
- What are the entitlements, including superannuation and long service leave, holiday pay, sick leave etc.?
- Are you required to fill out a time sheet?

- The hours for which you are required to attend the school should be clarified, along with any flexibility in those hours which may exist.

## 2.2 Wage Considerations

- What is the nominal rate of pay you will receive per hour?
- How often will you be paid and by which method?
- Does the school pay you or do the parents pay you directly?
- What administration costs, if any, does the school deduct?
- VMTA has a scale of recommended minimum teaching rates published on the VMTA website at <https://vmta.org.au/vmta-recommended-teaching-rates/>. These rates are adjusted each year in accordance with the CPI (Consumer Price Index).
- VMTA's recommended minimum rates are base rates only, and do not include GST nor is there an allocation for superannuation or personal leave.

## 2.3 Superannuation

- Does the school pay superannuation in addition to your nominal hourly rate?
- Under government legislation, full-time, part-time or casual employees aged 18 - 69, who earn \$450 or more (before tax) in a calendar month must be paid the Superannuation Guarantee Charge (SGC) on top of their wages.
- For salary or wage payments made on or after 1 July 2014, the minimum SG contribution rate of 9.5% will need to be applied.
- It is against the law for an employer to deduct the Superannuation Guarantee Charge from earnings, unless a salary-sacrifice agreement is made. This applies to casual, part-time, full-time and contract employees.
- In the case of contract employees, the contractor must be an individual and not a partnership or a business (e.g. a regular school would not pay superannuation to a small music school providing teachers to the school).

## 2.4 Lesson Parameters and Student Absences

- Will you be teaching one-to-one and/or group lessons?
- In the case of group lessons, how many students will be in the group?
- How many lessons per term / semester are you required to give? Are you required to give a set minimum number of lessons per year / term?
- If students are absent from their lessons for personal reasons or due to school activities or excursions, are you required to make up lessons in your own time?
- What is the frequency of the lessons?
- What is the lesson duration?
- In the event of a lesson cancellation, how much notice must be given by the student?
- What are acceptable reasons for cancellation / absence e.g. excursions, illness, unexplained non-attendance?
- Will the school still pay you for cancelled lessons?
- If the student is missing, are you required to physically locate that student and if so, who is responsible for the supervision of remaining students in a group lesson situation?

- Does the need to locate a missing student depend on whether the school or the parent pays the teacher for the lesson?
- Does your school offer you the flexibility to cancel and/or reschedule lessons?

## **2.5 Student Assessment, Teacher Appraisal and Other Non-teaching Duties**

- Does the school require regular student assessment and if so, what is the nature of this?
- Does the school enrol students for public examinations?
- Does the school conduct appraisal of teachers and if so, what is the nature of this?
- Are you required to undertake the timetabling of your own students?
- Are you expected to attend or participate in concerts / rehearsals / school events which are outside your nominal teaching load? If so, are you paid for this time?
- Are you expected to consult with parents and how is this to be arranged?
- Are you expected to write reports? What is the frequency and nature of any reports required?
- Are you expected to direct any ensembles? If so, will you be paid for this time?

## **3 Terms and Conditions of the Studio Teacher (Category C)**

Individuals operating independently of a school will have varying needs and policies. The VMTA advises studio music teachers to consider the following options at their discretion.

### **3.1 Teaching Fees and Rates**

- Fees for each term should ideally be paid in full, in advance, or by no later than the first week of the term.
- Fees can also be paid in regular blocks of 4 weeks or longer, or by the lesson.
- VMTA has a scale of recommended minimum teaching rates published on the VMTA website at <https://vmta.org.au/vmta-recommended-teaching-rates/>. These rates are adjusted each year in accordance with the CPI (Consumer Price Index).
- VMTA's recommended minimum rates are base rates only, and do not include GST nor is there an allocation for superannuation or personal leave.

### **3.2 Holidays**

- Lessons may or may not be suspended during the Victorian school holidays and on public holidays.
- Lessons may be suspended during any period where the student provides notice of at least one month that they will be unable to attend lessons.
- Where a student is absent for an extended period of time, the teacher reserves the right to terminate the lesson arrangement and offer the place to another student.

### **3.3 Absences**

- Absences due to student non-attendance will not be made up and will be charged in full unless the circumstances, in the teacher's opinion, warrant special consideration.
- The studio teacher may wish to make up one missed lesson per term, pending sufficient notice is given regarding the absence.
- Lessons cancelled by the teacher will be carried forward and the student credited.

### **3.4 Examinations**

- The teacher will not enter the student for any examination or competition without the prior consent of all parties.
- The teacher's opinion as to what examinations and competitions are suitable at each stage of the student's progress must be accepted by the student.

### **3.5 Ceasing Lessons**

- In order for a student to discontinue lessons, they must provide notice in writing one month prior.
- Prior to the commencement of lessons, the studio teacher may wish to charge a holding fee (bond) equivalent to 4 weeks of lessons, and retain such fee, in part or in full, in the event the student does not give sufficient notice.

## **4 Financial and Record Management**

### **4.1 GST (Goods & Services Tax)**

Non-salaried persons who earn more than \$75,000 per annum are obliged by law to charge and collect GST equal to 10% of their gross (pre-tax) non-salaried income and to forward the GST to the Australian Tax Office. The GST threshold only applies to income earned from the individual's private business - employer income is not included.

GST-registered studio teachers who work for schools or other organisations on a sporadic/one-off basis, should clarify the situation with the organisation concerned in regard to their fees and GST. (For more information regarding taxation, contact the Australian Taxation Office [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au))

### **4.2 Financial Records**

In accordance with normal business practice and legal requirements, and where appropriate, teachers should issue invoice/receipts when requested. Where a tax invoice is provided, the GST component should be identified.

Teachers are encouraged to clarify their policy, or the school's policy, on lateness, absences and substitute/make-up lessons, refunds, the amount of prior notice required from students for cancellation of lessons or for change of lesson time requests (either one-off or permanent) and any cancellation fees.

### **4.3 Record Management**

Studio teachers are advised to provide clear notification in writing of the teacher's policies and procedures in the form of a 'contract', a 'letter of agreement' or a 'newsletter'. Conflict is often the result of misunderstanding between both parties.

As a minimum, it is recommended that such documents should encompass the length and frequency of lessons, fees and payment procedures (including, as appropriate, whether fees are applicable for initial consultations).

In accordance with taxation requirements, teachers should itemise the date of each lesson as it is given, in the teacher's client/student file, as well as in the teacher's diary/day-book (it is recommended that teachers should not rely on the student's exercise book for this purpose: students may forget their books).

Studio teachers specifically should maintain a record for each student that includes the student's name, address, telephone number, date of birth, candidate number, fee, date of commencing tuition, usual lesson day and time, notes of examination results and other achievements and the teacher's assessment of progress made. It should also give dates of all lessons set out in the terms of the relevant number of weeks; current repertoire, exercises and technical work; name and cost of all music supplied; examination fees paid etc.

## **5: Industry Requirements**

### **5.1 Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Registration / Permission to Teach**

In light of the recent changes in this area, please refer to the various links on the VMTA's website at <https://vmta.org.au/useful-information-for-teachers>.

### **5.2 Working with Children Check (WWCC)**

Since 1 July 2010, any teacher of music who teaches a student under 18, in either a supervised or unsupervised capacity, and irrespective of whether that person is a member of VMTA, must have a current assessment notice for the Working with Children Check.

The Working with Children Check lasts for five years and as it is required by law, it is a tax-deductible business expense. Those persons who hold VIT registration are exempted from needing to obtain a Working with Children Check.

Further information: WWC  
The Justice Department of Victoria  
Website: [www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren)  
Information line: 1300 652 879  
Email: [workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au)

### **5.3 Child Safety Standards & Child Protection Programs**

In response to recent legislative changes following the Royal Commission into Institutionalised Child Abuse, schools are required to devise and implement a Child Protection Program. Schools must commit to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Schools must recognise the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring their school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

Resources and training exist to help protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. This information assists teachers in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations.

For further information visit <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards> and <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards>.

### **5.4 Teachers as Mandatory Reporters**

All Teachers in Victoria are Mandatory Reporters.

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* (CYFA) requires that mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection when they believe that a child aged under 17 is in need of protection from significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse.

If a report is made by mandatory reporters in accordance with CYFA mandatory reporting obligations, an additional report to the Police under s 327 *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* may not be required unless you have further information.

## **5.5 Retirement Planning**

Category (A), (B) and (C) music teachers, regardless of their nature of employment, are advised to make adequate provision for retirement. Early planning in this area will enable smaller contributions to be made.

Current taxation rules provide favourable treatment for contributions to Superannuation Funds. However, you should also seek the advice of a competent advisor to ensure that you select a fund that best meets your needs.

## **6 Insurance**

Studio teachers working in their own home should be aware that, in the majority of cases, domestic house and contents insurance policies will not extend to cover activity concerned with earning income from private business on their home premises.

### **6.1 Public Liability**

Category (A), (B) and (C) music teachers may become legally liable for an injury to students or members of the public whilst conducting your business. As most Home Insurance policies exclude claims arising from business activities, it may be possible to amend your existing Home Insurance policy or take out additional specific cover, such as public liability, to protect you against this risk.

### **6.2 Professional Indemnity**

In recent times, occurrences of legal action against professionals such as doctors, solicitors and teachers have increased. Whilst the potential exposure seems reasonably small, Category (A), (B) and (C) music teachers are therefore well advised and encouraged to take out coverage to protect them against legal action regarding allegations that following advice has led to an injury or condition (e.g. piano-hands, voice-vocal chords).

There is also insurance cover that indemnifies Category (A), (B) and (C) music teachers regarding allegations of molestation and abuse. The VMTA advises finding a policy that covers both professional indemnity and equipment liability.

### **6.3 Income Protection**

Income protection policies are designed to provide you with a benefit should you become ill or disabled in some capacity. It is possible to select a suitable coverage depending on your needs and budget. You are advised to investigate income protection policies which may be tax deductible.

### **6.4 Equipment**

Equipment used for business purposes (which may include sheet music, music stands, expensive instruments, computers, music subscriptions and recordings, audio systems, amplification and the like) may be covered in an existing Home Contents Policy. However, if equipment is used for business, you should check with your insurer and arrange amended cover if available or take out specific coverage.

If equipment is to be transported from the usual business premises, specific coverage is available and is well advised.

## 6.5 Insurance Providers

The following insurance providers are worth contacting for music teacher insurance:

- **Duck for Cover** - a not-for-profit incorporated association that offers a range of insurance products for 'performing artists'. This includes musicians who engage in teaching activities related to their performance discipline (Category 2).

The insurance cover applies when teaching in the private studio, school-based work and when running one-off concerts. Duck for Cover customers sign up as members in order to receive the required insurance. Products include public liability, professional indemnity, up to two years income protection insurance for personal accident and injury, and limited portable equipment insurance. Depending on the product, cover is worldwide excluding the USA and Canada.

For further information contact (03) 9439 5991 or email: [admin@duckforcover.com.au](mailto:admin@duckforcover.com.au), or visit [www.duckforcover.com.au](http://www.duckforcover.com.au).

- **AON Australia** - a large insurance broking company that offers a range of projects and services. They have specially designed insurance for instrumental music teachers, including policies that protect against risks such as inability to work due to injury, and claims of injury and negligence by students.

Products include public liability, professional liability, property in care, wrongful allegation, income protection for personal accident, schools cover, and additional instrument and equipment insurance. The premium for this type of insurance is \$269 per annum and the cover is limited to Australia and NZ.

For further information call 1800 610 or visit <http://business-insurance.aon.com.au/Professions/Entertainment/music-singing-teachers.aspx>.

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## Section 2

### VMTA SERVICES & POLICIES

#### **1 Professional Learning**

The VMTA is an independent not-for-profit incorporated association representing the interests of instrumental music teachers in Victoria and the general community.

We aim to support, facilitate and promote excellence in music teaching. We encourage all teachers to improve the quality of their teaching by providing regular professional development activities.

Opportunities include:

- Pedagogical Workshops
- AMEB Series Workshops
- Webinars on Specific Topics
- Member Forum on Social Media (Live Sessions + Q&A's) (VMTA members only)

The VMTA also promotes opportunities for professional learning via the events of other organisations and individuals in the industry.

#### **2 Membership Types**

##### **2.1 Full Membership**

- Full members who wish to be registered as a teacher must have at least 3 years teaching experience.
- Full members who wish to be registered as a piano accompanist must have at least 3 years' experience as a professional accompanist.
- Full members must have completed an approved tertiary course in music performance or music teaching, which could include the following: a graduate degree, bachelor degree, diploma of music, or any music qualification obtained from a recognised university or tertiary education institute (e.g. TAFE) (overseas equivalents will be accepted).
- The VMTA Board will consider general teacher training diplomas and music teacher certificates in lieu of tertiary music qualifications, e.g. Suzuki/Yamaha teacher accreditation, Kodaly/Orff teaching certificate, DipABRSM (Instrumental Teaching), ATCL and ATMusA (AMEB). These certificates will be considered in lieu of tertiary music qualifications when combined with a minimum standard of AMEB Grade 8 or equivalent.
- Please note that successful completion of a practical or written music examination (e.g. AMEB, ANZCA, ABRSM, Trinity College London) while an indicator of standard reached, is not considered in lieu of a tertiary music qualification.
- Where tertiary music qualifications and examination certificates cannot be provided as evidence of standard reached, we will accept professional recordings of performances, or evidence of performance in a premier ensemble. Referees are also asked to substantiate teaching skills, experience and standard reached.

## 2.2 Associate Membership

- Associate members who wish to be registered as a teacher must have taught their discipline for at least 1 year and have achieved a high standard in the main area/s taught, being a minimum of AMEB Grade 8 or equivalent.
- Associate members who wish to be registered as a piano accompanist must have worked as a professional accompanist for at least 1 year and have achieved a high standard of piano performance, being a minimum of AMEB Grade 8 or equivalent.
- Where examination certificates cannot be provided as evidence of standard reached, we will accept professional recordings of performances, or evidence of performance in a premier ensemble. Referees are also asked to substantiate teaching skills, experience and standard reached.

## 2.3 Graduate Membership

- Graduates must have completed an approved tertiary course in music and/or music teaching.
- Graduate membership is valid for up to 3 years from date of graduation.

## 2.4 Student Membership

- Student members must be enrolled full time in an approved tertiary course in music and/or music teaching
- Student membership is valid for up to 4 years from date of enrolment

## 2.5 School Membership

- School membership is available to any Victorian government, independent, or non-government registered school.
- The benefits of school membership include:
  - All staff at the school can attend VMTA professional learning events at the member rate
  - Monthly eNews and updates
  - Students of the school may participate in masterclasses and student concerts
  - Provision of support, advice and advocacy including recommended teaching rates
- School Membership is not available to private or commercial music schools. In this case, we encourage all music school staff to apply for individual membership.
- Please note that under the VMTA's constitution, only 'natural persons' can be individual members of the VMTA and only individual members can be listed on the website teacher search directory or vote on issues where a poll or ballot is required.

## 2.6 Affiliated Organisation Membership

This category is open to organisations who would like to be affiliated with the VMTA and are interested in supporting us. Benefits include the monthly eNews, discounted advertising in our publications, discounted hire of our Schimmel grand piano located at St Peter's Anglican Church Box Hill, and discounted attendance at professional learning events for interested staff.

**Piano Accompanists:** Full, Associate, Graduate and Student Membership is also open to professional accompanists who wish to be listed as a *piano accompanist only*. Please see above criteria for each membership category.

### **3 Membership Benefits**

#### **3.1 Website Listing**

- Individual members receive an ongoing listing in the *Find a Music Teacher* and *Find a Piano Accompanist* directories on the VMTA website at <https://vmta.org.au>.
- Listing includes member name, qualifications, studio name (if applicable), instrument / areas taught, membership type, contact details, teaching location, and up to 2 social media/URL links.
- Members can log in and edit their contact details and directory preferences at any time.

#### **3.2 Premium Profile**

- Individual members can purchase a Premium Profile to enhance their basic website listing. This includes a detailed description of teaching services, additional links to YouTube, Facebook and Twitter and a photo or other image.

#### **3.3. Professional Development**

- Discounted attendance at regular professional learning events.

#### **3.4 Performance Opportunities for Student of VMTA Members**

- Members can enrol their students in the Student Concerts Series and Performance Day.

#### **3.5 Publications**

- Monthly eNews, updates, blog subscription updates

#### **3.6 Accreditation and Post-Nominals**

- Full members can use the 'VMTA Fully Accredited' badge in their digital and print communications, and place the letters MVMTA after their name as evidence of full accreditation.
- Associate, Graduate and Student members can apply to be upgraded at any time providing they can meet the full membership criteria.

#### **3.7 Social & Networking Opportunities**

- The VMTA provides opportunities to socialise and network with other VMTA members, e.g. our annual end-of-year celebration.

#### **3.8 Discounts**

- Members and publication subscribers receive a 10% discount when advertising in the monthly eNews.
- Members may also request an official receipt for their current membership and show this as proof of membership to receive teacher discounts at various music retail outlets.

### **3.9 Piano Hire**

- Members receive a substantial discount on the hire of our Schimmel grand piano located at St Peter's Anglican Church Box Hill.
- To enquire, please contact Cecilia Joyner, Parish Administrator:
  - Tel: (03) 9899 5122
  - Email: [anglicans.boxhill@bigpond.com](mailto:anglicans.boxhill@bigpond.com)
  - Website: <http://www.anglicansboxhill.org.au/hire-of-vmta-piano/>
- The church office is staffed on a Tuesday and Thursday.
- If your enquiry is urgent, please contact the VMTA office
  - Tel: (03) 5243 4200
  - Email: [vmta@vmta.org.au](mailto:vmta@vmta.org.au)

## **4 Governance**

The VMTA is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors.

### **4.1 Board Structure**

- The new Rules of Association (2019) allow for
  - 6 member elected Directors (including 3 executive positions);
  - 2 Board Appointed Directors who may or may not be members of the Association.

### **4.2 Board of Directors (2019-20)**

- Josie Thomas (President), Robin Baker, Anne Lewitza, Bron Sozanski, Lyn Spiteri.
- Each position on the Board is elected at the AGM for a 3 year term.
- The Board of Directors of the VMTA is responsible for all matters pertaining to the running of the Association. This authority is expressed within the *Rules of Association (2019)* [which can be downloaded here](#).

### **4.3 Staggered Terms** - reset under new Rules and effective as at March AGM 2019

- 3 years – Josie Thomas and Lyn Spiteri
- 2 years – Robin Baker and Bron Sozanski
- 1 Year – Anne Lewitzka

### **4.4 Chief Executive Officer**

- Genevieve Newton (BMus, GradDipEd, GradDipMarketing)
- The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the managing the operations of the Association, and may be assigned additional duties that are the responsibility of the VMTA's Board Directors such as those of the Treasurer.
- This person is currently the legal 'Secretary' responsible for reporting to Consumer Affairs via the individual's personal myCAV account (as mandated by Consumer Affairs Victoria).

#### 4.4 Responsibilities

The governing authority is *Consumer Affairs Victoria* <https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au>, and the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer must ensure the rules under the Incorporated Associations Act (2012) and as outlined in the Rules of Association are adhered to.

The Board of Directors is responsible for, and has the authority to determine, the policy, practices, management and operation of the VMTA, and can do all such things as may be necessary to be done from time to time in order to carry out the objectives of the Association. Without limiting this general role, the principal functions and responsibilities of the Board of Directors include:

- setting the short, medium and long term goals of the Association
- providing direction in the context of the strategic needs of the Association
- determining the policies governing the operations of the VMTA
- appointing and approving the terms and conditions of the Chief Executive Officer
- reviewing and providing feedback on the performance of the Chief Executive Officer
- establishing and determining the powers and functions of the Board of Directors
- approving major operations plans
- approving the annual budget and long-term budgets
- approving all items of capital expenditure
- reviewing annual progress and performance in meeting the objectives of the Association including reporting on the outcome of such reviews.

The Board of Directors carries out its activities through the Chief Executive Officer and delegates to him/her specific powers and responsibilities.

- Delegations to the Chief Executive Officer are contained in the 'Role of the Chief Executive Officer'

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## **APPENDICES: DOCUMENT TEMPLATES & POLICIES**

Please find the following document templates and policies as appendices.

These resources and policies, including the VMTA Member *Code of Ethics*, are applicable to VMTA members, but may also be of use to any music teacher working in their own studio or in the school system.

- 1. VMTA Member Code of Ethics**
- 2. Lesson Enrolment Form & Contract**
- 3. Confidentiality of Information Relating to Child Protection Matters Policy**
- 4. Child Safety Code of Conduct**
- 5. Mandatory Reporting Policy**
- 6. Teacher and Student Professional Boundaries Policy**

### **Disclaimer:**

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Victorian Music Teachers' Association Inc.

## **VMTA MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS**

This policy has been developed by the Victorian Music Teachers' Association. It applies to our membership, as well as our Chief Executive Officer and Board of Directors.

All VMTA Members are required to comply with this Member Code of Ethics by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Member Code of Ethics applies in all situations and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Appropriate consequences will be applied to VMTA Members who breach the VMTA Member Code of Ethics.

VMTA Members will:

- maintain professional interaction with teachers, parents, students and other individuals within and outside the VMTA community at all times, including Student Concerts and other VMTA events.
- ensure equal learning opportunities are given to students without discrimination.
- maintain a supportive VMTA community environment free of harassment, intimidation, bias and unlawful discrimination.
- communicate compassionately and transparently with all members of the VMTA community.
- represent the VMTA community in a respectful manner at all times.
- offer feedback and suggestions when appropriate and in a respectful manner.

VMTA Members will **not**:

- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature or use inappropriate language with or in the presence of students.
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students.
- in a school environment or at Student Concerts or other events where students are present, consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.
- engage on social media (or in person) with others in an inappropriate, hostile, rude or discriminatory way.
- speak in a defamatory way about other individuals within the VMTA community.
- utilise VMTA community events, meetings and forums to publicly defame the VMTA.
- utilise VMTA community events, meetings and forums to promote anything contrary to the aims, objectives and guidelines of the VMTA.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*print name*), confirm I have been provided with a copy of the Victorian Music Teachers' Association Member Code of Ethics and, by signing, agree to the terms therein.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Studio/Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

# Lesson Enrolment Form & Contract

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

I, ..... *[insert Teacher's Name]* agree to provide lessons in..... *[insert teaching area]* for ..... *[insert Student's Name]*.

## 1. Lesson Fees

1.1 Lesson Length \_\_\_\_\_

1.2 Lesson Cost \_\_\_\_\_

1.3 Total Payable in advance by Term \_\_\_\_\_

These lessons must be paid in advance of each School Term

## 2 Lesson Cancellation

2.1 Except in the case of protracted illness or other absence (ample notification must be provided), no refund of fees will be given for cancelled lessons.

2.2 If .....*[insert name of Teacher]* cancels a lesson, they will *[insert your policy regarding make-up lessons]*.

## 2. Terms of Agreement

3.1 This agreement may be terminated under the condition that a notice of a month is provided in writing.

**To accept the terms of this Lesson Enrolment & Contract, please sign and date below.**

Yours sincerely,

*[insert Teacher's Name/Studio]*

I, .....have read and understood this document and accept the Lesson Enrolment and Contract from *[insert Teacher's/Studio name]* on the terms and conditions set out above.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_



# CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION MATTERS POLICY

This policy has been developed by the Victorian Music Teachers' Association. It applies to our membership and has been authorised for their professional use.

Anyone who has access to information regarding a case of suspected child abuse must keep such information confidential and secure and must only disclose or discuss this information with those involved in managing the situation.

VMTA Members must not provide undertakings that are inconsistent with the reporting obligations for the VMTA or relevant School's Child Protection Program. In particular, you must not promise a student that you will not tell anyone about the student's disclosure.

Students and any other parties who become involved in the investigation (this may include other students) should be informed of the reporting process and be required to maintain confidentiality.

Inappropriate disclosure will be subject to disciplinary action.

## Protection of Reporter's Identity

Reports or referrals made to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST are confidential and the report's identity is generally protected by law. Exceptions include if:

- the reporter chooses to inform the child or family of the report
- the reporter consents in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides it is necessary for the identity of the reporter to be disclosed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
- a court or tribunal decides the reporter is required to attend court to provide evidence

The identity of the person who makes a report to the Police, including reports under s 327 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) (Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence), will remain confidential unless:

- the person themselves discloses their identity or they consent in writing to their identity being disclosed
- a court or tribunal decides that is necessary in the interests of justice for the person's identity to be disclosed.

## Reporter Liability

A person who makes a mandatory report in accordance with the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) will not be held liable for the eventual outcome of any investigation.

If a report is made in good faith it does not constitute a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter and the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

## Protection of Personal Information

How an individual teacher, school employer or the VMTA handle the information it collects about individuals in the course of conducting its activities (referred to in the *Privacy Act 1988* as personal information) is very important. The people these organisations deal with expect parties to handle personal information properly as there is a legal obligation to do so. Personal information is

information, or an opinion, about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable:

- whether the information, or opinion, is true or not
- whether the information, or opinion, is recorded in a material form or not.

### **Requests for Information**

If you receive a request from the Police or DHHS Child Protection for information relating to a student who has been impacted (or is suspected to have been impacted) by child abuse, you should:

- obtain the request for information in writing, and
- ensure that the written request includes:
  - the name of the Police or DHHS Child Protection Officer, the organisations they work for and their contact details;
  - a description and reasons why the information and/or documents being sought;
  - what authority the officer or organisation believes that they have access to the requested information and documents.

When information and/or documents are requested in this way, you may be permitted to share the information, however you are not compelled to do so.

### **Information Sharing with the VMTA Membership**

The VMTA takes great care to assess the relevance and appropriateness of sharing information about a child protection incident before providing any information about child abuse to relevant authorities, because even the confirmation of an incident or allegation can lead to the identification of a victim.

**Policy status:** New

**Key Stakeholders:** VMTA Board of Directors

**Endorsement Body:** VMTA Board of Directors | **Ratification Body:** VMTA Board of Directors

**Author:** VMTA Chief Executive Officer | **Date of Approval:** 16 September 2019 | **Date of**

**Scheduled Review:** 16 March 2020

*The content of this policy can be changed at the discretion of the VMTA Board at any time without notification.*

# CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

This policy has been developed by the Victorian Music Teachers' Association. It applies to our membership and has been authorised for their professional use.

The VMTA Member [*insert your name here/name of your Studio*] is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The member recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring the teaching community is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The VMTA Member [*insert your name here/name of your Studio*] will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The VMTA Member [*insert your name here/name of your Studio*] will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the learning community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all situations and in the use of digital technology and social media.

## Acceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the learning community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the learning community's statement of commitment to child safety and adhering to the learning community's child safety policy at all times.
- taking reasonable steps to protect students from abuse
- treating students and families in the learning community with respect both within the learning environment and outside the learning environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse.

- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

## Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the learning community involved in child-related work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours with students which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put students at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with students or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as using the toilet or changing their clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature with or in the presence of students
- use inappropriate language in the presence of students
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to learning or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child in a learning environment except in accordance with school policy or with parent/guardian permission (whichever applies) or where required for duty of care purposes
- in the learning environment or at other events where students are present, consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (*print name*), confirm I have been provided a copy of the Code of Conduct for [*insert your name here/name of your Studio*].

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Policy status:** New

**Key Stakeholders:** VMTA Board

**Endorsement Body:** VMTA Board of Directors | **Ratification Body:** VMTA Board of Directors

**Author:** VMTA CEO | **Date of Approval:** 16 September 2019 | **Date of Scheduled Review:** TBC

*The content of this policy can be changed at the discretion of the VMTA Board at any time without notification.*

# MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

This policy has been developed by the Victorian Music Teachers' Association. It applies to our membership and has been authorised for their professional use.

## Source of Obligation

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* (CYFA) requires that mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection when they believe that a child (aged under 17) is in need of protection from significant harm from physical injury or sexual abuse.

If a report is made by mandatory reporters in accordance with CYFA mandatory reporting obligations, an additional report to the Police under *s 327 Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* may not be required unless you have further information.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the *Signs of Child Abuse Document*.

## Who Must Make a Mandatory Report?

Mandatory reporters are defined by the CYFA and include:

- Teachers
- Directors

## Reporting by Non-Mandated Staff

If you are not a Mandatory Reporter, you still have the option of making a report to DHHS under the CYFA if you believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection.

The CYFA states that any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of harm should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection.

All VMTA Members who work in the school system and have concerns that a student may be in need of protection, or may have been the victim of a sexual offence, should notify their relevant School Child Safety/Protection Program Officer as soon as possible to discuss their concerns.

If the VMTA Member operates outside of the school system has concerns that a student may be in need of protection, or may have been the victim of a sexual offence, they can seek advice from the VMTA or from DHHS. Also refer to *The Failure to Disclose Offence Factsheet*.

A Mandatory Reporter must make a report even if their relevant School Child Safety/Protection Program Office or the VMTA does not share their belief that a report must be made.

## What Gives Rise to a Mandatory Report?

A mandatory report must be made when you form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection where the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of:

- physical injury or sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

## Reasonable Grounds

The concept of 'reasonable grounds' requires you to consider whether another person, when faced with similar information, would also draw the same conclusion. It does not mean reporters are required to be certain, but rather reporters should ensure their concerns are well founded and based on information from a reliable source.

There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- a child states they have been physically or sexually abused;
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused;
- someone who knows the child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused;
- the VMTA Member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on a child's safety, stability or development;
- the VMTA Member observes signs of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision; or
- a child's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child;

Grounds for belief include matters of which a person has become aware and any opinions based on those matters.

## Significant

'Significant' means that which is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent.

What is 'significant' is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's safety, welfare or wellbeing. Significant harm can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these.

## Physical Injury or Sexual Abuse

To assist in identifying physical injury or sexual abuse, refer to the *Signs of Child Abuse Document*.

## Parents Have Not Protected, or Are Unlikely to Protect, the Child from Harm of That Type

The meaning of this phrase is not defined by legislation, but some examples may assist.

A parent who 'has not protected, or is unlikely to protect that child from harm of that type' includes a parent who wants to protect his or her child from harm, but lacks the means to.

It also includes a parent who has the means to protect his or her child from harm, but does not want to. A parent may be rendered 'unlikely to protect' that child for many reasons. For example:

- that parent does not, or refuses to recognise that harm is occurring;
- that parent or child may be subject to domestic violence; or
- that parent's partner may be abusive or harmful to the child.

'Parent' includes:

- the child's father, the child's mother
- the spouse or domestic partner of the mother or father of the child
- a person who has custody of the child
- a person who is named as the father on the child's birth certificate; a person who acknowledges that he is the father of the child by an instrument under the *Status of Children Act 1974 (Vic)*; and
- a person in respect of whom a court has made a declaration or a finding or order that the person is the father of the child.

### **What to Report and When**

A report becomes mandatory as soon as is practicable after forming the belief. A report must include details of the belief, and the reasonable grounds of that belief. Additional reports must be made on each occasion where you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

Refer to the Victorian Department of Education's *Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection* or Child FIRST (Child and Family Information, Referral and Support Team) for guidance on making a decision on whether to report.

### **How is a Report/Referral Made?**

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

A report to DHHS Child Protection should be considered if the VMTA Member forms the view the child is in need of protection because:

- the harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development;
- the harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability and development; or
- the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child from harm.

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit, call the 24 hour Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78.

Concerns that require immediate attention should be made to the local or regional Human Services Child Protection office, or the After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services on 131 278.

### **What If I Don't Have a Reasonable Belief?**

If you don't have a reasonable belief about a child, but still have concerns, you can refer the matter to the relevant School Child Safety/Protection Program Officer or seek advice from the VMTA.

There is also the option to refer the matter to Child FIRST.

A referral to Child FIRST should be considered if a VMTA Member forms the view that the concerns have a low-to-moderate impact on the child and the immediate safety of the child is not compromised.

A referral can be made when the following factors may affect a child:

- significant parenting problems;
- family conflict;
- a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability or bereavement;
- isolated or unsupported families; and
- significant social or economic disadvantage.

### **What Happens After a Report/Referral is Made?**

After receiving a report, DHHS Child Protection may seek further information, usually from professionals who may also be involved with the child or family, to determine whether further action is required. In most cases, DHHS Child Protection will inform the reporter of the outcome of the report.

After receiving a referral, Child FIRST may consult an experienced community-based Child Protection practitioner in their assessment. The assessment may lead to the involvement of a local family services organisation.

In most cases, Child FIRST will inform the referrer of the outcome of the referral.

Child FIRST must report the matter to DHHS Child Protection if they form the view the child is in need of protection. Reports made to the Police will be dealt with in accordance with Police practice.

### **International Students**

The relevant School authority or VMTA must notify the VRQA if the alleged abuse relates to an international student and the relevant School authority or VMTA has issued a *Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare* (CAAW) letter in relation to that student thereby assuming responsibility for approving the student's accommodation, support and general welfare.

**Policy status:** New

**Key Stakeholders:** VMTA Board of Directors

**Endorsement Body:** VMTA Board of Directors | **Ratification Body:** VMTA Board of Directors

**Author:** VMTA Chief Executive Officer | **Date of Approval:** 16 September 2019 | **Date of**

**Scheduled Review:** TBC

*The content of this policy can be changed at the discretion of the VMTA Board at any time without notification.*



# TEACHER AND STUDENT PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES POLICY

## Preamble

This policy has been developed by the Victorian Music Teachers' Association. It applies to our membership and has been authorised for their professional use.

Music educators hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to their students. As such, it is their duty, at all times, to maintain professional boundaries with students.

The following policy and guidelines are designed to raise awareness of situations where professional boundary violations may occur and some strategies to minimise the risk of boundary violations.

The practice of protective behaviours at all times will also reduce the possibility of vexatious claims being brought against VMTA Members.

## The Victorian Music Teachers' Association Policy

The Victorian Music Teachers' Association is committed to its Members, Staff, Board of Directors and Volunteers providing a safe physical and emotional environment where all students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner, where the risk of child abuse is minimised, and a safe and supportive child safe environment is maintained.

It is our policy that:

- VMTA Members exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationship with students at all times.
- VMTA Members identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student.
- VMTA Members interaction with students is professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours.
- Equal learning opportunities are given to each student without discrimination.
- Appropriate consequences will be applied to VMTA Members who breach professional boundaries.

## What are Professional Boundaries?

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person (a student) entrusts their welfare and safety to another person (a music teacher), in circumstances where a power imbalance exists.

The fact that VMTA Members are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students means that there is always an inherent power imbalance that exists between them. It also means that professional boundaries must be established, maintained and respected at all times.

In most cases this power imbalance is clear; however sometimes it may be more difficult to recognise especially for younger teachers who may only be a few years older than their students.

The following guidelines are not exhaustive, and given that sometimes "grey areas" may occur, it is expected that all teachers (no matter their age or experience) use their own good judgment, think very carefully about the implications and potential consequences of engaging in certain behaviours with students, and always err on the side of caution.

When unsure about whether professional boundaries are being, or have been, breached, ask yourself:

- Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?
- How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting?
- Am I sharing information for the student's benefit, or for my benefit?
- Am I dealing with this student differently from others in similar circumstances?
- Is my language or demeanour different from normal when dealing with this particular student?

## **Intimate Relationships**

VMTA Members must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be misinterpreted as having a romantic or sexual, rather than professional basis. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents/carers.

Such relationships have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of students and colleagues, and may risk the reputation of the VMTA Members and, in turn, the VMTA itself.

The professional relationship of staff and students may be breached by:

- flirtatious behaviour or dating;
- development of an intimate personal relationship;
- sexual relations;
- the use of sexual innuendo, inappropriate language and/or material with students;
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching;
- unwarranted and inappropriate filming or photography;
- deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others (e.g. pornography);
- having intimate contact without a valid context via written or electronic means (e.g. email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms);
- going out, whether alone or in company, to social events such as the movies or dinner; and
- exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship.

VMTA Members should also be aware that developing or encouraging romantic or sexual relationships with recent former students (over 18 years of age) may violate professional boundaries and are strongly discouraged from doing so.

The imbalance of power and authority that exists in the staff/student relationship does not suddenly disappear after the student finishes their schooling. VMTA Members should not assume that they will be protected from disciplinary action by claiming that a relationship began only after the student ceased music lessons as there may be a reasonable belief that the emotional intimacy of the relationship developed while the staff/student relationship existed.

## **Personal Relationships**

VMTA Members must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be perceived or misinterpreted as having a personal rather than professional element. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual or condoned by parents or carers. It is the student's perception of staff behaviour and not the intention of the staff member that is important.

An established and expected professional relationship between VMTA Members and students may be compromised by VMTA Members when:

- attending parties or socialising with students outside of organised School/Studio events (without parental/carer permission);
- sharing personal details about their private lives with students; or
- meeting with students outside of school/studio hours without permission from the School/parent/carer.

VMTA Members must recognise at all times that their role is not to be a “friend” or “parent” to a student.

## **Fair Learning Opportunities**

The main focus of teaching is effective student learning and as such, teachers are expected to support their students with their professional expertise so as to offer them the best education in their individual circumstances. The quality of teaching and learning between teachers and students characterises their relationship.

VMTA Members should demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect;
- recognising and developing each student's abilities, skills and talents by catering to their individual abilities and respecting their individual differences;
- encouraging students to develop and reflect on their own values;
- interacting with students without bias;
- not engaging in preferential treatment;
- not discriminating against any student on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, disability or religious or political conviction; and
- always making decisions in students' best interests.

## **Electronic Communications between Staff & Students**

It is expected that all VMTA Members will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all use of technology should be for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular activities.
- all email communication between VMTA Members and students should be via a professional/official email system and reflect a professional staff/student relationship.
- VMTA Members should not communicate with students via text message where it is not in a professional context.
- VMTA Members should not give out their personal telephone numbers or social media contact details where it is not in a professional context.

- VMTA Members are not to accept or request students as 'friends' on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate in any way that is not condoned or approved by their School/Studio.
- VMTA Members should not exchange personal pictures with a student.
- VMTA Members are not expected or encouraged to respond to the concerns of parents/carers or students on holidays, weekends or in the evening outside of normal studio hours.
- Any student personal contact numbers or other personal contact details made available to VMTA Members should only be used for relevant communications.

### **Physical Contact with Students**

All VMTA Members should be aware that situations may arise that can be perceived in a manner that was not intended. For this reason, all VMTA Members should adhere to the following guidelines for contact with students:

- teachers should avoid unnecessary physical contact with students;
- minimal, non-lingering, non-gratuitous physical contact in the context of the situation is acceptable (e.g. congratulatory pat on the back or handshake); and
- contact for sport, drama and dance instruction is acceptable in a class situation but not in a 1:1 situation.

If physical contact is required for specific technical instructions, it must be brief and only with the consent of the student. Note that a student may withdraw consent for this contact either verbally or gesturally and teachers must remain vigilant whilst engaging in necessary contact situations. Once consent has been withdrawn no further contact can be or should be made.

### **School System: Off-Campus Excursions and Camps**

During off-campus excursions or camps, the same physical contact guidelines apply as well as the following:

- checking of sleeping arrangements, or supervising of students changing should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students' privacy and personal space.
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory.
- ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict staff/student relationship is upheld and that inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student's bed, is not undertaken.

### **Managing Conflicts of Interest**

Where personal relationships with students such as family relationships and close friendship networks exist, questions of conflicts of interest may arise.

This may be more prevalent in close or rural communities where professional boundaries may be tested due to the nature and size of the community. In these circumstances, VMTA Members need to be far more diligent in developing and maintaining these boundaries.

If a VMTA Member working in the school system feels that a conflict of interest may exist, they should notify the Child Protection Program/Wellbeing Officer at their School. Should the VMTA Member operate in their own Studio and require advice, they can contact VMTA.

In a School System, any significant decisions relating to these students should be referred to the Director of Music or other senior staff member and endorsed by a supervisor.

### **School System: Disclosure of Staff/Student Interactions**

It is the VMTA's policy that all VMTA Members are encouraged to declare any interactions with students outside school hours with their relevant school personnel. These interactions may include instances where the VMTA Member is:

- related to the student;
- friends with the student's parents or family;
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours and has notified their relevant School.

Schools maintain their own records of such declarations made by staff members related to their interactions with students, or relationships with students, that exist outside of teaching hours or school premises.

**Policy status:** New

**Key Stakeholders:** VMTA Board of Directors

**Endorsement Body:** VMTA Board of Directors | **Ratification Body:** VMTA Board of Directors

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